



Welcome to our chat!

Q: Could you tell me what drew you to UPenn over other programs?

A: I chose Penn because I wanted a rigorous, studio-based program that would give me technical skills while still encouraging me to think critically about my practice. I also wanted to do a dual degree program with planning and preservation, which surprisingly isn't that common. I ended up only applying to Penn and Columbia for planning because of the dual degree component; Penn stood out because of its faculty engagement and student enthusiasm.

Q: Does the MCP have an internship component? Or help with job placement?

A: Yes, you are required to do an internship the summer between your first and second years of the MCP. The program also requires that the internship is paid, which is very appreciated. I know some students who do an internship during the school year, which can lead to a summer internship placement and/or can lead to a job after graduation. The program also focuses on providing networking opportunities for students through guest lectures, a mentorship program, and other events, which can help with internships and job placement as well. The university career services office is very active in the school of design, so they are a great resource for providing information on jobs and internships as well as helping with resumes and interview prep. I would also say that there is a mix in terms of summer internships, with some students staying in Philly, but not all.

Q: What is the major objective of MLA degree under the leading of Richard Weller?

A: Richard has reshaped the curriculum at Penn to be comprehensive in its structure. Now we have core courses that all students must take in sequence such as Media, Workshop, and Theory. The idea is that ideas and tools taught in those courses feed into studio courses to push the work further.

Q: Do a lot of graduates of the MCP program end up in the Philly area or do people go all over?

A: I think it's a mix. A lot do stay in Philly. Your best bet would be to check with Kate Daniel, the Coordinator for City Planning. She keeps tabs on her graduates. Her email address is katf@design.upenn.edu.

Q: Any trend or interesting topic which you guys are currently doing in the school? for example, compared to GSD which is now pushing the technology to play a role in designing landscape like Bradley Cantrell does

A: In our Media courses we push grasshopper as a strong component for suitability analysis and design. I have yet to experience simulation work. And our theory courses emphasize ecological urbanism. Studios think through designs as systems that allow for failure or success with different outcomes.

Q: Am I eligible to apply if I haven't studied statistics? Is it sufficient to attend the bootcamp before the semester begins?

A: You are definitely eligible to apply if you haven't studied statistics before, like me. However, if you have the opportunity, I would recommend trying to learn some basic statistics before you start the program. I did the

statistics course during boot camp and felt like it was more of a refresher course that was geared towards students who had already studied it.

Q: I've got a City Planning question. In what ways are the PennPlanning program integrated with the City of Philadelphia?

A: The planning program uses Philadelphia as both a living laboratory and as a case study for much of our coursework. It's been great for me to see what we learn in our courses reflected in the city and we get a number of opportunities to analyze data specifically about Philadelphia. There are also numerous practitioners from Philadelphia and the region who come to speak about their work.

Q: For the city planning degree, does one need to be proficient in Arc GIS?

A: You do not need to be proficient in ArcGIS when you start the program, but at least one GIS course is required in order to complete the degree. I am currently taking Introduction to GIS, which is really helpful and useful. I also did the GIS course during the summer bootcamp, which I would recommend taking if you have no experience in GIS.

Q: I have heard from a friend of mine who attended the seminar at Penn this year that Penn is now eagerly attempting to be the leader in the landscape architecture field. I would like to know what would you strategically do?

A: We are actually a leader in the landscape architecture field. Our faculty are world-renowned! James Corner, Laurie Olin, Chris Marcinkowski...and don't forget Ian McHarg! All are affiliated with Penn. Richard Weller has been working very hard to make Penn the resource for new and provocative research and methodology with publications like LA+ and Scenario Journal, and recently hosting the LAF Summit.

Q: Could you help me clarify the position that PennDesign MLA is gonna take in compare to GSD. What are major advantages study at Penn over at GSD?

A: First of all, we are in Philadelphia. The cost of living is much lower and we are close to NY, Boston, and Washington DC. Many of our graduates teach at the GSD so I would say we have a very strong influence on the profession.

Q: I had a question about the dual MLA/MFA degree. Would I submit two separate portfolios, or just one?

A: you will be filling out and submitting two separate applications. So you will need to upload two portfolios. They can be the same or different, as long as you follow each department's guidelines.

Q: Do you feel that between there's much collaboration between each department? Of do you feel each one exists independently of one another?

A: Yes, you can definitely collaborate with other departments. There are a number of students who are doing a dual degree with other programs (such as preservation or architecture) and you can also do a certificate program as well. Outside of those formal programs, you are encouraged to take courses in other programs in the School of Design as well as courses in other schools in the University (e.g. Wharton, Law, environmental studies).

Q: How long does it typically take a student to complete the March+MCP dual degree.

