



Hi everyone! Thank you for joining us today, let us know what questions you have.

Q: How would you differentiate the Penn MLA program from Cornell or Berkeley?

A: I have my undergraduate degree in landscape architecture from Cornell. Cornell has a relationship with the Agriculture School, so you have more plant science classes, and a concentration on construction detailing. Penn has a relationship with the architecture and city planning departments because we're in the same school. Cornell will have urban and rural projects concentrated in New York State. Penn has more opportunities for international projects.

Just to add to that, (I also went Cornell as undergrad at Cornell, but in engineering) and Berkeley was my top choice for MLA and when I got in and visited I was disappointed in the feeling of the student body and how they felt their professors interacted with them. The impression I got was that they were not very available outside of class due to their own work. Also the facilities and such seemed to be lacking due to funding. Overall, I got an amazing vibe of the student body when I came to visit Penn and that's what swayed me.

Q: How can I know the Program specifically? I am writing my personal statement now; I am curious about how can I match the program? Especially I do not have Architecture degree in my undergraduate; I pursued the landscape architecture and gained the Bachelor of Arts.

A: I would say that you should describe how you became interested in architecture. You should also talk about how you would fit in to PennDesign

Q: Could I mention some works I saw on the PennDesign website and some books I read which were written by the faculties and alumni in the P.S.

A: Yes that is a good idea!

Q: Hi, I'm applying to the MCP program, but I'm not going for the Urban design concentration. Should I still submit a portfolio, since my undergrad was in Architecture?

A: For the concentrations other than Urban Design, we do not ask for a portfolio - you could upload your portfolio but it likely will not be reviewed.

Q: What does concentration on construction detailing mean

A: There are opportunities to do design and build projects at Cornell for both plant science and site construction courses.

Q: I'm looking to go for an Urban Design concentration, but I don't have previous experience with architecture. I was a geography major with an art minor. What sort of things could I put in my portfolio? I have map work but it's mostly things that were assigned to me and I followed instruction, not much in the way of original thought really.

A: I'm enrolled in the Urban Design certificate program, as a landscape student. And for urban design it's helpful to show a diversity of work in scale. If you have any work on large scale projects as well as detail work that can help. But as an anecdote I had no prior design experience and my portfolio was all works of visual art like drawing and paintings. Choosing pieces to display what you will bring to the table will be helpful, to show you have a 'visual eye' as well design mindset

Q: Mostly out of curiosity but also because my background is in horticulture and landscape design so I'm wondering how much plant science factors in to the program and design work at Penn

A: Horticultural background is helpful, as it's not emphasized as a course at Penn. But we have an ecology course that works on plant communities in relationship to geology, which students take in their first year in the 3-year MLA program.

Q: Hi, I am wondering if the MLA students could share some background info into the types of projects that students will be designing. Is it mainly conceptual? Or does your work get implemented into projects going on in the area?

A: Studios are mainly conceptual, but there are opportunities to do design and build through programs like Penn Praxis

Q: What are the opportunities for study abroad like? Can you go anywhere you can find a good program/person/firm? If we have funding from Penn would it transfer to the study abroad program?

A: There are summer abroad programs through architecture in Paris, Greece, and Colombia (1 month), but no semester long study abroad programs. We do, however, have international projects, for which you travel abroad for a week

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Q: Why did you all choose Penn over other programs? I heard about Berkeley and Cornell a little but were there other programs you were seriously considering?

A: My top was Penn Berkeley in UVA, and to be completely honest, I was very close to choosing UVA since they are much more affordable and also gave me a separate scholarship. However, the professors that drew me there ended up going on sabbatical so that was a con. Also, Penn has such a big name in the field of Landscape and has professors who are not just teaching the dogma of LA but really at the forefront of pushing it forward. We are heavily focused on incorporating digital analysis and production into the work to a scale that almost no other programs are doing

Q: I really pay attention to interdisciplinary communication, could you introduce some examples about collaborating between PennDesign and other professions or school? May I choose some other school's subjects? Like business and engineering.

