



Webchat Transcript October 26th, 2018

Q: I am interested in the PhD in City Planning and to work on Sustainable Urban Development of Historic City cores. It's kind of a multidisciplinary topic delving both into Conservation and Urban Planning. Does the Department of City Planning support such multidisciplinary areas of Research?

A: Our PhD programs are open to multidisciplinary research, but it really comes down to individual faculty interests. I would encourage you to read over the faculty profiles on our website to see if there are faculty that have common research interests.

Q: I have a bachelor's degree in architecture with city planning experience. I am very interested in MCP with concentration in urban design. My bachelor is in the Spanish language. Please guide me in the correct translation and equivalency process to submit with application form

A: If you received your bachelor's degree outside of the US you will need to submit a WES (WES.org) or Certifile evaluation along with your application. These evaluation services will translate your transcript to US standards and we require them from any applicant who studied at a non US institution. Our online application actually has links to complete a Certifile evaluation if you choose to use their service instead of WES. Furthermore, if your primary language is not English then you will need to take an English proficiency test. These requirements can be found on our 'How to Apply' page. I hope this information helps!!

Q: I am preparing a brief outline research proposal for my topic. Can I share the same with the faculty members in order to see whether I need to upgrade my research based on their areas of expertise and research initiatives?

A: You are welcome to reach out to the faculty! In fact, at the PhD level, that is recommended. The first person you may want to contact is the Chair of the PhD program in City Planning, Genie Birch. You can contact her at elbirch@design.upenn.edu and here is a quick link to the faculty profiles: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/people>

Q: How much weight is placed on a portfolio for urban design concentrations?

A: It is definitely an important component if you know that you want to concentrate in Urban Design, since the other concentrations do not ask for a portfolio. Though, the faculty admissions committee does try to look at your application as a whole, so they will consider your academic background when considering your portfolio. For example, if you do not have a specific architectural design background, then the faculty won't be expecting to see specific design work. It's just to assess your general skill with visual design and 3D space.

Q: I'm working on my portfolio right now. I would like to know what makes a portfolio stand out the most? Should the concentration be on the graphic or the articulation of the process?

A: If you can show images that display the process of creating a project that is fantastic. I included some sketches and process designs to articulate the rationale of the final product. Definitely better to show your graphic abilities rather than paragraphs of text. Ultimately decide what you want to show about yourself and the images you would need to make that stand out.

A: A portfolio works best to align with your interests in my opinion.

A: Our faculty admissions committee reviews the portfolios, so we only know so much about what they are looking for in a portfolio. That being said, these students obviously did gain admission to their programs here, so I imagine that their advice would be worthwhile. I always suggest to get lots of extra opinions and reviews of your portfolio to clean it up as much as possible!

A: I will recommend that the focus should be on graphics. For me the first impression on the portfolio should be visual and someone who knows nothing about the content should be able to understand it. If the process is important for one project I will include but usually the final result is more important.

Q: I will complete the 5 year bachelor of architecture program next year and am interested in M.Arch.

A: Unfortunately because you will hold a 5 year B.Arch you will not be eligible for our M.Arch degree (it would be too redundant for you) You would, however, be eligible for our MSD:EBD, MSD:AAD or MS in Architecture degrees.

A: Instead of MArch, you can get a post-professional degree. If you are interested in improving building performance and making city greener, another post-professional degree is Environmental Building Design.

A: I will recommend you to check the MSD-AAD in you are interesting in a design studio based program.

Q: What digital program do you recommend to put together a portfolio?

A: Whichever program you are comfortable with. Lots of people use InDesign. You can also use Illustrator, Photoshop, Powerpoint even. In the end it will be submitted as a multipage PDF so as long as you can export it and it looks good that's what counts.

Don't forget, if you have more questions for our students, you can find their contact information here: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/graduate-admissions/get-know-us/> And you can always email us at admissions@design.upenn.edu. Thanks for joining us!