



Web Chat Transcript: November 9th, 2018

Q: I am interested in MS AAD. I would like to know if the concentration of the course is more on technical aspects or conceptual development of architectural projects (possibly in urban scenario). Or is it a combination of both? Is there a possibility to see some projects done in previous years?

A: It depends on what your interest is. You can choose whichever path you are interested in. The AAD is very flexible that way.

Q: Could you please elaborate on the scholarships for international students?

A: Scholarships are given on a merit and/or need basis, and typically range from \$2,000 to \$25,000 per year, though there are larger scholarships given at times, depending on the competitiveness of the applicant pool.

Q: Is it possible to get a job or work as a TA or RA while studying at UPenn in a 3 semester course? What are the pre-requisites for such an opportunity? I have 7 years of experience in architecture including 2 years of teaching experience.

A: There is a possibility - you should reach out to the Program Director, Ali Rahim, to express interest.

Q: Is there a minimum cut-off score for GRE placed by the University for Admissions to MSD-EBD?

A: There is no cut-off score for the GRE, though we do have suggested minimums as guidelines for competitive applicants - 160 Verbal, 148 Quantitative, and 4.5 for Analytical Writing.

Q Since I am a fully funded awardee of Indonesian government, they will provide sponsorship letter (not Letter of Guarantee) for support my application. But after saw the application portal, they don't have any space to upload that letter. Please advise:

A: You can mention this in your personal statement and also list it on your resume. Once you are admitted and are getting your I20, you can send the letter to our International Scholars office.

Q: I have completed a five year professional course of B.Arch from India. Would I be eligible for the post professional programs such as the MSD-EBD?

A: Yes, you would!

Q: Would it be possible to elaborate the course structure for the MSD-EBD? Would it be studio based or research oriented? Please do elaborate

A: You can see the entire MSD-EBD curriculum structure on our website here: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/architecture/graduate/master-environmental-building-design-mebd>

Q: For MUSA, do you have the information about the job placement after graduation?

A: One place to find out about job placement for our programs is through Penn's Career Service's Graduate Career Surveys - you can see the most recent report here, which has MUSA information: [https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/files/2017\\_PennDesign\\_CP\\_Report.pdf](https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/files/2017_PennDesign_CP_Report.pdf). You can also see the last 10 years of surveys on their website here: <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/surveys.php#GradStudent>

Q: For the MS AAD, a writing sample is required for the application and it prompts us to express our computer skills. What is the extent of the technology and fabrication lab at PennDesign? Is the AAD more focused on computer software and parametrics?

A: The MS AAD program is technology based but it isn't necessarily focused on parametrics. You can kind of choose. The fabrication lab at PennDesign is extremely resourceful and contains a woodshop, laser cutters, powder printers, and CNC mills.

Q: Could you please provide a breakdown of the weightage for the various criteria that the admissions committee would be looking at.?

A: I would say that your portfolio weighs the heaviest. Next comes your test scores and grade point average. Finally, your letters of recommendation and personal statement. The faculty will want to know more about your specific interests.

Q: How does one select the studios for the three semesters? When are they offered or if you could elaborate on the process of selecting courses/subjects?

A: For studios, there is a system in place called "lottery" and what it is, is design studio professors present a theme/topic for the semester they would like to focus on, and from their presentations you select which professor you would like to work with.

Q: Is merit based scholarships provided along with the application for admission? And could you please provide the process for the application of teaching and research assistantship?

A: The faculty determine your scholarship during the admissions review and it is based partly on need but primarily on merit. You would contact the Chair or Director of your program after you are admitted to express your interest in being a TA or RA.

Q: On the Academic section, what is the 'CertiFile' all about? Is it must to fill it?

A: If you have attended a college or university that is not in the US, we require that you submit a course-by-course evaluation from either WES or CertiFile. The advantage of the latter is that you can order it through our ApplyWeb admissions application.

Q: Are only second year students eligible for teaching and research assistantship?

