Good morning! We have several City Planning students with us today, one Urban Spatial Analytics student, and one Architecture/Landscape Architecture student. When you’re ready, visitors, please send us your questions!

Q: I have a question about the statement of purpose. I am applying to the dual MARCH/MCP program. Should I submit the same Statement of Purpose?

A: You can do either. You will need to submit your Architecture application first and then start the City Planning application. This gives you the option to either upload the same statement or 2 separate ones.

Q: For MCP program, do most applicants have relative professional experiences?

A: Many (but not all) students in the program have worked in various fields for a couple years before entering the program. But these fields are wide and varied and are not necessarily related to city planning. The department does not expect you to have any work experience before starting.

A: I came to PennDesign straight from undergrad and had no experience more than a few internships in related fields. This was the case with several of my classmates.

Q: What is the duration of this dual course program?

A: Do you mean MArch/MCP? If so, it generally takes 4 years.

Q: You mean the combined dual degree of M.Arch & MCP is 4 years together?

A: Yes, that’s right. Generally, our dual degree programs add one year to the longer of the 2 programs. So the 3 year MArch program plus one year = 4 years.

Q: I am from India. I want to know if the MCP is going to be general or it is confined to the regions of USA. I am trying to understand how well my masters would help me in my national context.

A: The MCP program is "general" in the sense that you will learn theories and skills that apply to many urban contexts. We spend time studying cities in various countries, such as China, India, Singapore, and Brazil. That said, your first-year workshop will take place in the U.S. In the second year, you will have an opportunity to pursue an international project. This year, for example, there are studios in Beijing and Rio de Janeiro. Many students also pursue internships internationally.

Q: I am in Colombia and interested in working in Latin American cities. Is there any specific focus on the developing world?
A: We do have a professor, David Gouverneur, whose focus is mostly in Latin American cities, he had
studio in Columbia... check out his link: https://www.design.upenn.edu/landscape-architecture/people/david-gouverneur

Q: I’d like to know where MCP students typically start working after they graduate. Do most go on to
work in private firms, or the public sector?

A: I have found that most graduates seem to work in the public sector, but that is a hard question to ask
because every group is different. It mainly depends on where you are interested in working.

Q: The portfolio can be very general, right from the basic designs to the UG final year growth, right?

A: The portfolio for MCP is only if you want to pursue the Urban Design concentration so it can be
relatively general.

Q: From planning background, can you provide more information on the prerequisites needed please?

A: Are you applying to the MLA program? If so, there actually aren't any prerequisite courses you'll need
prior to entering the program. They do have a 2-4 week Summer Institute for all new students during
the month of August.

Q: What is the internship period normally for MCP?

A: The internship period is a minimum of 6 weeks during the summer between your first and second
year

Q: Is it easy to get around UPenn? Should I bring a car?

A: You can bring a car if you have one. I have one, but I do not need it. Public transportation is pretty
good. There are trolleys, subways, soon there will be a bike share. There is a train station in town and
several buses that run cheaply between Philadelphia and other cities like NYC, DC etc.

Q: Could you please tell me about scholarships and funding?

A: To start, we have 2 types of financial aid at PennDesign, merit and need based. Need based aid is
determined by the information you provide on the FAFSA (or the International Financial Aid
Application). Merit based aid is determined during application review for admission and does not
require a separate application. Check out more details here: http://www.design.upenn.edu/graduate-admissions/tuition-and-financial-aid

Q: What is the average GRE score for the year 2014 and is there any cut off for it?

Q: Also about TOEFL and CGPA

A: We don’t have a cut-off, but we like to see 160 or higher in verbal, 148 or higher in quantitative, and
4.5 or higher written for GRE. For CGPA, a 3.3 or higher is recommended and 100 or higher for TOEFL.
That being said, the portfolio is the most important part of your MLA application.
Q: Is the above mentioned, an eligible criteria for admissions? The others are rejected is it?

A: That is a pretty good guideline, but of course we look at other components of your application. And as I mentioned, those numbers aren't cut-offs, but guidelines. We certainly admit students with lower GPAs or GREs who have strong supporting material.