A: We do have a lot of opportunities! You can pursue a dual degree (MArch/MBA) with Wharton, we also have an Integrated Product Design degree which is a collaboration between PennDesign, Engineering, and Wharton. Besides that, we have numerous dual degrees within PennDesign and also with Social Work and Law (in the City Planning program). We do encourage our PennDesign students to take electives OUTSIDE of their departments. there are also many certificate programs that you can pursue alongside your master's degree, many of which are interdisciplinary. We have certificates in real estate design & development, integrated product design, urban redevelopment, urban design, etc., that are all interdisciplinary and have courses across Design's academic departments and Penn's other schools.

Q: Are there opportunities to be involved in research? Connected to this, do any students continue into related PhD programs. I recently emailed a University of Washington MLA graduate who is pursuing a PhD on green space and global health.

A: There are opportunities to do research with professors here upon personal request. More structurally, LA+ and The Scenario Journal are publishing journals produced in Penn's landscape department that have research opportunities. However, if you want to continue to do a PhD, you must apply again and through the architecture or city planning with a landscape architecture focus.

Q: I was an art student, and I did take classes like 2D and 3D Design. As well as Kiln Form glass and Perceptual Drawing. Things from these classes will be applicable for my portfolio for Urban Design?

A: Yes, certainly! Things that diversify you and show your own artistic/design self are the key to the portfolio

Q: I have a question about the focus of design project. I heard the projects are mostly parametric -centered, is that true?

A: You do have the benefit of working with parametric design but you definitely don't have to focus on that for the entire program. If it's not in your interest, you don't need to go there¹

Q: What are some of the research focus areas of MLA professors at Penn?

A: Some professors are focused on urban design, others more about patterns and formal design of landscape, others more about the history and ideals of 'beauty' as it pertains to a space, and others are more into the specific hydrodynamic qualities of water / coastal resiliency and climate change

Q: Will the MLA1 program continue enrolling students with architecture background? Just a bit worried this can be too competitive for LA students or does it mean a preference of architecture background in our portfolio?

A: Yes, we have many students with architecture backgrounds, but it does not mean that you're limited to it. We also students without any design background such as geography, art, urban studies, biology, and literature.

Q: I'm interested in Urban Design as a whole but I'm specifically interested in Sustainable Living and green spaces. Is Urban Design the program for me or would I be better suited for something else?

A: I'm kind of thinking that you might want to do the Smart Cities concentration. You could also pursue a certificate in Ecological Architecture in tandem with the MCP.

Q: Someone mentioned earlier that the MLA program at Penn works closely with the Architecture and UP programs but I'm hoping for a program that will be specifically focused on LA issues and design elements. Are a lot of the classes focused on larger, planning ideas or are smaller design concepts also emphasized through all three years?

A: Our studio projects may start at a large scale, thinking about urban systems, but then we zoom down into sites and do a specific landscape design. Some are urban and others are rural or communal. We don't often have MArch students in our landscape studios, until your last year of studios.

Q: Many schools offer advanced placement (2 years only) for students with backgrounds in architecture. Is that common at Penn, or do most students complete three years regardless of background?

A: We very rarely offer advanced standing, though it has been done before. Most of our students complete the three year degree.

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Q: Could you please give some examples of places students go on to work after graduating from the MLA program?

A: Most students go on to work in Landscape firms, be that more technical or firms that build projects, as well as firms that are more focused on competition work. But to be honest landscape is so broad that these skills are applicable in so many other professions so others go on to work for government organizations such as planning offices, or to interdisciplinary firms. And some even go on to more academic work in a PhD or other masters

Q: I'm coming from an undergraduate program in urban planning. If admitted, would I be able to waiver out of intro classes in place of taking more electives

A: Yes, you may request to waive out of courses, but it's not guaranteed. The professor of the course will likely review your course syllabi for comparable courses alongside your transcript to determine if you can waive the specific degree requirement.

Q: About portfolio, do you think I should make some works to close to the PennDesign's characteristic or the style? Or only express my real opinion, but maybe it is not really match the program?

