2019-20 POLICY ON STUDIO CULTURE
COMMUNITY STANDARDS

Community Standards and Procedures

STUDIO CULTURE POLICY

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Community Standards and Procedures

Carnegie Mellon University is committed to cultivating an environment that supports the personal and intellectual growth of each student by promoting our traditions of innovation, leadership, responsibility to society, learning, dedication, commitment to quality and commitment to each other. We are a community with high expectations for those who choose to become members, including established community standards intended to foster behavior that is consistent with an educational setting where each member can achieve their full potential.

It is the responsibility of each community member to become familiar with the standards and expectations of the Carnegie Mellon community. In general, each member should:

- Respect the rights of others;
- Respect the property of individuals, groups and Carnegie Mellon;
- Know, understand and abide by all Carnegie Mellon community standards, policies and regulations, as well as all local, state and federal laws;
- Engage in behavior that does not interfere with individual, group or Carnegie Mellon regular activities and/or operation;
- Ensure that guests behave in a manner consistent with and in accordance with the expectations of our community.

At the core, the standards, policies and regulations of the Carnegie Mellon community are designed with one or more of the following four purposes to:

- promote and protect the rights of members and guests of our community;
- promote and protect the health and safety of all members and guests of our community;
- promote the respect of and protect community members and University property;
- promote and protect the academic integrity of our community.

The Word provides a list of policies students are expected to uphold and the process by which violations will be addressed. Policies and procedures may be established or amended as necessary during the course of the academic year, which will become effective immediately upon notification by the dean of students. Specific procedures for how the university receives and responds to student allegations through the Community Standards Violations process can be found here.*

*This excerpt was taken from the “Community Standards and Procedures” section of The WORD – an online student handbook published by the Division of Student Affairs for all Carnegie Mellon University students.

For detailed information about The WORD and other information regarding community standards, policies, and procedures, please reference The WORD at https://www.cmu.edu/student-affairs/theword/index.html.
1. What is Studio Culture?

As defined by the AIAS, Studio Culture is defined as, “the experiences, habits, and patterns found within the architecture design studio.” The organization elaborates:

“That who have studied architecture undoubtedly have vivid memories that characterize their design studio experience. Late nights, exciting projects, extreme dedication, lasting friendships, long hours, punishing critiques, unpredictable events, a sense of community, and personal sacrifice all come to mind. Those aspects are not usually written into the curriculum or even the design assignments, but they are likely the most memorable and influential. The experiences, habits, and patterns found within the architecture design studio make up what we have termed ‘Studio Culture’.”

The School of Architecture also cites the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) 2014 conditions on Learning Culture and Social Equity as an introduction to its Studio Culture policy which parallels the board’s specific interest in:

“...demonstrat[ing] that it provides a positive and respectful learning environment that encourages the fundamental values of optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation between and among the members of its faculty, student body, administration, and staff in all learning environments both traditional and non-traditional...”

It is under these terms that the students, staff, and faculty of the Carnegie Mellon School of Architecture proudly present to you the Policy on Studio Culture, a testament to our communal mission to foster an attitude of professionalism within the studio.

1.1. Community Standards and the Studio Culture Policy

The Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture’s Policy on Studio Culture was initially written in 2009 by the school’s chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) to build a strong community that is inherently unique to the architecture studio environment.

The WORD is the official student handbook for members of the Carnegie Mellon community. Our policy on Studio Culture serves as a supplement to the standards and policies that the university has adopted and established www.cmu.edu/student-affairs/theword.

If a student feels that the community standards established in The WORD and/or in the Studio Culture Policy have been violated, he/she should consult with his/her designated faculty mentor to discuss the situation and determine the next steps to addressing the issue either within the school or at the university as outlined by the Division of Student Affairs in The WORD.
1.2. Pedagogical Philosophy

Carnegie Mellon University is a premier research university recognized for its world-class arts and technology programs. As such, the School of Architecture connects both the technical and the conceptual/theoretical elements of architectural design in its undergraduate curriculum. Specifically, students combine technical processes of both analog and digital fabrication - or “making” - with theoretical and conceptual positions tied to a more diverse range of studies within the studio and supported by their coursework.

