



Q: Would you advise MSD-AAD students to pursue certificate programs while studying?

A: YES, it's absolutely fine to pursue a certificate while enrolled in the MSD.

Q: I have a question regarding the M.ARCH program: The impression I got from recent portfolios are that there is a strong emphasis in integrating architecture into urban networks such as New York City. Would you say that urbanism is a big part of the course here?

A: The design in your studio courses becomes more strongly integrated into urban networks in your third (or final) year of studio. A lot of the studio professors are from New York and often choose sites for the studios in Manhattan or the surrounding area, but are not only in New York. Also, the third year studio that is more focused on the urban fabric has studio project locations all around the world.

Q: I am curious about the general Professor to student ratio in the Transportation concentration of the MCP program. Megan and Erick are the two professors that focus on concentration, correct?

A: Megan and Erick are the focus professors, but the class sizes are roughly 10-12 people per class, and there are many visiting professors.

Q: I am interested in the Master of City Planning and Master of Urban Spatial Analytics dual degree program. How do MCP students apply for the Master of urban spatial analytics program? Is it typical for students to apply after they begin the MCP program?

A: You apply to MUSA just as you would with the other concentrations, and you can apply once you are already in the program.

Q: I was looking into real estate design and development but the description states students may have to take an additional semester to finish the certificate program.

A: Students may need to take an additional semester to finish the certificate if their degree program is shorter than three years.

Q: How many studios do students in the MCP program typically undertake?

A: For Urban Design concentrations, you must complete 2 studios, other concentrations only need 1 studio. There is a separate course called Workshop that you take your first year that is to prep you for studios.

Q: I have an M.Arch question: How strong of an emphasis (if any) is put on sustainable design and technology?

A: There are many different ways to emphasize sustainable design and technology. It's really up to you how much you want to focus on it. There are certificates you can go for and a lot of electives offered that revolve around those topics. Also, in your second and third year you have more control over which studio you are in and have the option to take one that is more focused on sustainability/technology.

Q: Are there any faculty in the MCP program whose research interests or courses dive into the link between planning and public health?

A: There are faculty, namely Professor Vitiello and Hillier.

Q: I'm really interested in nature-integrated designs and natural environment (not necessarily sustainable design) such as that found in the works of Neri Oxman and Zaha Hadid. With many projects situated in the urban area do you think that I will be able to pursue my interest?

A: The studio's offered range a lot per professor, I've found most students are able to take studios with professors that align with their design thinking.

Q: What is the total tuition rate for the MSD-AAD program since the website only gives information for one academic year? And finally is there potential for international students in U.S. to find jobs in architecture firms after graduation?

A: The total tuition for three semesters is 1 1/2 times the academic year rate. For finding the jobs upon graduating, there is a great amount of chance even for international students because students from MSD program graduate in the different seasons, so that it is likely to be less competitive to find jobs. Also, every year, career fairs are available at school.

Q: How difficult is it to get a work-study, TA, or other department job in your first year? Is this even possible, and if so what is the process for applying to these positions?

A: There are work-study positions your first year and I would say they are pretty manageable. You can also be a TA, but that is mainly dependent on your financial aid position. Usually for TA-ship the department will reach out to you, and the work-study has email notifications on how to apply.

Q: How many students do you expect to be in MARCH class of 2016?

A: We are planning on having an entering class of about 70.

Q: What is the acceptance rate of March program 2016?

A: We had about 500 applications for 70 slots. Of course, we admit more than that, but that should give you an idea of how difficult the selection process is.

Q: What is the breakdown of MCP current students by concentration? And depending on the popularity of concentrations, are concentration classes more difficult to enroll in?

A: I don't have the exact numbers in the breakdown, but there is roughly 15-25 students per concentration. The concentration classes are not difficult to get in, no worries there.

Q: Could you estimate what amount of loan in total is today's a reasonable threshold for international M.Arch students taking private loans given that the average salary after this course is app. \$52,000? Otherwise how much is too much?

A: That's a difficult question because past your tuition and fees, your living expenses can vary depending on your personal living budget and rent, etc. However, a good guideline is to use the financial figure provided on the ISSS website for your program because that is what the government will expect to see proof of when they approve your I-20.

Q: Regarding advanced standing, my understanding was that if I had an undergraduate architecture background (4-year BA in Architecture) then I would be eligible to skip the first year of the graduate program. I received an email the other day saying that nobody in this year's class received advanced placement. Is that common and is there any way that I can still petition for it? Frankly, I don't have the money for three more years of college.

A: We rarely give advanced standing. About 2/3 of the entering class have either BAs or BSs in architecture.

