



Good morning! Welcome to our webchat! Please type your questions on the bottom of the screen. Do you have any questions about our programs? We have students here from City Planning, Historic Preservation, Landscape Architecture, and Environmental Building Design.

Q: Prospective MCP student here. Is there an MCP student in attendance that concentrates in CED? Specifically, is the program policy focused? Within the MCP program, is there room for interdisciplinary flexibility?

A: I am an MCP student concentrating in urban design. However, I do know a bit about the CED concentration and it is policy focused. There is also a ton of room for interdisciplinary flexibility, you will have studio classes and other core classes with MCP students of all concentrations and you will have the chance to take other concentrations core classes as well if you like.

A: I'm in Historic Preservation, there are a number of students who either take dual degrees in MCP/MSHP or opt for a certificate as well. In addition, there are some extra-curricular opportunities to become involved in Economic/Community Development, many student driven, like PennPraxis (<http://www.design.upenn.edu/pennpraxis/about>)

Q: I will be applying to the MCP program for Fall 2016. I was wondering about the average financial aid package of the program. I was also wondering if financial need affects the possibility of being admitted to the program.

A: We have various types of scholarships. The average award is about \$10,000. Our admissions process for the masters programs is need-blind; that is, we don't look at whether you are applying for financial aid when we're reviewing your application.

Q: Could any current MCP student comment on the studio requirement? What are some examples of studios on offer? What types of specific projects have students undertaken?

A: for first year MCP students, there is a requirement to take "workshop" which is a studio of all concentrations. This past year our study areas were different neighborhoods in Queens, NY. Then your second year, non-urban designers have to take one studio and urban designers must take two studios. You have options of different studios that may change topic each year, right now we have waterfront studios in Cartagena, Mumbai, and Oakland and LA.

Q: Hi, I was wondering If would be possible to list the research topic I am proposing in my statement for MCP in PennPraxis.

A: You are definitely welcome to list any research topics that you are interested in, and I imagine that you might want tie it in with your resume or previous course lists.

A: PennPraxis is mostly about student driven projects, so if you are accepted and have a project that you wish to pursue, you can start the conversation with faculty/students as early as you choose, or we could put you in touch with groups that are currently organizing projects

Q: For M.Arch how do you guys address the difference between non-architecture and architecture background students?

A: We sort portfolios for the admissions review by your background. So applicants with a non-architecture background will be looked at together, and those with an architecture background together.

Q: Weston, I am interested in focusing my studies in cities in the global south, specifically in South America, is there a possibility of joining a professor in a project during the first year in the program? I saw that there is a possibility of working on a specific project during CPLN 700.

A: I am in the Cartagena, Colombia studio right now, and there will be other opportunities to engage with Latin American studies in the future. Also David Gouverneur studies Latin America and teaches a theory course largely woven with Latin American studies. If you have any questions on the Colombia studio I'm happy to share

Q: First, I have a question about the transcript. Since I have joined the exchange program and I got the sealed transcript already. So can I mail this transcript to Penn directly? Or it needs to be sent by that school only? And I would like to apply the urban design program this year, so I am eager to know what is the most important quality for a successful applicant.

A: For exchange program transcripts, we will accept a sealed, official copy of your transcript, and it can be sent from you as long as you do not open the envelope. This is assuming that your exchange program was one year or less.

A: We look at your GRE scores, grade point average, personal statement, and letters of recommendation. For the statement, it is important that you articulate your interest in City Planning and perhaps the direction you wish to pursue.

Q: What does the Cartagena, Colombia Studio entail?

A: All studios have travel week, so Oct 3-Oct 11 we travelled to Cartagena and did workshops, did site seeing and were able to engage with political parties. We have since then been expanding on research and proposing a design for a resilient waterfront in Cartagena. The final product will be a presentation and a book. We have students of all concentrations in the studio so it will result in a very comprehensive plan for Cartagena. We will also be launching a website of our work at the end of semester; you are welcome to check it out!

Q: I saw the information you posted about Penn Praxis. Should I express my interest to join Penn Praxis in my application or contact Dir. Randall Mason independently?

A: Thanks for asking, I'd suggest highlighting your interest in PennPraxis. If you can come to Open House I'd suggest chatting with him then, Randy is super friendly, helpful, very engaged, and passionate about this type of engagement

Q: How crucial is planning-related professional experience for admissions and success in the MCP program?

A: Having planning experience can aid in making you a successful candidate, but it is not mandatory, in fact I believe most who apply do not have previous planning experience.

Q: For the M.Arch program, what are the main themes in the program?

A: There's no specific theme in the program. There are various studios led by different professors that are focusing on different issues. For the MArch I (3 years program), students would start from designing a pavilion in the first semester, and gradually the difficulties of the studios will be increased. In last year, the studios will explore urban issues and have some famous architects to be the professor. And the last year's studio will be mixed with MSD (formally MArch PPD) program students who have five years architecture bachelor's degree.

Q: Do you know any professors that are working on establishing partnerships between community stakeholders?

A: there are a couple professors in practice that are working on projects that work with community stakeholders, if there is a topic you are specifically interested in you can always reach out to the faculty and ask if there is an opportunity to collaborate with their work. There are many students in my class that are research assistants with faculty here.

Q: I have a question related to the letters of recommendation for the MCP Fall 2016 application. For applicants who have been out of school working in non-planning related fields, is it better to have your letters of recommendation written by your professors only, or is there some benefit to having a non-planning professional write one of your letters of recommendation?

A: For applicants that have been out of school for a while, it is fine for your recommendations to be from people other than your former professors, though the faculty admissions committee does like to see at least one academic recommendation. Your professional references should be fine, though they should speak to elements of your work ethic or projects that would best relate to your success in pursuing a graduate city planning program.

Q: When will the next open house be?

A: Our fall Open House just passed but there will be one for admitted students in the beginning of April.

Thanks for joining us! If you have a question that wasn't answered, send it to us at [admission@design.upenn.edu](mailto:admission@design.upenn.edu). We'll be chatting again on Wednesday at 6 pm EST.