A: Correct, usually only second year students are eligible for these positions. Though, each department does things a bit differently so I would suggest reaching out to the department directly at [cityplan@design.upenn.edu](mailto:cityplan@design.upenn.edu)

Q: Is it possible to see works of last semester or years AAD students? On the website I see first and second year work... can't make out if it's March or MS Aad or ebd...

A: You can see more work here in our Pressing matters publication:  
<https://www.design.upenn.edu/architecture/graduate/work/pressing-matters-vii>

Q: MY question is about TOEFL and GRE scores. IF they are lower than scores mentioned in the website, do I need to take these exams again?

A: For the PhD CPLN, I would say that test scores do matter quite a bit. It's not a bad idea to take the exams again. We will use the higher scores.

Q: I was also wonder what the typical size of a studio is. And how many students are admitted for the MSAAD program annually? I understand it is growing, but would you happen to know the projected numbers?

A: We generally have about 40 students in the AAD but this year for some reason, we had about 60! We prefer a smaller class.

Q: How many student for MCP program per year?

A: We have about 65 new MCP students per year for a total of about 130.

Q: How many student for MUSA do you accept per year?

A: We like to see about 15 new MUSA students. But the program is really gaining in popularity so I wouldn't be surprised if the class size expands over the next five years.

Q Could you let me know the class size for MSD-EBD?

A: MSD-EBD class is usually 12-15 students each year.

Q: Do you provide dual degree for MLA and MUSA?

A: Yes we do!

Q: All the PhD students get either RA or TA position? How can I apply for a RA position?

A: I think you CAN but I don't think it's guaranteed. You would contact the Chair of your program once you are admitted to see what kinds of positions might be available to you.

Q: On the GPA scaling, my non-US school is using a scale of 5.0

A: The course-by-course evaluation will convert the GPA to a 4.0 scale- that's part of the evaluation process.

Q: Are international students eligible for part time work on campus other than the teaching and research assistantships?

A: Yes, you can work up to 20 hours per week, though 10 hours is more typical for our students. There are plenty of positions on campus.

Q: So for dual degree, we would have to apply both programs separately right?

A: Correct, for a dual degree you will need to apply to each program separately, then if you are admitted to both programs you can choose to pursue the dual degree. You will need to complete and submit your

first application before you can begin your second application. You will not be charged the application fee for the second application.

Q: Can u give an info about number of applicants per year? And how many international students in the MCP program? It will give a much benefit for international link

A: We have about 350 applications for MCP. I would say that maybe 30% of our MCP students are international, although it really varies year to year.

Q: What is the admission rate for MLA and MUSA?

A: We have about 60 MUSA applications for about 15 slots. For the MLA, we have probably about 450 applications for 35 to 40 slots.

Q: What would be the percentage of accepted applicants from the total, for the MSD-EBD program?

A: Probably about 50 applications for 12 to 15 slots.

Q: Should the Letters of Recommendation be sent in directly from recommenders?

A: Yes, in fact once you enter their email address in the online application system they will be sent an automatic prompt to submit their letter directly through our online system

Q: The portfolio specs are mentioned as 10" by 12", is that understood to be landscape in orientation?

A: It can be landscape or portrait, whichever you prefer

Q: Can the recommender be a person other than a full time faculty, but who was in the review committee for my thesis.

A: Yes that would be fine if they know your work well.

Q: What is the PhD video interview about? It's for all the applicants? And when do applicants receive the interview invitation?

A: Yes, all applicants to the PhD city Planning will be invited to take a video interview, it is not mandatory but we do suggest you complete it to give the faculty admissions committee a better understanding of you as an applicant. You will receive the invite after submitting your application. We are not exactly sure what questions will be asked by Genie Birch.

Q: Are there any merit based financial aids that are available through the application for admission? Or should I make a separate application for tuition waiver (if any)

A: You should mark that you are interested in applying for financial aid. The faculty automatically review each applicant for merit-based aid and decide on your scholarship, which generally ranges from about \$5,000 to \$25,000 per year.