Q: I'd like to know that is MSD-PPD course concentrating mainly on form-making process? Through the research on the internet, especially looking at "Pressing Matters" (Annual book from PennDesign), I realized the PPD course is SEEMINGLY focusing on curvy and one-of-a-kind form-making without serious consideration of structural possibility for realization of buildings. Due to the examination of material and structure in architecture is also important factor for me, I'd like to know that the basic elements of realized architecture how much matters in PPD curriculum.

A: The first studio for MSD-PPD program is to get used to the form making. But, the studio requires material and structural consideration along the formative exploration. After the first semester, MSD-PPD program joins in the last year of MARCH program, so that the structural/material discourse depends on the studio.

Q: I was wondering if the calculus prerequisite module for the March program had to be taken in Penn before August. If so, how would this be organized by the university?

A: You must be able to show that you have successfully completed your calculus prerequisite before you matriculate in August. PennDesign does not organize this. Many of our students who need to complete calculus before they begin at PennDesign opt to take an online course.

Q: I am in MSD-AAD program, can I apply for UD certificate in the coming fall semester? Or do I have to wait until the 2017 round application?

A: You can apply for the UDES certificate when you arrive in the fall.

Q: In Penn studio environment, how much time do you have for extra-curricular activities? Given the workload, would you say most student lives' are balanced? Though I would not be surprised if everyone live in the studio 24/7. The reason I ask is I like traveling, fitness, etc.

A: The workload is intense, as to be expected in architecture school. I know that a lot of students have created teams through the universities intramural leagues and get memberships at the gym. The amount of time you might have to travel/for fitness is really up to each person's time management but it is definitely possible.

Q: Could you discuss the demands of the program? Do MSHP students typically hold part-time jobs or internships during the semester?

A: It's a demanding program but you could still work. There are always opportunities to be research assistant for a professor at PennDesign or as a Teaching Assistant for a class within the program, these are paid positions. I personally have been doing side jobs as well, but I just made sure to frontload my money work to the beginning of the semester so that I have time when it comes down to finals and mid-reviews.

Q: In your opinion, what is the toughest part of the CP curriculum?

A: Well courses can obviously get tough, but that is relative. So I would say for me the hardest part has been juggling a part-time job while in classes, but once I worked things out with professors and my boss things moved smoothly.

Q: I've recently decided to take a year or two off before attending. How does deferred admission work exactly?

A: Most of the departments including City Planning do not allow deferrals. You would be required to reapply.

Q: I've learnt that in this year the MSD-AAD students will join the M.Arch students for ARCH702/701 advanced studio course for fall and spring semester, so I am just wondering how many studios are in total? Are all the advanced design studios digital oriented? Or the focus of different studios vary widely?

A: The first studio is only for MSD-AAD, while the following two semesters are ARCH702/701. The first studio is digital oriented and requires large amount of productions including physical models. The followings semesters are dependent on the professors.

Q: Do most of the students choose to live in student accommodation or they tend to rent with a local landlord?

A: Most students live off campus since it's less expensive. But it IS convenient to live on campus!

Q: Do you need a basic WES evaluation or a course-by-course WES evaluation? Also please let me know what is the last date for this evaluation? In my case the confirmation is conditional upon the WES Evaluation.

A: You need a course-by-course evaluation. If your admissions is conditional upon us receiving your WES then we must receive it before you matriculate in August.

Q: What is the size of the MCP class overall, and how large are the classes typically?

A: The size is typically 60 per year. The class sizes range, seminars are usually 5-10 people and other classes can range from 10-30.

Q: Do MCP/PennDesign graduate students typically find housing together? Are there formal opportunities before/after enrollment to find potential roommates, or is it up to the students/more informal?

A: I personally live with 2 other MCP students, we found each other on the Penn roommate finder and they happened to be MCP students. However, I would say in my group only about 1/3 of us live with Penn people.

Q: Aside from advanced placement, is there the opportunity to get individual class's waived based on undergraduate work? As an example, if I took three years of structures in undergrad, is it possible to waive a structures class and make room for elective work? Is there the potential for this?

A: Yes. My undergraduate is a BS in Architecture and I was able to waive the Structures/Construction course series. This is based off of your syllabus and transcript from undergrad and is decided on the first day of class by the professor.

Q: Room and boarding: Is it on campus and does the boarding includes food?

A: The room and board that we have in our budget is off-campus room plus food. It would be higher if you lived on-campus.

Q: I have heard last time that they were some possibilities to apply for a dual degree from year 2 onwards, and to get an MBA as well from Wharton?

A: PennDesign students do have the option to enroll in classes in Wharton and there are student organizations that connect with the school of engineering/Wharton etc.