The philosophy is maintained that professionalism should be embodied by faculty, staff, and students and demonstrated in the work exhibited in a professional degree program. The School realizes that the studio is a 'melting pot' of sorts that contains these interactions and their outcomes. Therefore, as a premise for deriving the guidelines for Studio Culture, we embrace the idea of professionalism as a means to instill positive and productive relationships between all parties present in architectural education.

Core Pedagogical Values

Under the heading of professionalism, the School of Architecture supports core values that further emphasizes the importance of collaborative engagement, critical interaction, and decision-making within the studio environment:

- **Critical Practice**: Innovate, question, reevaluate, and redefine in order to push for forward thinking in the study and practice of architecture.
- **Process/Product**: Demonstrate the ability to actively participate in studio by creating work that challenges oneself in his/her specific skill-set level. Contribute – to the best of one’s abilities – a product that is well-developed based on the conceptual objectives assigned.
- **Critique**: Promote constant interaction between students and faculty in the critical discussion of both precedent study and student. Engage in public discourse about architecture whether it be at a personal final critique, a gallery showing, or a town hall meeting.
- **Engagement**: Understand and be committed to studio content and take advantage of resources. Work to achieve personal and academic goals in an effort to learn more from your work and that of your peers. Be present at every studio session as attendance and attentiveness are essential to success.
- **Communication**: Voice suggestions, concerns, and opinions frequently. Have the judgement to understand on what level to communicate with peers and colleagues in all areas of architectural learning.
- **Respect**: Be respectful of others - their ideas, work and philosophies. Embrace the diversity of our community with regard to: race, color, religion, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability.
- **Integrity**: Commitment to honesty without compromise, as well as truth without equivocation and a willingness to place the good of the community above the good of the self. Obligations, once undertaken, must be met and commitments kept.
- **Character**: As citizens of the School of Architecture at Carnegie Mellon University, we are ambassadors charged with the responsibilities of representing the ideals of both the school and the university as a whole: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, accountability, and integrity.
- **Self-respect**: Maintain respect for our bodies and minds. Proper time-management, personal cleanliness and hygiene, and continuous personal accountability must be upheld.
- **Personal accountability**: Don’t make excuses for bad decisions. Be willing to claim ownership for the results of your actions and the consequences of your involvement, both individually and collectively with others.

### 2. Design Process and Curriculum

#### 2.1. Curriculum

The ten design studios of the undergraduate Bachelor of Architecture degree program are considered to be developmental courses that teach students to make informed architectural design decisions on increasingly advanced levels as they progress throughout their undergraduate education. First- through Third-year studios build skills and comprehensive design abilities, while the last two years allow for self-chosen topics in breadth or depth. The studio curriculum is defined by the accreditation requirements of NAAB and shaped by the faculty, administration, and students according to the School’s pedagogy. Students engage in curricular discussions with the faculty and administration via their respective student advisory council (SAC or GSAC) representatives, or personally, as necessary.

This feedback is received openly by the administration to better inform the development of the curriculum, evaluate responses, and make any necessary changes accordingly. If they so choose, students reserve the right to request to take supplementary courses or to make independent study opportunities for themselves with the guidance and approval of an appointed faculty and/or administrative advisor.

#### 2.2. Grading Policy

Grading is a university standard that is one type of evaluation of a student’s academic performance based on defined learning objectives and established curricular requirements. More important to the design studio is the review or critique, which can be a formal qualitative evaluation of students’ architectural work. The faculty are responsible for assigning the studio grade based on criteria stated in the studio syllabus. Students should be actively involved in the process of critically evaluating their work and the work of their peers. However, in doing so, students must adhere to the core values of self-respect and respect for others in all discourse.

Students have the ability to ask for direct feedback from faculty at any point during the design process, but they must be open-minded when receiving this feedback, even if they are not in agreement with the faculty response. Learning objectives should be included in course syllabi; students should reference their syllabi often. However, the student cannot expect every faculty member to have similar criteria and must be aware of other external resources – other faculty, administrators, peers, the public, and texts – and must have the judgement to use them wisely.
In turn, the faculty must provide sufficient means for students to be able to self-evaluate at all times, whether in the form of a rubric or with continuous feedback.

