



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

Q: Hi, this question is for students in the MCP program. Can you speak a little about the diversity of the program? How many students are international? What is the ratio amongst students who had applied straight out of undergraduate and those who have taken time off? What is the ratio between men to women?

A: There is a good mix of those coming straight from undergrad and those that have taken time off. I would say about 15 students in my class came straight from undergrad. There are about 50% international and just over 50% women.

Q: Hi, Along those same lines, are there any graduate student groups that are focused on social justice and/or supporting students of color in the planning profession?

A: We have Diverse Design and Penn Praxis.

A: PennPraxis is the professional arm of the school that allows students to complete projects in the community and DiverseDesign reaches out to all students with an emphasis on students of color and who are female

Q: Hi I'm applying to the March program. Apologies for the multi-part question. I do not have a background in architecture--I have 5 years' experience building furniture and cabinetry, and am currently helping with the gutting/remodeling of a house, both of which I think are relevant for my statement and portfolio. What I'm hoping for are some suggestions for how to approach incorporating those experiences into my application. As far as the portfolio goes, I have a number of furniture pieces I have designed and built on my own, and many more that I have built or helped to build but not designed. And I only have poor quality images of most and no access to most, as they are almost all with clients. So really just hoping for advice on dealing with those issues

A: it sounds like your furniture/cabinetry would be great to put in your portfolio. But it is also very important to showcase your work in the best way possible. The portfolio is the most important part of your application. Is there a way to contact your clients and get better images?

Q: I'm just not sure I could get quality images from clients, at least for the pieces I designed and built. I can for pieces I built but did not design, but I would assume such pieces wouldn't be very useful in my portfolio?

A: I think as long as you specifically say that you didn't design the pieces, just built them that would be fine. I wonder though if you would have (or could make) sketches of the furniture that you did design?

Q: I wanted to know how the work atmosphere at Penn Design is. How are all the students put in a similar studio, although each one of them will have their own architectural background?

A: The studios are divided into 11/13 students per studio professor. In the first year the projects are more broad and focus on creating space whereas in the second and third year you enter a lottery to choose a professor you'll work well with, each typically focusing on different types of design/programs

A: There is also a good mix of architecture and non-architecture backgrounds which start to even out in the second year when everyone is exposed to all the programs and design offered here

Q: This question is for MCP students, what do you find is the most challenging aspect of the program? And how do you surpass or struggle with those challenges?

A: Managing the readings with the assignments/site visits is pretty challenging. Penn offers some really good resources to help with managing your time like the learning resources center and the counseling services.

Q: I hope to pursue the Urban Design concentration in the MCP program but I also have interests in the Community and Economic Development. How much flexibility is there to pursue both or have a hybrid concentration?

A: You can technically only concentrate in one, but I am personally an urban design concentration and you can cross between concentrations and other programs like landscape architecture and architecture. There is also an urban design certificate if you would want to concentrate in CED

Q: Is there no CED certificate?

A: No CED certificate.

Q: How is the GRE grade taken into consideration and does it have a major role in the admission of the students. and how many international students are usually accepted at PennDesign

A: The portfolio is the most important part of your application. The GRE and GPA scores are second most important. Also we don't have a quota for international students. The MSD has a fairly high percentage of international students while the first professional degree not so many.

Q: Should I be submitting projects I've done as part of a team (of three) or should I only be handing in projects I've done on my own? I'm applying for city and regional planning.

A: You do not have to submit a portfolio for the city planning degree. If you are applying for the urban design concentration under city planning, a portfolio is recommended but not required.

Q: Are there any courses that you all look for on the undergraduate transcript or is the attention just on GPA?

A: We primarily look at the GPA, although if there are certain courses related to City Planning or your concentration, they might be looked at more closely.

Q: What opportunities are there for teaching assistantships and work-study, and how accessible are they? In other words, how can I best make PennDesign affordable?

A: These teaching assistantships are usually according to your financial aid package, but exceptions can be made if an instructor requests you. I would really focus on your financial aid section of the application and look for outside scholarships; the planning department is wonderful on keeping you updated on new scholarships during your time here.