Q: How much interaction do the PennDesign students have with the rest of UPenn? Is it very much integrated or is the student kind off isolated from the rest due to the environment and work load of PennDesign?

A: I would say honestly most PennDesign students have a full course load and usually are working in studio most of the time, so I would say Meyerson will sort of be your home. Most classes are also held

here so I would say the connection to the rest of campus will definitely be different and less than your undergrad experience. That aside, there are a lot of opportunities to join extracurricular activities within the design school, as well as outside in other schools. There is also a graduate student organization called GAPSA which organizes events across all the grad programs, so it is really up to you to decide how much or how little you are involved within the rest of the Penn community.

**Q: Are we going to receive any soft or hardcopy of the University prospectus?**

**A: Most of our documents and handbooks are on-line. For visa documents, you'd need to check with our ISSS office (for international students).**

Q: So right now, I'm choosing between SCI-ARC and Penn. Personally, I love the abstract and explorative nature of SCI-ARC. However, I do want to create something that's a bit more concrete. In your opinion, would you say that Penn is something like this?

A: I did not apply to Sci-Arc so I can't really speak for their program but I know that Penn offers studios that range from the "abstract and explorative" to the "concrete" so you can mold your education to the type of design you're interested in.

Q: How can I pay the 500\$ along with my decision letter? Since after filling the letter, there immediately appears an option to submit.

A: When you fill out the response form, you will have the opportunity to enter your credit card information for the deposit.

**Q: Do MCP students typically work throughout their first and second year? If so, what opportunities are there for MCP students on and off-campus? Does Penn help students find off-campus jobs during the school year?**

**A: I would say most do NOT work the first year, and most DO work the second year, but it is just unique to your own workload and balance. There are work study opportunities on campus, and students are free to apply to part-time jobs throughout Philadelphia. You can ask faculty to assist with contacts and advice on finding a job, but as far as I understand they do not find them for you.**

Q: Is there an online resource to view syllabi for courses? I have found links to course descriptions on the website but just curious if actual syllabi are available.

A: No, we do not have syllabi posted online. However, if there is a certain course you are interested in we encourage you to email the instructor; he or she will more than likely be happy to send you the syllabus.

Q: Is the Digiblast II workshop required for all incoming arch students? What if I already have a pretty thorough knowledge of digital tools and can't make it during those dates? What types of programs are taught in this workshop?

A: The workshop is mandatory and cannot be waived.

Q: How similar is the spring open house for admitted students to the fall open house? I attended the open house in the fall and would love to attend the admitted student's one as well, but am just curious about whether it would be exactly the same program/information or if it is tailored to admitted students.

A: It's pretty similar but for one thing, the lunch is held in the Penn Museum so you get to be with the entire PennDesign community and not just your department. We also have more student-centric programming.

Q: Do the studio courses focus mainly in the scale of the building? Are there courses which focus on smaller scale, assembly and fabrication?

A: In the first studio only for MSDAAD, the project is the scale of tower building. But it also requires assembly and fabrication method. There are several elective courses available specifically for the small scale in the first semester.

Q: Can someone from the MSD program give insight as to time spent researching vs. time spent designing?

A: In the first studio in MSD-AAD, students mostly spend time for designing. But, along that, large amount of research regarding architectural assets and real estate tendency was required in the last year.

Q: Do you know about any architecture student who was ever rejected H-1 visa application, because the loan he or she had to take was too high?

A: I am Canadian and have had to go through the entire VISA rigmarole as well, and I'm pretty sure that H1 is not an option. I believe that you will need to apply for either a F1 or J1, F1 is typically the most popular and is what I'm on.

Q: Can I still apply for a visa even if I have not passed the prerequisite module that I need to take before August? Would the offers we received several days ago be considered conditional?

A: Once you know the exact course that you will enroll in, please email the syllabus and/or course description to us at [archprer@design.upenn.edu](mailto:archprer@design.upenn.edu) so that we can pre-approve the course. Once you have identified the course you plan to take and we confirm that it will fulfill the prerequisite, then we can start your I-20/Visa process.

Q: I have some question regarding the MUSA program. Is this program a STEM program?

A: Yes MUSA is a STEM program.

Q: How many students will there be for this year's cohort? And how many international students are there?

A: We expect about 15 or 16 students. Not sure what percentage is international...

Q: What is the MCP course load like? I'm interested in Urban Design - do you know about how many hours a UD student spends working a week?

A: I am Urban Design as well, it's hard to say how many hours generally, I can say that I typically spend at least 2-4 hours a day outside of class working on classes. This isn't always intense working, but it is a strong course load, especially with studio.

Q: I'd like to know how many students applied for and how much was the acceptance rate of MSD-ADD degree?