A: You should put in your own work, that which you think shows your best talents. You should not tailor it to what you THINK the faculty will want to see.

Q: Is there much funding, fellowships, etc. for students at UPenn in the MLA program? Also, are there any external scholarships for prospective MLA students that you know of that we should be looking at applying for now?

A: If you apply for the MLA program, you will automatically be considered for merit-based scholarships. The scholarships can range significantly - I've seen them easily range from \$5,000 a year up to above \$25,000 per year. We also have a few full tuition scholarships for our Diversity Scholars in each program, and there is a statement submission on the online application for those specific scholarships. You can also be considered for some additional need-based scholarship support, but most of our scholarship funds are in the merit side. I update the scholarships page with new scholarships as we find them.

Q: Hi, I'm interested in applying to the City Planning graduate program for Fall 2017. Although I would be graduating in May 2017 with a Bachelor's Degree from Indiana University- Bloomington, I have previously studied in Singapore Polytechnic, a technical/vocational school in Singapore, for 3 years, and received a Professional Diploma (not an Associate's/Bachelor's degree) in Civil Engineering in 2013. Since this is technically neither a high school nor university level education, how should I list it in my application? Do I

have to send in my full transcripts for Singapore Polytechnic, since I'm already sending in my transcripts from Indiana University, and since the grading system & standards at Singapore Polytechnic are very different from university-level education (and therefore I do not think it contributes much meaning to my application)? Or can I just send in my diploma?

A: You would need to send official transcripts from Indian University and a course-by-course WES evaluation from Singapore. If you will be graduating from India University with a Bachelor's Degree, then you should list that on your application. A WES evaluation will translate your Singapore GPA and grades into US standards

Q: Also, is gaining admission and getting financial aid tough for international students?

A: It is the same for US and international as far as the admissions and financial aid process goes.

Q: Could you tell me about the situation which I choose two degrees to apply such as landscape architecture and architecture? Is it valuable? Should I change the content of personal statement and portfolio for each program? If it is ok, may I select some landscape's studio as an architecture's student? Thanks.

A: You can apply for both MArch and MLA. You would complete and submit the MArch application first. Then start the MLA application. You will need to upload another portfolio and have your recommenders submit their letters twice, but you would not need to pay an application fee for the second application. If you are in the MArch program, you cannot take MLA studios unless you are a dual MArch/MLA student.

Q: Do many students act as Teaching Assistants? Is it easy to get stipends by working for the faculty, or are those positions very limited?

A: There are definitely TA positions available in Architecture, though most students aren't considered for them until their second year of study, though at times students with undergraduate architecture degrees can TA for particular courses in the first year. You should feel free to contact the Architecture Department at arch@design.upenn.edu to inquire further.

Q: Does lack of experience in Arch disqualify someone for any of the Penn Design programs? Other than MARCH, obviously. Also from reading on Smart Cities description... Are there a lot of elements in the way of design or is this more of a facts and figures concentration?

A: For any of the PennDesign programs having or not having any sort of design background, including architecture does not affect your admissions decision unless you are applying to a 2-year program. That being said if you took classes and have work from a design class that could be interesting to include in your portfolio, but all of the classes at PennDesign do not assume you have any prior training.

Q: Will there be more than one open house?

A: We will only have one fall Open House

Q: Is there career service help for internships in MLA

A: There is a general career services center for the entire graduate school throughout the university, but we have specific career events such as a career fair for the school of Design. Specifically for MLA you can meet with Richard that chair of the department or other professors you may feel have connections to get feedback or information about internships

Q: as a transfer student, I have a transcript for 3 years in my previous university in China and another transcript for 2 years in U.S., what should I do when I turn in the transcript?

A: We will need an official transcript from your US institution and a WES course-by-course evaluation from your institute in China

Q: Are there internship and study abroad opportunities for the City Planning graduate program?

A: Yes, students find their internships with postings available through the university. But study abroad opportunities are limited to the summer abroad programs that last about a month. Those programs are in Greece, Colombia, and Paris.

Ok then, thank you so much for joining us. If you still have questions, please contact us at admissions@design.upenn.edu.

