

BUILDING PLACES AND SPACES

Landscape
architect

Beautiful landscapes aren't always as natural as they seem. Often, nature has had a helping hand from a landscape architect. Experts in design and the environment, they are passionate about the role functional, beautiful open spaces play in enhancing people's lives. Their work spans everything from parks to city centres, new developments to riversides, historic gardens to areas of outstanding natural beauty. It can take up to seven years to become a chartered professional. But, with climate change and sustainability both having a big impact on where and how we live, the profession is growing and demand is fast outstripping supply.

Degree needed

Most landscape architects begin their careers by undertaking a course accredited by The Landscape Institute (LI), either at undergraduate level, or as a postgraduate option following a degree in a related area.

A wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses are available, from design and planning to ecology and conservation. Training for designers is typically either an undergraduate degree in landscape design followed by a further postgraduate year, or for those who already hold a degree a two-year master's level qualification. A three-year degree or one-year MA is usually required for other specialisms.

The final stage of qualification as a chartered landscape architect is through the Pathway to Chartership, a period of work based learning followed by an oral examination. Fully qualified landscape architects may use the designation MLI (Member of the Landscape Institute).

Good courses

The LI accredits courses at more than 14 universities, including Birmingham, Greenwich, Manchester, Kingston, Reading and Sheffield. A full list of accredited courses is on the LI's website www.landscapeinstitute.org.uk.



Adam White at work
Principal landscape architect, Groundwork



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Facts and figures

Starting salary

Between £16,000 and £25,000.

Working hours

Typically a 37 hour, five-day week.

Days' holiday per year

Usually 25.

Skills and experience

Employers look not only for vision and enthusiasm but also for good design, communication and negotiating skills.

Would suit

This career would suit someone with a natural flair for design combined with a practical outlook and excellent communication skills.

Likely employer types

- Around 50 per cent of landscape architects work in private practices
- Local authorities
- Environmental or government agencies such as English Nature
- Some voluntary organisations

How many jobs available?

Although it is a relatively small profession, landscape architecture is growing fast and the demand for new entrants is outstripping supply. Growing political emphasis on sustainability, liveability and environmental conservation means that landscape architects' skills are increasingly in demand.

Number of people employed in this field

There are around 3,000 chartered landscape architects in the UK, according to the Landscape Institute.



Meet the expert

Adam White,
Groundwork



"It's so cool seeing an idea materialise from my head onto a drawing board and then into a public space. I'm like a child with a pile of lego."

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Did you know?

Uniquely among the built environment professions, almost 50 per cent of landscape architects are female.

More information

- The Landscape Institute offers information on becoming a landscape architect, advice on courses, news and jobs www.landscapeinstitute.org
- The Association of Professional Landscapers highlights the importance of landscaping in the environment www.landscaper.org.uk
- Lantra has information about careers in landscaping, plus details of job vacancies www.lantra.co.uk
- The Landscape Design Trust provides details of courses and lists job vacancies in landscaping, the environment and garden design www.landscape.co.uk