Welcome to our webchat! We have several students here with us from Historic Preservation, Environmental Building Design, Landscape Architecture...and more. Please start by typing your questions.

Q: Do you do any AP for students with Architecture background for the Masters in Architecture (Professional Degree)

A: Yes, we do offer up to one year of advanced standing in the MArch program. That being said, it is VERY difficult and only about 6 or 7 out of 70 students are eligible. It's determined during the application process based mainly on your portfolio and then on your undergrad curriculum.

Q: Is policy an integral part of the CED concentration in City Planning? I saw a few policy courses, and really want an interdisciplinary study.

A: Unfortunately, we don't have anyone here tonight from the MCP program. We will have students from the MCP program during the webchat sessions this Friday though! In the meantime, please feel free to contact the City Planning department directly at cityplan@design.upenn.edu

Q: For City Planning (concentration in Urban Design), is there any focus on these needs specifically in the developing world?

A: Yes, there are opportunities to pursue that. However, for specifics we would recommend coming back for one of the Friday sessions, or contacting the department, cityplan@design.upenn.edu

Q: How many students are admitted to the MArch program each year?

A: In the MArch Professional degree program, we have a class size of about 65.

Q: Hi, I was wondering about conditional acceptances. Specifically I noticed that architectural drafting and chemistry were required/recommended for the HP program. Are students able to be admitted, pending the fulfillment of these requirements?

A: Yes there are conditional acceptances made. Not knowing how to draft is not a huge deal. Chemistry should be taken before you arrive at Penn if interested in conservation science, but that is easily noted in an application.

Q: I have some questions about the documents I need to submit online, do I need to submit the copy of my passport before the application deadline(Jan.13)? or I need to submit it only if I was admitted to your program? I didn't see a requirement for passport in the application requirements, and I want to confirm with you about that. My passport is under handling, and I can get it after several months.

A: You do not need to submit a copy of your passport with your application for admission. If you are accepted, and are an international student, you will need to submit a copy of your passport as part of the I-20 and student visa process.

Q: Following the question of prerequisite classes, what sort of knowledge or professional experience is preferred for the MCP program?

A: The MCP program does have a suggested prerequisite course, descriptive and inferential statistics. They also have a summer bootcamp for new students. More information can be found on their website here: https://www.design.upenn.edu/city-regional-planning/graduate/master-city-planning
Q: I have another question about prerequisites: I will need to take Architectural history in the first semester of 2015. I am living in Colombia, I will need to take that course here. Will I need to get that transcript reported through WES? I am currently working with them, and they have not been able to provide course reports for the courses that I took that were not part of a degree program. Also, how many credits does this course need to be? 3 credits?

A: Yes, eventually you will need to submit your transcript through WES if you are admitted. We don't care so much about the number of credits; rather, the content of the course is most important. It must cover ancient Egypt through modern.

Q: I read on one small link on part of the website that MArch portfolios must be 10 spreads or less, could you confirm this restriction is true? Thank you.

A: That is correct. Portfolios must be 10 spreads or less.

Q: I am an Indian citizen, I however did my first degree from the United Kingdom...from University of Bath, Bsc hons Architecture... could you please throw some light into how WES plays a role?

A: If you attended a university outside of the USA, you will need to have the transcript evaluated by WES: www.wes.org

Q: Could you explain the process for being placed into the 2 year architecture program and how competitive it is to be placed in the 2 year with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture as opposed to the 3 year program?

A: It is very competitive. Besides the 65 MArch professional degree admits, we have about 6 to 8 entering the second year with advanced standing. This is based primarily on your portfolio and then also on the courses you have taken, if they are the equivalent of our first year courses. If you DON'T receive advanced standing, it is possible to waive out of some of the required technology courses and replace them with electives.

Q: Would IDP hours play a role in helping achieve advanced standing in the M. Arch program, or is it solely based on coursework?

A: Advanced standing is something the faculty decide during application review for admission. They usually base their decision on your previous coursework and portfolio.

Q: Do you know about what service I can specifically request from WES? They have told me several times that they can't make a score report for single courses (only for complete degrees). I am having this same problem submitting transcripts for other courses for my application now.

A: You must select WES Basic Course-by-Course evaluation. We require all courses to be evaluated from WES and if accepted, your final transcripts must be sent through WES as well. There are other services to use if it does not work successfully. Please send an email to admissions@design.upenn.edu for more information on the other services.

Q: If I already did a WES evalution, do I need to mail my copy of transcripts to PennDesign? I'm from China, thanks!

A: We will need your transcripts sent to us directly from WES. They usually send us an electronic evaluation of your transcript. However, you will be able to upload your copy of your transcript into your online application. We will view that until your version from WES arrives.

Q: One more question, how important is your GRE score? Is there a cutoff?

A: We don't have cut off scores, but we do have suggested minimums. They are 160V, 148Q, and 4.5AW. If you're applying to the M. Arch program, then your GRE scores will hold a little less weight. Your portfolio will be the most important part of your application for admission.
Q: I want to know if I did my UG Degree from the United Kingdom in English, do I still have to give TOEFL?

A: You can be waived from the TOEFL requirement if you have completed at least 4 years of schooling at an English speaking university. We would need your official transcript to confirm.

Q: Another question for the recommend letter, in what form should I ask my recommenders to submit them, should they sign it at the end of the letter, then scan it and upload to the application system, or they just need to submit it in a Word document?

A: They can do either. Since they have a unique log in and password, they can just upload the letter from their computer without having to sign and scan it.

