Architecture
at Chicago

UIC

Graduate Admissions Portfolio Guide

The portfolio gives the admissions committee a sense of each applicant's aesthetic sensibility and intellectual curiosity. Through the works themselves and in the inquiry or argument framed through their presentation, applicants should use the portfolio to exhibit their potential to develop original design work. Individual work is preferred, but if including group work, you should carefully note your individual role and contribution. The portfolio should not document CAD drafting skills or technical coursework that is independent from design work.

Applicants with architecture backgrounds

Portfolios should contain individual design work, preferably studio work completed in an academic setting. Applicants who have professional work experience should avoid including professional work, such as construction drawings or renderings, unless you had a *significant* role in the design process.

Applicants with non-architecture backgrounds

Portfolios may contain any visual, design, or creative works. This may include paintings, collages, graphic design, woodworking, freehand drawings, sketches, photographs, sculpture, jewelry making, and so on. The admissions committee prefers to see original creative work that best represents the applicant; applicants without formal architecture training are not expected to include any architecture-related work.

If you are concerned about having content to include, consider looking into architecture workshops or summer programs (like our TryArch or YArch programs), enrolling in an art or design class, or exploring options at a local arts center.

Size and format

- Submit your portfolio in PDF format through the online application for graduate admission
- The maximum file size is 32 MB
- You can lay out the portfolio as pages or spreads, as you prefer

Image preparation

- When cropping, resizing, and adjusting the color/contrast of images, use a raster-based image editing program (e.g., Adobe Photoshop) for jpegs, tiffs, or photographic images and a vector-based graphics program for digital drawing files (e.g., Adobe Illustrator)
- Make sure images are at a resolution of 150 dpi or higher, to allow the admissions committee to zoom in

Layout guidelines

- Setting up a template that includes margins, guides, and gutters can help you lay out your portfolio consistently
- Use text to provide context for your work and help readers navigate the document
- Keep the design (color, type, formatting) simple; the focus should be on your work