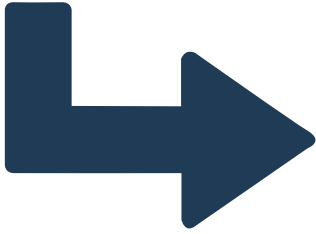


## What is the difference between Interior Design, Interior Architecture, and Architecture?

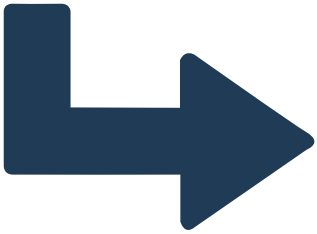
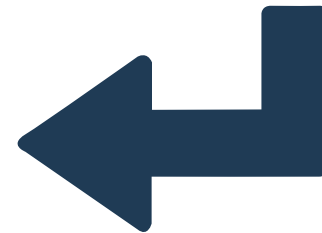
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The term **interior architecture** is used in a number of academic institutions for interior programs that have an architectural philosophy. At GW, our sequential, studio-based program is modeled on the standard architecture curriculum, where the core studio is 6-credits. We emphasize conceptual thinking and design process, with a creation of architectural space expressed through an architectural concept and shown through sketches, models, and architectural drawings.



Students who graduate from GW IA are considered **interior designers** in the professional world. They take into consideration conceptual development, space planning, functionality, and the health, safety and wellness of the user-- as well as the overall aesthetic of the space. Unlike interior designers, **interior decorators** primarily focus on the aesthetics of a space, which includes finishes, furnishings, and fixtures. Professionals that do not have an interior design or interior architecture degree are considered interior decorators. On the other hand, architects design the base or exterior of a building, meaning they design the structure of the exterior and sometimes the interior. Interior designers are very involved in sustainable practices such as adaptive reuse, since they often re-purpose the interior of an existing building. They often also work on new build interiors, in collaboration with a licensed architect.

In the US, there are two professional organizations for interior design (ASID, IIDA) and one can become a **licensed interior designer** through work + the NCIDQ exam. There is also a professional organization for architecture (AIA) and one can become a **licensed architect** through work + the NCARB exam. At this time, there is no professional organization for interior architecture, nor is there a licensure to become a interior architect. To legally call oneself an interior architect, one must follow the same path as an architect, since using the term 'architect' is restricted to those that passed the ARE exam and are licensed in their state. This is different in other parts of the world, where interior designers are often called interior architects. This is why this is so confusing!



Ultimately GW IA graduates become **interior designers** and work on all phases of the interior...which is important since this is where people spend most of their time. Our alumni work at leading architecture + interior design firms all over the globe, and some have even started their own firms. Check out our alumni on LinkedIn...and feel free to reach out to connect with a GW IA graduate (they love to hear from IA students).