### 2.3. Reviews/Critiques

The aforementioned idea of the “review” or “critique” is a quintessential and crucial aspect in the learning development of architecture students. Students and faculty must actively engage in the critical discourse of architecture, both inside and outside of the studio.

Traditional critiques are coordinated between one or more students and a series of faculty members and/or guest reviewers. However, at times the traditional method of student presentation/faculty response and evaluation may be dubbed as inadequate means for academic growth. In an effort to give students and faculty new opportunities and methods by which to evaluate studio work, a series of review formats are suggested below and should be used with respect to the specific needs of the student:

- Student/faculty one-on-one review session;
- Students/faculty review session - one or more faculty and multiple students in discussion;
- “Round robin” full studio critiques - studios rotate to different faculty each week to gain new perspectives;
- Student/student review sessions - highly encouraged within the studio – especially after hours;
- Guest reviewer seminars - discussion or pinup with guest critic;
- Full jury - one or more students with a panel of reviewers present; and/or
- Composite - students discuss their work alone, then faculty contribute, break-up into student/faculty groups, etc.

It should be noted that reviews should always be discussion-oriented and never critical of the person, but always directed to the work as it stands. If at any time a student or faculty feels that they have been personally offended within the setting of a review, he or she has the right to take appropriate action by first talking with their studio coordinator.

Final reviews are a privilege and not a right, however, as guest critics frequently give their time to give us a broader perspective on our studies. Students must demonstrate continuous effort and aptitude to be able to present in a final critique scenario. Faculty have the final say regarding a student’s ability to present during final reviews, and may deny the privilege if the student’s work is incomplete by their judgment, that of any immediate coordinators, and/or supervisors. Review attendance is a requirement. Each student must be in attendance and be attentive for not only their review, but also for those of their peers.

### 2.4. Responsibility of the Design Process

The design studio is a place for open exploration of architectural methods of teaching and learning. Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining a consistent level of inquiry within the studio. Faculty should provide background material pertinent to both the requirements of that specific studio as well as for specific explorations pursued within individual projects. In return, students should keep up with their work and make a constant effort to contribute to the studio environment.
3. Fostering a Positive Culture

3.1. Work-School-Life Balance

Students need to strike a balance between time allocated for work and other aspects of life. This is essential to the well-being of students. Students & faculty alike should strive to facilitate and encourage extracurricular and health practices. Students may achieve this by joining campus and community organizations, seeking advice from peers when needed, and practicing a healthy lifestyle through getting enough exercise, rest, and food. Moreover, Faculty should aim to encourage open and honest communication with students about their abilities and any obstacles that may hinder their studio work. In doing so, students will not only be more likely to lead a healthier lifestyle, but students will be more well-rounded as they enter the workforce, broadening both their breadth of knowledge and their passions.

3.2. Expectations from Students

Architecture students must always make an effort to have positive interactions with one another within the studio. The School of Architecture accepts students into its accredited program as young-professionals and expects them to demonstrate professionalism throughout their five years in the School.

In addition to this Studio Culture Policy, we are expected to adhere to the community standards, policies, and procedures established by Carnegie Mellon University as outlined in the WORD.

Students are expected to maintain these standards when involved with their peers in a studio setting:

- Respect one another with regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability, and differences in experiences and ideas;
- Be communicative with peers about all pertinent issues regarding studio and its culture;
- Understand your personal boundaries and respect the space of others;
- Support one another, learn from each other, and be open-minded when collaborating;
- Participate in the discourse of studio and feed off of the ideas of classmates while maintaining core values;
- Practice high standards of personal hygiene and cleanliness; and
- Practice equality and fairness in group work settings.

