The guidelines that follow are offered to help you create your application portfolio for the Distance Master of Architecture program. The portfolio is an important element of the documentation that you will submit if you decide to apply to the BAC. Your portfolio is important for several reasons:

- It provides evidence of your knowledge and skills from past academic and work-related experiences which can help us determine your qualifications for the program.
- It provides evidence of your ability to think creatively and critically, and to communicate, in both graphic and written form—all of which are important for your potential to succeed in the program.
- It provides you with an introduction to the BAC tradition of portfolio as a teaching, learning, and assessment tool.
- It is an opportunity for you to reflect on the creative and intellectual content of your work at this stage of your career.

We hope you find the examples provided in the following pages to be helpful in creating your application portfolio to the Distance Master of Architecture program.
Portfolio content

A portfolio of an applicant’s relevant creative and intellectual work is required for admission to the Distance Master of Architecture program.

The portfolio is a key factor in assessing a candidate’s potential to succeed in the program; it therefore should present representative examples of the applicant’s best work from academic coursework, professional practice, and personal efforts. Ideally this will include work that demonstrates design thinking (for example, process sketches, diagrams, or iterative studies), as well as design, presentation, and documentation drawings and models. Work that demonstrates a range of design media, project types, and examples of collaborative process should also be included.

One important function of the application portfolio is to provide evidence, in addition to college transcripts and other documentation, of the extent to which pre-requisite skills and knowledge area competencies have been met in the applicant’s undergraduate design education and in their work experience in architecture practice.

The portfolio will be evaluated by the BAC admissions committee. Students must show evidence and understanding of the following:

**Basic Systems Thinking:**
The student understands how to design for people within an ecology of ideas, needs, cultures, histories, and systems.

**Design Process:**
The student understands how to engage design as a reasoned process of establishing the criteria of a problem, resolving these criteria, and critically evaluating the design resolution.

**Representation:**
The student understands the importance of craft in drawing, drafting, diagramming, modeling, digital representation, and writing.

**Concept Development:**
The student explains concepts, spirits or motivating ideas drawn from within and outside the design disciplines; clearly explored and creatively expressed.

**Analysis of site and contexts:**
The student provides analysis of and documentation of environmental, qualitative, cultural, and historical issues in the context of the site(s).

**Translation of concept into form:**
The student shows rigorous exploration leading to successful translation of concepts, site and context issues, and analysis into built form.

**Human scale and occupation:**
The student provides evidence of design thinking at human scale. The student designs appropriate spaces for movement and other activities. There is evidence of inquisitive exploration of design for human purposes and aspirations.

**Form and Space:**
The student shows an ability to develop and communicate three-dimensional space and form. The student understands how ordering systems structure formal, spatial, and performative relationships.
Portfolio Requirements

The portfolio should conform to the following guidelines:

Format:
- 8.5” x 11” landscape orientation
- Portfolio should be bound on the left side, spiral binding; avoid loose leaf.
- Provide a title page with applicant’s name, date of application, and table of contents.
- Contents should consist of high quality images (b&w or color); do not include original work. Slides, CDs, DVDs will not be accepted.

Contents:
- Applicants are encouraged to provide examples of a range of project types, scales, and design media. **We are interested in how you think.** Include creative work of a non-architectural nature.
- Separate contents into sections reflecting the source: academic, professional, personal.
- Provide examples of both design and technical drawings, including: free-hand drawing; hand drawn orthographic and 3D drawings; 2D CAD drawings; 3D CAD drawings. Include images of physical models.
- For academic work, identify the name of school; studio level, semester and year and project duration. Present academic work in chronological order.
- Provide captions and a descriptions of the nature of the project problem and the design response. **Reflections on learning and lessons taken from the experience are highly encouraged.**
- For professional work, identify the firm, project and or client name, location, project dates (of completion). Applicants should describe their involvement in the project. Images should represent work done by the applicant. Work done by others shall be clearly identified.
- For group projects (academic or professional), the applicant’s role shall be clearly indicated.

Portfolios will NOT be returned. Applicants are encouraged to make a copy of their portfolio prior to submitting.
Portfolio examples

Applicants are encouraged to give careful consideration to the overall composition of the portfolio. The layout and design can convey a design sensibility and clarity of intention that is helpful in assessing strengths. This portfolio provides an example of how different types of drawings show initial design ideas and how the final design was resolved.
This example of practice-related work experience shows a balanced range of drawing types, photographs, and commentary that help explain the work illustrated. The “Applied Learning” section is helpful in conveying how the candidate’s work experience relates to larger educational goals.
Examples of non-studio work are strongly encouraged. Evidence of learning from other settings helps to substantiate credit for pre-requisite courses and provides insights into the candidate’s other strengths. Work can range from academic essays or work-related correspondence to projects or assignments in technical subjects, to analytical drawing and digital media examples.
Examples of analysis including design precedents, site analysis, and programming are important to illustrate an applicant's range of skills and their potential to succeed in the program. Such examples provide context to fully explain the project and the thinking that led to the design solution presented.
The presentation of design work to others is a requisite ability for architects. Portfolio reviews at the Boston Architectural College are critical gateways where a student must demonstrate the ability to perform at the next level of curricular advancement.

Accordingly, the design of the application portfolio warrants careful consideration. Above all else, the portfolio must communicate the student’s intentions and process with clarity. Students should keep in mind that this clarity is far more important than making a “slick” book. We are interested in how you think about design and the process you took to make decisions.

For more information please contact:

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