Q: Can students still apply for dual degrees in their first-year at PennDesign?

A: You can either apply for both initially or apply to one first, then apply to the second after you're here. Sometimes you might get into one degree and not the other. If this happens, you can join the first degree program and then apply to the second after you're here as well.

Q: What is the best way of calculating my GPA since I took my undergraduate in the UK?

A: We actually require that you have your official transcripts from any institution outside of the USA evaluated through WES (www.wes.org). You will need to request for the "course by course" evaluation. This evaluation provides us with a converted GPA.

Q: About recommendation letters, Is it advisable to take one from school principal?

A: It is advisable if the principal has taught you and knows you well.

Q: I heard from my seniors that high school LORs are considered immature.

A: They really should be from your college professors.

Q: Kindly tell me if I can take more than 3 LORs.

A: Yes, we take up to 4 LORs.

Q: Can we still submit the application if one of the Recommendation Letters is missing?

A: Yes, please go ahead and submit your application. The LORs will link to your application when the recommenders submit them. You will be able to track this, and also send reminders to those who haven't submitted yet.

Q: I don't think I have enough time to complete the WES evaluation before the application deadline. Can I just send my official transcripts?

A: Great question. We recommend uploading unofficial copies of your transcripts into your online application. That way we can reference those until your evaluation report from WES arrives. You do not need to send your official transcripts in place of your WES evaluation. It will not fulfill the transcript requirement.

Q: I would like to know how much weight is given to GRE scores?

A: Your portfolio weighs the heaviest. The GREs and GPAs are second heaviest.
Q: It seems that the GPA score that I got from the WES is lower than my expectation as in the UK system the final score each year weigh differently, whereas the WES seems divide them all evenly.

A: I would recommend contacting WES to determine how and why they evaluated your transcript that way. In the meantime, please upload a copy of your transcript into your online application. You are also welcome to include an additional PDF document with an explanation for why you feel your WES evaluation does not represent you properly. That way, this information will be in your application when the faculty begin to review.

Q: Are there any TA positions available for first year students in the M. Arch program?

A: There are only positions in Architecture in your 2nd or 3rd year and they are primarily work-study positions.

Q: Do I need separate LORs for dual-degree application?

A: You can have separate recommenders or not. Either way, your recommenders will need to submit their letters to each program you've applied to.

Q: This is a question for M.ARCH. How many students do you anticipate will apply this year? And how many will you accept?

A: We have about 500 apply for about 70 positions.

Q: What studio space is available for M.ARCH students?

A: The architecture studio spaces are excellent. Large windows, big wooden desks for everyone with personal pinup space as well as studio pinup space. There are roughly 5/6 sections in each larger studio space with about 12 students in each section. Within each section we have our own projectors and screens for digital reviews and pinups as well as TA tutorials. The past few years we have been doing a lot of 3D printing, so we have a number of 3D printers in each studio section as well. It is an open and collaborative environment.

Q: Can IELTS can substitute TOEFL? If yes, what should be the min score?

A: Yes, we accept the IELTS. We like to see 7.5 or higher. Again, this is a recommended number, not a cut-off.

Q: Is there a cut-off score for GRE?

A: We don't have a cut-off.

Q: How many spots are available for the Landscape Architecture program?

A: We have an incoming class of about 25 every year.

Q: And how many applicants in average roughly do you have every year?
A: We had about 450 applicants for the first and second professional degrees, and we have an entering class of about 50 - 25 in each program.

Q: I am a current UK M Arch student, interested in MCP, and the SMART Cities/Sustainable Transportation and Infrastructure specialisms. What kind of thesis are students encouraged to produce? How much overlap is there with Landscape Architecture?

A: MCP students are not required to produce a thesis. In the second year of the program, students complete a studio, and there is an option to pursue an independent project as a studio.

A: We do have a lot of studios in Landscape Department that is about urban design, a lot of topics related to infrastructure, post industry site, land value, etc.