Facilities and Conduct

Use of the facilities in the School of Architecture are a privilege, and the contents of these spaces are the property of Carnegie Mellon University. As such, they should be treated with respect in the same way the users would want their personal spaces to be treated. Below is a list of facilities and criteria for their usage. Students and faculty should adhere to these when using any of the facilities within the school:
Drafting Boards, Maylines, Desks, Stools, Cabinets, Keys, and Flat Screen Monitors

Drafting Boards and maylines are purchased by the School for first-year students. Desks, stools, cabinets, and keys are distributed by the school to each student accordingly on a yearly basis and flat screen computer monitors are available to students upon request. Students should think of these tools as their personal belongings and should treat them well. Guidelines for use are as follows:

- Maintain both personal desk space and shared communal spaces at an adequate level of cleanliness. If a student requests for you to clean your space because its level of cleanliness is inadequate, please be respectful and do so.
- Food should be disposed of after you eat it. Please don’t leave half-empty containers open on your desk or in communal spaces for days at a time.
- Be sure to lock items in your studio cabinet or take personal belongings with you (e.g. wallets, phones, backpacks, laptops) when you leave the studio. Lost and or stolen items are your responsibility.
- Do not use other people’s belongings - this includes using their desks as a work space without permission. In the case that you use another student's desk for work, please ask them first and then clean up the area completely when you are finished.
- Students are responsible for maintaining drafting boards, maylines, desks, chairs, cabinets, and flat screen monitors. Parts to repair these items can be obtained from the school's Shop Director upon request.

Computer/Model Workstations

- Computing workspaces are reserved for the use of SoA students and faculty.
- No eating or drinking around computers, printers/plotters, or model workspaces; do not leave trash in the area.
- Clean up modeling workspaces after you are finished working – otherwise, anything left may be disposed of.

Wood Shop and Design Fabrication (dFAB) Lab

Both the wood shop and the dFAB Lab at CMU are utilized as part of the undergraduate and graduate curricula and are integral tools of the design and fabrication process. All policies and procedures established by the wood shop and dFAB faculty and staff should be obeyed at all times. Students should be mindful of others when using these facilities and clean up all excess materials and work areas.

Spray Booths

Similar rules apply to the use of the spray booths as they apply to the wood shop, the dFAB Lab, and the above listed tools and facilities. For more information, reference the Fabrication Facilities section of the SoA student handbooks.
3.3. Expectations from Faculty

Faculty are integral to the architectural education process. Students use faculty knowledge and advice as a resource; therefore, faculty are expected to bring their passion into the studio during every session. Like students, faculty must promote the School’s core values to the best of their abilities.

As practitioners of professionalism within the studio, we ask our educators to adhere to the following:

- Respect all students and fellow faculty of the CMU SoA community;
- Come to studio with a concise plan and openly communicate this agenda;
- Push students to exceed expectations, while always considering their pace and skill-set;
- Provide students with the ability to evaluate their work based on feedback and written criteria;
- Facilitate discourse within a specific studio;
- Plan discussions ahead of time; and
- Treat students equally and encourage diversity in ideas, interests, and philosophies.

Faculty should not only be invested in getting good work out of their students but also promote a holistic and healthy work culture/environment in order for the best work to flourish. We ask the following of our faculty:

- Know the capabilities and limits of their students;
- Show interest/concern over the physical/mental health of their students;
- Discuss regularly with students their personal well-being - especially if they observe that a student is not doing well physically/mentally; and
- Take it upon themselves as a mentor/professor to say and do something to help their students.

In return, the student body is expected to respect all faculty members and consider them a part of the studio community. Without these educators, advancement in architectural education would be impossible. Students must be diligent in their studies, and they are expected to maintain a positive relationship with their studio faculty. Specifically, the student body must uphold these standards when working with faculty:

- Respect all faculty of the CMU SoA community;
- Come to studio with an open mind and a positive attitude;
- Push to meet & exceed expectations in all areas;
- Understand and consider all feedback given – think and react according to individual processes;
- Communicate with your faculty - the positives and the negatives;
- Be curious;
- Participate in studio discussions, and embrace your faculty’s knowledge-base; and
- Acknowledge/become informed about faculty interests and diversity in practice.

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4. Accountability and Implementation

The school’s Policy on Studio Culture is reviewed at the beginning of an academic year by School of Architecture undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, administration, and staff. It is revised and updated annually according to feedback received during the review process by student leaders of the CMU chapters of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) and the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS).