A: We had about 200 applicants for about 40 places.

Q: I know this is a broad question, but could you talk briefly about what you see as the strongest elements of Penn's MCP program? What drew you to the program over other schools? Anything you really love about it as a student?

A: I always say the strongest aspect of the program is its flexibility. I have a landscape architecture undergrad and being involved with the other programs here has been essential.

Q: What are the chances of getting TA or RA?

A: I am an MEBD student too and I am doing research activity with Bill Braham. It's more about your willingness and time, Bill as well as other professors, encourage any students willing to pursue some research activity.

Q: What's the summer intensive like? Do you feel like it prepared you for the fall semester?

A: My summer program was two years ago, and it tends to change each year based on the feedback of students and also to better accommodate the first year 501 studio (which has also changed in the past few years). My background is in civil/environmental engineering so I think it was an interesting way to help jump into the "design" culture and methodology. I believe that this summer may include a computer aspect to give some primary exposure to modeling programs and representation like Adobe suite. So yes, I believe it was helpful, and if nothing else it is really good to start to build relationships with your cohort as well as get a feel for how pin ups and professor interactions are. Also there is a week of ecology and plant ID which is great. The instructor for that week, Sally, is so amazing and usually ends the summer session on a great note.

Q: Hello, Any scholarships for International Students? Who gets the Dean's Diversity Scholarship?

A: If you are an admitted student, you would have already been considered for merit-based scholarships from the School and that would have been communicated to you via a financial aid letter attached to your checklist in your online application account. If you did not apply for need-based financial aid, you can still submit the form, just contact our office at [fin-aid@design.upenn.edu](mailto:fin-aid@design.upenn.edu). You should also look into outside scholarships, which we list on our website here: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/graduate-admissions/outside-scholarships-0>



Q: will there be studio space allocated for MCP students?

A: There is studio space, and for those not in studios there is a communal workspace.

Q: I noticed that I can apply for dual degrees at PennDesign, so what types of degrees can I apply?

A: The only dual degree program with MUSA is the MCP. But you would need to apply for them both originally in order to complete the program in 2 1/2 years.

Q: Does the MSD program have a real estate component?

A: It is different from real estate program, but yes, we broadly study real estate in order to think the way to design the architectural asset in the studio.

Q: Do the MEBD students have any kind of group, where the incoming students get to know each other and their seniors?

A: The groups are quite small and everyone gets to know each other from day one. Regarding meeting, usually the first semester there is a required class that is a kind of research seminar that promotes sharing ideas and getting familiar with one another's interests, etc. And then during second semester, studio is where we are most of the time doing the same thing. Not to mention there is happy hour every Friday when all programs meet and greet together in a casual setting. Lastly, there is a sustainability group at Penn that meets weekly I believe, which allows for more time to get to know others with similar interests at the school.

Q: Could you put a percentage to the ratio of MCP students who land up in design focused jobs vs. planning focused jobs?

A: There is not correct answer but I would say it is pretty split even from last year's cohort.

Q: Would you say that if I was looking for any barrier that could prevent me from taking a big loan it would be stated in the F1 application?

A: Upon admittance iPenn will contact you with a wonderful/comprehensive package as to what you need to prepare for your VISA application not only that, iPenn actually takes your submitted information and submits on your behalf through an online program. It's very efficient and not as painful as many other processes. If you plan on taking out money to come to program, but don't want to take it out immediately just to get the VISA for obvious reasons like interest, then banks usually prepare notes as to you eligibility of loan taking.

Q: Can I get some more information about the sustainability group at Penn?

A: This is a pretty good resource for getting a better picture of sustainability involvement at Penn <https://www.sustainability.upenn.edu/partners/student-groups-ssap>

Q: Hate to add a pessimistic tone to this enlightening chat, but I am curious to know what you like LEAST about PennDesign, your program or the city in general? So far my 'con' column for Penn is practically empty!

A: Specifically for MLA I would say a con is that since Penn has a big urban approach to the field, the program will much more prepare you to be a "generalist". Coming from a technical background I wish we had more plant classes or grading/technical drawing components, but on the other hand you will come out with a portfolio and a skill set that includes regional and urban planning that no other LA grads will possess. Also, there's no plants inside the building! I find the building a bit dark and stuffy, but then again the HP program only has windows in our labs. I sometimes gaze longingly at the MLA studios on the 4th floor near the windows from our gloomy bit.

Q: Hi, I am just wondering what digital design software we are going to use or learn for the MSD program. Rhino/grasshopper, Maya? Revit?

A: The first studio only for MSD-AAD, we mainly use Maya and sometimes use Rhino. But in other classes, students learn Python and the combination with grasshopper.