A: In addition, as an MCP student, you can also take electives in landscape architecture. There is also a Landscape Studies certificate that you can apply for, I am doing the certificate along with MCP and it requires that you take 5 credit units of a Landscape Architecture class.

Q: My cgpa is 7.7 out of 10. The wes.org says my grade is 4 on 4. How is it possible?

A: They probably take into consideration how difficult your courses are and how equivalent they are to US courses.

Q: I am amazed. Is there any other reliable convertor?

A: There are other credential servicers including IES.

Q: About the 3D printers, can you tell me more about the fabrication and model making techniques used at Penn?

A: We have a variety of 3D printers at the School. In our Fabrication Lab, we have powder printers that print ceramic-like models of a very high quality as well as PLA printers that use PLA plastic to print models with a dissolvable support material. In our studios we mainly use PLA printers that print both supports and model with the same material, although some studios have both machines. We use makerware for the Makerbots, otherwise we follow our general guidelines for the Fabrication Lab printers.

Q: Please could you tell me a little about how much funding assistance you both managed to get? Are there any scholarships that I might consider?

A: Your financial aid package is automatically determined based on your application materials. There is no separate application for scholarships. Except for need-based aid for which you will need to submit either a FAFSA or Int’l Financial aid application.

A: You can go to [https://www.design.upenn.edu/graduate-admissions/outside-scholarships](https://www.design.upenn.edu/graduate-admissions/outside-scholarships) to apply for other outside scholarships.
Q: Is there a wood shop?

A: Yes, we have a woodshop which we refer to as the Fabrication Lab. It houses machines for metalsmithing, wood working, 3D milling, laser cutting and 3D printing.

Q: What firms/where do M. ARCH students go to work when they graduate?

A: Architecture students work all over the world after they graduate. I think you can get a list from the Architecture Office of where students work after graduation. They can be contacted at arch@design.upenn.edu

Q: What are the frequencies of part time jobs?

A: Any students take part-time jobs although it is difficult in some programs.

Q: What is the Certificate Program in the 2nd step (program information) in the online application? Could you please provide me some details about that?

A: We have a number of certificates that you can pursue in addition to your master’s degree. They range from Historic Preservation to Ecological Architecture. For a list, go to http://www.design.upenn.edu/interdisciplinary-programs/certificates-and-dual-degree-programs.

A: Applicants can usually complete the certificate while pursuing the master’s degree in the same amount of time that it takes for just the masters. It does limit your elective selection, however.

Q: So the certificate programs are some additional courses which students can take from other department, is that correct?

A: Yes, that’s correct.

Q: I know that the portfolio is most important, but what is about the minimum GRE score you will accept from applicants. Sorry if this has already been covered.

A: We only have suggested minimum scores, they are 160V, 148Q, and 4.5AW. Please keep in mind that these are not cut-off scores. All parts of your application will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee no matter what your test scores are.

Q: How do you guys like Philly?

A: Philly has pleasantly surprised me by how interesting it is and how much is going on here. There are so many events every day and since I love sports, going to Flyers games, Phillies games, and running down the Schuylkill river trail is great.

A: I am from Toronto and I moved here 2 years ago. I love the city; it is friendly, not too big but still has all the great parts of a large city. You can get around easily and the food is great but well-priced.
A: I have found Philly to be a very balanced city, big enough to have plenty of cultural and social amenities, but not too large to be suffocating. There are really neighborhoods that can meet any lifestyle preferences that you have.

A: There are things that I like about Philadelphia and things that I don't. I enjoy where I live in West Philadelphia and the friends that I have from and outside of school. I think of Philadelphia as a human scale New York.

A: In my neighborhood there are a lot of great restaurants which is my favorite part. Also it's easy getting back and forth from West Philly to center city which has a lot of great places to eat as well.

A: This is my first time living outside of Ohio and Philadelphia has been so inviting. I love the city, the campus, the food, the culture!

Q: Do you guys find opportunity to practice architecture in the city? Little projects, etc.?

A: The student from the Architecture program just left for class! I recommend contacting him with any other questions you might have. He can be reached on our "meet are students" webpage: https://www.design.upenn.edu/admissions/meet-student.