Workshops or discussions about the Studio Culture Policy will be communicated to students and faculty. Changes or amendments to the policy will be announced to students in school newsletters. The dates of the most recent review and update of the SoA’s Policy on Studio Culture is noted at the bottom of the document.

4.1. Policy Awareness

Students and faculty should review the Policy on Studio Culture at the beginning of the academic year and as necessary. It can be located as a standalone document on the SoA website. Students and faculty are encouraged to discuss the topics addressed in Studio Culture Policy throughout the academic year and reference the policy as needed.

Student Awareness

- Students will be informed of the policy during orientation and at the beginning of the academic year.
- Undergraduate and graduate students should be informed of the Studio Culture Policy in their first year seminar course.
- Students are encouraged to utilize university resources for sensitivity and mental health first aid training.

Faculty Awareness

- Faculty should be informed of the policy during onboarding and before teaching.
- Any already on-boarded faculty should also review and reference the policy, such as at the faculty retreat or faculty meetings.
- Faculty are also encouraged to utilize university resources for sensitivity and mental health first aid training.

4.2. Assessment and Feedback

Faculty Course Evaluations (FCEs)

Faculty Course Evaluations (FCEs) rely on active student participation to improve the quality of teaching and learning at Carnegie Mellon through feedback to both individual faculty members and promotion committees. Responses also serve as one measure of the quality of faculty member’s teaching that is used to evaluate faculty for promotion and tenure. This feedback will help guide changes in future iterations of the course and/or the instructor’s teaching. Students are strongly encouraged to participate with constructive feedback that is relevant to teaching and course content.
Strategies To Gather Feedback:
- Over a period of time, be sure to remind students in class to fill out FCEs.
- Send a personal email to the class/studio to maximize FCE responses.
- Plan ahead to schedule dedicated class time to encourage students to fill out the FCEs in class.

One-on-One, Faculty-Student Interactions
Faculty are encouraged to form a relationship with their students and learn about things like their strengths and weaknesses, interests, learning goals, and career aspirations. Faculty may do this through a variety of platforms including, but not limited to:
- Introduction, mid-semester, and exit interviews
- Studio engagement exercises (e.g. first-day presentations, portfolio exercises)
- Reviews and critiques

Reciprocally, students are encouraged to learn more about their faculty member’s work and career trajectory, and reach out to them for feedback and guidance. Moreover, students must attempt to clearly communicate their strengths and weaknesses, interests, learning goals, and career aspirations, in order to make the most of their interaction with the faculty.

4.3 Student Communication

Student Organizations
Student organizations play a crucial role as implementers and upholders of the Studio Culture Policy. Responsibilities and expectations of the members of these organizations include, but are not limited to:
- Serving as role models for the community by abiding by the policy in their own conduct and commitment to their work;
- Spreading awareness about the policy and educating the wider community;
- Creating platforms for feedback regarding the Studio Culture Policy and its effectiveness, such as hosting workshops, tracking public opinion, etc. from these organizations on a regular basis - ideally once per semester or at most, once an academic year.

Peer Discourse
Peer discourse can be a vital means of communication between students, on a range of topics, such as curriculum changes, work expectations, and strategies for success. Students are encouraged to tap into the existing conversation, not only to seek out advice, but also to inform. Underclassmen should feel comfortable reaching out to upper-year students for advice on both work and personal matters. Reciprocally, upperclassmen must attempt to foster a welcoming and positive environment, and help underclassmen address any concerns they may have.
Student Platforms: APM, SAC and GSAC

The Architecture Peer Mentorship (APM) program and the Student Advisory Council — both undergraduate (SAC) and graduate (GSAC), are set in place by the SoA to offer channels for mentorship and for addressing student concerns.

4.4. Faculty Communication

Faculty are encouraged to set aside time during the first week of classes to introduce students to the Studio Culture Policy, and review its major tenets. Reciprocally, students are urged to take the initiative to discuss the policy with their faculty.

Faculty are encouraged to quote the Studio Culture Policy in their syllabus documents from Sections 3 and 4, with particular emphasis on §3.1. and §4.1.

It is recommended that the school’s Head present the Studio Culture Policy, along with that year’s strategic foci, at the All-School Meeting to ensure the policy’s continued observance and development.