Q: In regards to the letters of recommendation, do the recommenders have to submit it before the deadline or is there more room for them to submit it after the application has been submitted?

A: The letters of recommendation need to be submitted by the application deadline to guarantee that the faculty admissions committee will consider them during the application review process. If a letter comes in late, we will do our best to attach it to your application for review, but we cannot guarantee that the letter will be reviewed as part of your application if it is submitted after the deadline.

Q: I could make up some nice sketches for pieces I've designed if you think that sort of thing would be helpful to include. And I could certainly include pieces I've only built, not designed, but would only want to do so if they were going to add value to the portfolio in the eyes of Admissions folks

A: for the portfolio it's important to keep in mind that they'll be looking at the quality of the work as well as the composition. Sketches of pieces you've built could help give the admissions committee a sense of your
1. Your drawing skillset
2. Your compositional awareness and
3. allows you to add your own personality into the page

A: Also, it's important to showcase all of your talents from building to drawing, maybe photography etc.

Q: I have a question about certificate programs. In particular, in conjunction with the MCP program. Are these certificates taken in addition to a student's concentration within the program?

A: Yes, the concentration is required but the certificates are optional

Q: For the application, is it best to submit our official transcripts through Parchment, or is there another way that would be best for you all to receive it? (I didn't see an option on the online application to submit transcripts)

A: You can upload copies of your transcripts directly into the online application but you must also follow up with official transcripts. These should be sent to use directly from your school (assuming you attended university in the US?).

Q: When would you need the official transcripts sent to you, after the acceptance has been granted?

A: They should submit letters of recommendation by the deadline if at all possible. If they're a bit late, that's ok but depending on when the reviews start, they may not be viewed.

Q: What are some suggestions in what the review board would want to see in the portfolio of a MCP student who wants to do an Urban Design concentration? Are sketches important? Most of what I've done is computer based.

A: Just highlight your strengths, if you only have computer work; just showcase your best work. Sketches are nice if you have them, but it's not necessary to make them just for your portfolio.

Q: What about official transcripts from schools outside the states? Is the university original stamp and signature enough?

A: You will need a WES evaluation. The only exception is if you have studied abroad as part of an exchange program.

Q: The online application does not mention any grades for the GRE, is there a cutoff grade or an average for it?

A: The official transcripts should be received by us by the application deadline.

A: For the GRE, we don't have any cut-off scores, but we do have suggested minimum scores based on our previous successful applicants' scores. The suggested minimums for the GRE are as follows: 160 Verbal, 148 Quantitative, and 4.5 for Analytical Writing

Q: To be perfectly honest my drawing skillset is nowhere near that of my building/furniture making set. So I guess what I'm hoping is to figure out a way to emphasize those skills without entirely high quality/nicely composed photographs... Possibly not issues I can get an easy answer for.

A: If the quality of the photos for your pieces is low I would highly recommend trying to find a way to get better photos, or if you're interested in photography in general maybe showcase that as well. Also, having the built work supported by your SOP and any text you include in your portfolio could help explain the type of work you were doing and hint at the fact that you don't have access to it anymore. Definitely consider the way you compose the pictures on the page and consider including other work outside of built pieces

Q: In regards to uploading our transcripts online, is it alright to upload either official or unofficial copies of our transcripts? Can these be scanned copies if we are unable to access transcripts?

A: You can definitely upload unofficial transcripts. But you must still send us official transcripts.

Q: Since the application deadline is in early Jan, is it okay if our official transcripts don't have this most recent semester that ends in December?

A: That's a good question. How late would the transcript arrive to have your fall 2015 semester? Because if it's by mid-January, that should be fine. Much later than say January 20, I would recommend that you send

them earlier without fall grades.

Q: Besides the concentration of Urban Design in MCRP, is there any other Urban Design program could be selected?

A: Yes if you are doing the MLA program you can do the additional urban design certificate

Q: Are TAships only offered through financial aid then? It isn't application based/ something you apply for once you're admitted? Also what type of package does it offer? Is it a full stipend or are TA's paid hourly?

A: There is a priority given to financial aid candidates, but there are exceptions. It is a stipend granted throughout the semester

Q: For the prerequisites for March I, I know we need to finish one course of physics and one for calculus. Is it okay that I have AP credits for those two acknowledged by my undergrad transcript?

