

Chalking Your Own Career Path

Many of my students, interns and fresh graduate employees come asking for career guidance and advice. They want advice on what they can pursue as a career after their graduation in architecture. I cannot claim to be a person who knows all options available, but I share my experience on how I went about finding my own path. And most of the time, the process is more or less same, although the end decision depends on the person's strengths, interests and background. I would like to share the same to the young professionals from building industry.

Let's address the frequently asked questions. *"Should I work or go for masters? If masters, then in which area? In India or abroad? Immediately after graduation or with some work experience?"* This is the beginning of every person I talk to. My response to these questions is as follows.

Today, master's education has become a trend. Although it is not a prerequisite for a good career development, students think they will not be valued if they don't have additional degree. I think it's a wrong assumption. If you are a good learner, additional degree or not, you will be valued! Your growth in the profession is directly linked to your performance and skills and not qualification only. Some students say that they are advised to finish their education in one continuous effort so that they don't lose touch with learning. If you think your learning is over after school and college, you are in for a big surprise. Learning never stops. It's a continuous process and those who think they are done with education and need not learn any further, won't get much ahead in their careers.

When we start our bachelor's education, it's not completely our choice or decision. Our age, education system and family decisions influence tremendously. But to decide on master's education and the area of interest, the decision must be taken only by the individual. It cannot be family and friends' decision. If you think you want to explore the subject more, then go for it. You must be convinced that the post graduate will add value to your knowledge and not just your resume' and job prospects. **The subject should be your passion!** Once you decide

on the subject, family and friend advice helps in choosing the appropriate place (country) and time to take the next step.

I highly recommend working for two years after graduation. You can explore the field of architecture and its allied practices through your work experience. This also gives you a time to know about career options and find your passion among them. Once you have shortlisted an area of interest, you can start your research about the field and then apply for further studies. You have better chances of getting scholarships and assistantships because of your work experience. Since you have chosen the field with thorough research, you won't regret the choice as you move ahead in the chosen direction and excel in your work.

We at Alternate Angle have had interns and fresh graduates who have chosen various options after Bachelor of Architecture. Some have done project management, landscape architecture, urban planning, MBA in real estate, environmental planning and sustainable design, and many other options. Some of them have chosen not to pursue masters and focus on their area of work. And I feel each one of them has chosen as per their own interest. Our responsibility was to understand their capabilities, give them the exposure to their own strengths and let them choose their own career path. And I am proud to say, each one of them is excelling in their field.

Choosing a career path is confusing in today's world. There is too much information and advice. You will have many options in terms of courses, colleges and countries. But only you will understand what suits you the best. If you have to chalk your own career path, ask yourself only one question. **What am I passionate about?**

You may need some time to find that answer, but once you do, the path is set!