Q: I'd like to know how PennDesign is involved in the community in Philadelphia. What kind of cooperation is there between architecture/ city planning students and the community?

A: PennDesign is heavily involved in the community with many projects, through classes, studios, and at an individual level. Many studios study an area of the city and interact with the community there. Currently there are several projects like the Gray Area Project underway as well as development about possible city trails with the help of Penn professionals. In addition to this, Penn Students get involved in the community in their spare time.

Q: I am currently applying to the MS in Historic Preservation program. Concerning the writing sample, the application states that "applicants must submit an essay or research report in English on the subject of their field of specialization". Just to clarify, am I submitting a writing sample from my undergraduate curriculum or a writing sample that reflects the field to which I am applying to (historic preservation)?

A: It does not mean that necessarily. It should be around 5 pages or so. It just has to reflect your research and writing skills.

Q: Thank you, so any subject should suffice?

A: As long as it is an academic research paper reflecting your ability to put together an argument, analyze sources, and put it in theory.

Q: Following up on the writing sample, is it expected to be a complete paper? Or could an excerpt from a longer paper be appropriate?

A: No, it does not have to be a whole paper though it could be. Usually examples range from 5-10 pages double spaced.

Q: How many students are usually accepted into the HP program, and are some concentrations more popular than others?

A: We usually have an incoming class of around 25 in the MHP program. The most popular concentration is conservation science, while the least is Site Management.

Q: I am originally in the Rochester New York region. I have been volunteering since 2009 with our Greater City of Rochester Rec Program serving as a mentor for children. I'm guessing that this would pose a problem? I also have internship experience, but I do not have work experience in the field of public service, just internship experience.

A: It is always a plus to have internship experience.

A: These might be good things to include in your resume or personal statement.
Q: What study abroad options are available?

A: There are pretty limited options for study abroad in City Planning. I do know that one class went to China last year, and frequently some of the interdisciplinary studios travel.

Q: I will be graduating with an MPA, which I hope helps. I'm not sure if the committee would be looking at just my undergrad?

A: We require official transcripts from all colleges and universities you have attended, so we will be looking at your graduate coursework as well.

Q: If you are accepted, can you defer admissions?

A: We only allow deferrals in exceptional situations. If you would be interested in doing so, please send an explanation to our admissions email admissions@design.upenn.edu.

Q: I'm not 100% sure if Penn would accept me? My GRE scores are not at excellent. Plus, my undergrad was in Communication Journalism, which is not in the related field.

A: We would still recommend applying. Many of our departments like to admit students with diverse backgrounds and varying interests that will complement our current student body. They will review all areas of your application, despite your GRE scores.

Q: Do you require a transcript from study abroad programs as well?

Q: If you have taking continuing education classes since undergraduate, should we include transcripts of these as well?

A: Yes, we require official transcripts from all universities you attended for credit.

Q: How about any audited courses and semesters abroad during undergrad?

A: You don’t need to submit transcripts for audited courses but do for semesters abroad. And yes, admission is need-blind for our master’s degree programs.

Q: Can someone please add a link to prerequisites for City Planning?

A: This is the link to application prerequisites to City Planning - http://www.design.upenn.edu/city-regional-planning/graduate/how-apply-pennplanning

Q: I have some questions about scholarship application, when and how should I apply for the scholarship, should I do it at the same time with my online application, and is there a deadline to apply?

A: You will automatically be considered for merit based scholarships during application review for admission. You will need to apply separately for need based financial aid between January 1st and February 15th. The International Financial Aid Application can be found on our website here: https://www.design.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/International%20Financial%20Aid%20Application%202015.pdf

Q: Does the MCP program require students to be proficient in certain softwares?

A: The MCP program recommends having a working knowledge of spreadsheet analysis and digital graphics programs. However, they do have a summer "bootcamp" where new students get a refresher in some of these skills: https://www.design.upenn.edu/city-regional-planning/graduate/master-city-planning
Q: Knowledge of spreadsheets, like stats? I have taken basic Q. Research and Advanced Statistical Methods pertaining to spreadsheets.

A: We recommend getting more detailed information from the City Planning department directly at cityplan@design.upenn.edu.

A: Don’t forget, if we can't answer your questions here, you're welcome to contact one of our students at our Meet a Student web page here: https://www.design.upenn.edu/admissions/meet-student

Q: Is the City & Regional Planning an MCRP?

A: No, it's an MCP.

Q: Is admission need-blind?

A: Yes, admission is need-blind.

Q: What is the number of students who are currently completing a dual-degree program?

A: There are about 45 students completing dual degree programs. This doesn't include a number of students who are pursuing master's degrees with certificates.

Q: Would you recommend us to do the portfolio in spread-pages, or in single page? I mean in which way would you examine it on the computer? Because I may have some large pictures that need to be displayed in spread page.

A: You are welcome to set up your portfolio however you wish. If you feel some of your images need to be displayed in a spread, go for it!

Q: Is it possible to begin a dual degree after you start a particular program?

A: Yes. You can apply to the second program during your first or second year.

Q: Do I need to provide a proof of financial support before application deadline?

A: You do not need to submit any financial documents as part of your application for admission. You will need to submit a financial document as part of the International Financial Aid Application. Also, just like the copy of your passport, you will need to submit your financial information if you are accepted to obtain your I-20 document.

Q: What recommendations do you have for creating the MCP portfolio for a student without a design background?

A: If you are applying to the Urban Design concentration, it is strongly recommended. It should include any design work that you've done, and also could include fine arts such as painting and sculpture.