A: yes if your AP credits show up on your undergrad transcript that should be fine.

Q: I can't give a guarantee of when my Fall 2015 grades would be submitted by so should I just send them now without the Fall2015 grades for good measure and then submit again when they come out?

A: Yes you can do that.

Q: Are we able to inquire whether our official GRE scores and transcripts have been received by PennDesign prior to the application deadline?

A: As soon as you submit your application you will be able to check to see if your GRE scores and transcripts are in. Before that, it's hard for us to check...

Q: Can you please explain what are the financial aid offers are for international PhD candidates?

A: We offer full tuition, health insurance, and a stipend to our PhD students for 3 to 4 years.

Q: Is the curriculum for the CED concentration more heavily quantitative or qualitative? Also are there any classes on community organizing?

A: It is not so quantitative, there is a lot of effort spend on developing policy and understanding community-based organizations

Q: Sorry for the wrong username before, actually I want to apply the Urban Design concentration in MCRP program. Is it based on more theory or design? And is there any other UD program to be selected when I am applying?

A: There is only one urban design program, like said before you can get an urban design certificate but they are the same courses. It is heavily design based, but you have a comprehensive theory overview with the

landscape architecture students

Q: Is the March 1 program for all students without architecture background? As a student majoring in urban planning, I am wondering whether I should apply for March 1 or March 2?

A: The MArch I is for students without a professional degree in architecture. If you hold a BArch (five year degree), you would apply to the MSD in Advanced Architectural Design.

Q: Do you have any examples of types of PhDs it will be possible to pursue upon completion of the MLA program?

A: I can't say for other programs at other schools after the Penn MLA, but we have students who have applied for Architecture PhD programs here at Penn after completing the MLA program

A: in our PhD Architecture program, you can pursue a concentration in Landscape Architecture. I'm not sure if this is so at other schools.

A: If you want to see more about what our students do post-graduation (careers, further graduate study, etc), you should check out Penn's Career Services' Career Plans Survey: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/reports.php#grad> . They have the last 7 years' survey results up for you to look at; though keep in mind that this is an optional survey, so the data only represents those that chose to respond.

Q: How long is the turnaround for the time I take the GRE to when you all receive it? If I take the GRE in the beginning of January, would that be enough time for you all to receive it by the Jan 12 deadline?

A: I'm not sure; you should probably contact ETS directly. Since it's a busy time for them, I would think 7 to 10 days but I could be wrong.

A: If you indicate our school as a recipient, then it should take exactly 15 days to get to us from ETS.

Q: What do you see as the main thing that separates PennDesign's planning program from other programs, and for MCP students what ultimately made you choose Penn?

A: I would definitely have to say what makes PennDesign's planning program stick out is that it is incredibly cross-disciplinary. I have a landscape architecture background and PennDesign has allowed me to explore MCP while also taking classes in landscape architecture and even outside of PennDesign, like in the Wharton business school and others. If you have any other interests, PennDesign allows you to expand your education in nearly any way.

Q: Another thing I want to know is that how many students apply for March 1 every year and how many of them can get admissions.

A: We have about 500 applications for 70 slots.

Q: Have you taken any courses in urban sociology/history of urbanism? Are these types of courses available?

A: Yes there is a fantastic course that is cross listed with landscape architecture called Contemporary Urbanism. There is also a class for the urban design concentration called Fundamentals to Urban Design which will also give you a great breath of history

Q: What is the exact process for obtaining an application fee waiver, and who should I send that info to?

A: You should send your request to admissions@design.upenn.edu along with financial documentation supporting your case.

Q: I'm wondering if the concentration of a program should be selected when I am applying or after attending school.

A: you will have to pick a concentration when you are applying but they are flexible and can be changed once you explore a couple of options.

Q: How many applicants/slots do you currently have for the PhD Architecture program?

A: We have about 60 applications for about 3 slots.

Q: How many applicants versus admitted students for MRCP?

A: We had about 300 applications for about 60 slots.

Q: What about the number of applicants for the PhD in urban and regional planning?

A: We also had about 60 applications for 3 slots.

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