A: March+ MCP is a four year dual degree

Q: What is the approximate split between people with and without planning backgrounds in the MCP program?

A: There really is a mix. I wouldn't say more planners; probably less. Fewer?

Q: Are there any courses (bio, environmental sciences) that I should be taking now that would make my application more desirable to the MLA admissions? I am completing a BFA in Painting.

A: Yes one of the leading scholars in that field, Eugenie Birch, is a professor here at Penn. A number of professors also focus their research on planning in developing countries.

Q: Could you give me some examples on the kinds of research and methodologies in MLA

A: Why don't you check out our publications? <https://www.design.upenn.edu/landscape-architecture/work> I think they'll give you the best grasp of the type of research students are doing while at Penn.

Q: What prerequisites are needed for the MCP program?

A: there are no strict requirements for the MCP program besides what's listed on the school's website. Depending on what concentration you pursue and the work you'd like to do, it might be advantageous for you to have certain course or work experiences under your belt.

Q: What advice do you have for applicants w/o background in architecture or art?

A: We have a lot of students in the architecture program without a background in art/architecture. When building a portfolio it's important to showcase your perspective and talents in art and design. That can be through photography/hand crafts/building/drawing etc. Also consider the composition of your pages. It's about the content and the layout

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A: The portfolio is the most important part of your application, so I would concentrate on that. Otherwise, no particular course...

Q: I'm curious to hear from the students in here what their background was coming into the master's programs, whether it was a design background, or something completely different.

A: I'm in the planning and preservation programs. I have a BA in American Studies and French & Francophone Studies from Vassar College. I took off four years between undergraduate and graduate school to get some work experience and to save money. The first year I taught English at an elementary school in Strasbourg, France. After I returned to the States, I starting working at the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, a State agency that's responsible for both regulatory and planning work regarding the preservation of historic resources. It confirmed my interest in pursuing a career in preservation and convinced me that a degree in planning would make me a more effective preservation advocate. The architecture department has a mix of students with

architecture backgrounds and non-design backgrounds. There are summer sessions before your first year for students who do not have a background in architecture

Q: To the MCRP students, how much engagement do you all have with outside community organizations? Is there a strong commitment to work alongside their efforts in the community?

A: There is a strong desire among the students in the MCP program to do work with and for communities. This is reflected in our courses as well as our studio projects. There are also opportunities for students to pursue social impact projects with funding and faculty guidance from PennDesign.

Q: Are our GRE scores also due in January? And are we able to resend scores after that date?

A: Yes, we should receive the GRE scores in January, no you cannot resend scores after the due date.

Q: In terms of international student graduating from 5-years BLA, is TOEFL score of 102(29,27,22,24) qualified?
GRE V:153 Q:160 W:3

A: Yes those are fine.

Q: Does PennDesign accept graduate courses (planning) from other institutions?

A: No we don't accept transfer courses from other schools.

Q: Do students who have a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture have the option to opt out of the summer session, or not?

A: The summer studio is determined by the faculty, the digi-blast is required

Q: How many 2-years MLA applicants last year and how many of them got the seats

A: We had about 200 applicants for about 15 positions.

Q: For students pursuing a dual degree, do you find that most of them are able to work part-time as well?

A: Architecture school is often referred to as "a full time job" there isn't really and time for part time work outside of school. A lot of students do work-study or teaching assistantships in the school

Q: How common is it for Master's students to receive full funding for their program? And average how many students does the program admit each year?

A: We don't usually give full funding to masters students. We have about 65 to 70 students entering the MCP program each year

Q: How many students this year both 2 and 3 years degree?

A: We have about 110 students altogether.

Q: Is it possible to take courses in other faculty, such as real estate course at Wharton

A: Yes, you will have some elective course options that just need to be graduate level courses. Also, if you are interested in real estate, you may be interested in pursuing our Real Estate Design and Development Certificate program. It is available to our current PennDesign students and involves coursework at the Wharton school in real estate.

Q: Are the GRE's an aspect of the application that could make or break the admissions decision?

A: The portfolio is the most important part of your application. The GRE and GPA come in second.

Q: How about essay?

A: That comes in at number 3, with letters of recommendation the least important (unless they are BAD!).

Q: How many enter the March - AP program annually?

A: We haven't been giving advanced standing for the past few years.

Q: I am interested in applying to your PhD Program in City and Regional Planning, I know it is competitive. How open is the program to accepting students with bachelor's straight to the PhD? What are the statistics of students not having a master's entering the PhD?

A: It is incredibly unlikely to be admitted to the Ph.D. without a master's degree.

Thanks for joining us! If you have more questions, please contact us at admissions@design.upenn.edu