



Welsh School of Architecture
Ysgol Pensaernïaeth Cymru

WSA MArch Year 1 VISA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Do I need to secure a placement in order to enrol on March Year 1?

Most international students, including EU, EEA, and Swiss nationals who do not hold permission under the EU Settlement Scheme, will need to apply for a Student Route visa before travelling in order to study the MArch Architectural Studies.

You need to secure a placement, whether in the UK or your home country/overseas in order to be eligible for a student visa for the duration of the programme. The placement is an integral part of the programme, and failure to obtain a placement may lead to your student visa being cancelled. Please note: **In order to activate your student visa, you must arrive into the UK by the final start date stated on your CAS letter.** This is referred to on your CAS as the 'latest date for migrant acceptance' and can be found directly after the course start date.

If you are unsure of the status of your placement please contact the School urgently via ARCHITeachingOffice@cardiff.ac.uk

What if I cannot secure a placement by the above date?

In order to obtain a student visa needed to accept a placement in the UK, you need to provide details of this position in advance of the start of March1 Year 1 (as stated in your CAS letter). If you are unable to find a placement by this time, you can still find a placement in your home country and are still eligible to enrol on March Year 1 and attend the first Short Course but would not be able to apply for a student visa until March Year 2.

Is there a limit (min/max) on the number of hours per week I can be on a professional placement while studying the MArch Year 1?

A professional placement is part of the course and as such you can access the placement on a full-time basis whether based in the UK or overseas.

Students are also able to enter full-time employment during holiday periods and once they have

completed the course fully.

You can find guidance on student work permissions on our intranet here: [Working during your studies - Student intranet - Cardiff University](#).

Can I accept an unpaid placement?

As a School we encourage ethical practices and advise students against accepting unpaid professional placements. We feel your contributions to practice should be valued and fairly remunerated. However, we recognise that particularly outside of the UK RIBA structure, placement arrangements can differ. Ultimately, the decision to accept a placement is your personal choice, subject to your personal circumstances. An unpaid placement would not affect eligibility for a student visa.

Do I need a sponsor for my Visa application? What does this entail for the sponsor?

This could refer to educational or financial sponsor.

Cardiff University is the educational sponsor, we provide the CAS needed to support a visa application and are then responsible for monitoring students while they are on their studies.

A financial sponsor would be a government agency, university, or international company that provides financial support for the student for their studies (stipend or grant). This is not something that is needed for the visa and depends on the students' own circumstances.

Do I need to liaise with the University Visa Compliance team or UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) or both?

If you are applying for your first student route visa, you should refer to our online guidance to help you prepare your visa application. Our detailed PDF guides can be downloaded through the 'related documents' section here: [Visas and immigration - New students - Cardiff University](#)

If you have specific questions, or struggle with the application and do not have an agent helping, or if your visa is refused or you are contacted by the UKVI, you can contact our Visa team (Student Visa Support) for help via the Student Connect system.

Your visa application is submitted to UKVI but there is no contact beyond submission of the application.

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With regards to your professional placement (which is part of the first year of the MArch), you do not need to contact UKVI about this directly. The University Student Visa Compliance team reports your placement details to UKVI on your behalf.

However, it is vitally important that you communicate your placement details, and any change to your placement details throughout your first year, to the School as soon as possible. Cardiff University is required to report your change in status to UKVI as part of the visa rules, and a failure to do so can result in your visa being cancelled.

Please note that the Student Connect system has an FAQ section that students/applicants should be able to access before raising an enquiry.