



Web chat Transcript March 28th, 2019

This was a busy chat! We have tried to group the Q & A's into categories to help navigate this transcript.

Architecture

Q: If I choose to enroll in MSDAAD, am I still able to apply for the Real Estate Design and Development Certificate (CREDD)? For a 1.5 year program, I am aware that I need an extra half year to complete the real estate certificate. But I saw on your page that international MSD students may have issues to extend the VISA. So I wish you could reconfirm this.

A: Unfortunately you would not be able to take a certificate along with the MSD-AAD degree.

Q: Is it common to take electives outside of the school of architecture? (Eg. business)

A: It is very difficult to get into Wharton courses! Some of our students will take the Certificate in Real Estate Design and Development, but even then it's hard.

Q: Are there any successful international students in MSAAD who managed to get both their degree and the certificate the same time (in 1.5 year)?

A: Yes I have known quite a few people in the MSDAAD program who have completed a certificate.

Q: The elective courses in curriculum of MSDAAD are ARCH XXX, does it mean that I could only select course in Architecture Department?

A: Actually you could select courses outside of architecture as well. I picked a landscape seminar this semester and it is amazing. Some courses require a permit if you want to register you just have to send an email to the person who is in charge of the department

Q: How many studios we could choose in 2nd and 3rd term of MSDAAD? Who will be our instructors?

A: It looks like you take one studio in each term, you can see the full curriculum here:
<https://www.design.upenn.edu/architecture/graduate/post-professional-program-msd-aad>

Q: How many students will enroll in MSDAAD?

A: Around 40

Q: Hi, apart from the designated electives, how many credits/electives are MSDEBD students eligible to take up outside of PennDesign?

A: You can view the entire curriculum here:
<https://www.design.upenn.edu/architecture/graduate/master-environmental-building-design-mebd>

Q: Are there any graduate research assistantships within the school of design for architecture students?

A: Yes! Generally these positions are not offered until the students second year though. You can inquire further with Architecture at arch@design.upenn.edu

Q: How many MSD EBD foreign students on average seek part-time employment?

A: That is really dependent on how much time you feel you have to work outside of your coursework. I would guess that some students at least work with faculty on research while in the program. You should follow up with Bill Braham directly, I'm sure he can let you know.

Q: What is the ratio of international students of MSDAAD? Where do the students usually come from?

A: For our year there are a lot of students with internationally background. The ratio would be roughly 3 to 1. Most of the internationally students are from China.

Q: How many students will enroll in MSDAAD?

A: There are about 40 or 50

Q: I am accepted into a three-year MArh1 program; however, I would like to have an advanced standing. Is the committee still making their decisions (I contacted the graduate coordinator before)? When approximately can I get the result?

A: If you've contacted the coordinator, there's nothing more to be done. I would follow up with her. We did not give advanced standing to anyone this year.

Q: As for the preparatory workshop from July 29th to August 10th, is it mandatory for every one entering the MArch program? Since I am currently interning in a company, and there might be a time conflict.

A: Yes, it is mandatory for all incoming M.Arch. Students. I would suggest talking with the Architecture Department about your conflict just to see if there is anything they can do, but likely not. You should

Q: Apart from the designated electives for MSDEBD, how many credits/electives are students eligible to take up outside of PennDesign?

A: Based on the curriculum on the website (<https://www.design.upenn.edu/architecture/graduate/master-environmental-building-design-mebd>), it looks like there are two electives that may be taken outside of your program.

Q: I am a MAR student and will attend the summer preparatory studio in June. Since I don't have any architecture background, I am wondering what I should prepare for the summer studio. Design skills like sketching? Or some tools and materials? And I also would like to know the summer studio size.

A: The summer studio is a supplemental and required step before starting the first semester. Depending on your undergrad degree and the curriculum taught at your previous university they will be using the summer studio as an opportunity to get everyone on the same page in terms of design skills since many students accepted don't have an architecture background. They will teach you everything you need to know, just make sure you have a good laptop to support all of the new programs you will be downloading.

Q: What sort of jobs do students from the MSD EBD course generally enter into post-graduation?

A: This is a great question for the Director, Bill- brahamw@design.upenn.edu

Q: Is it possible for MSD: AAD to get 1 term extension for my program if I could not get enough credits?

A: No, you will not be able to extend the AAD program

Q: Is the M.Arch curriculum is heavily focused on the history and design theory of architecture or if there is a focus on the real world effect of constructing the built environment and how the spaces we create impact the environment and promote equality or the opposite. Is there a focus or at least classes and faculty available to specialize in green building materials research or equitable urban and community development or holistic/ecological design as it relates to landscape and architecture in responding to environmental and human forces?

A: One of our required courses is a history and theory course that you will take each semester, each focusing on a different period for architecture. The curriculum and the professors do an excellent job at putting you in real world situations. If you have a specific interest in the environment there are courses and certificates you can apply for that focus on that type of architecture. I am currently doing an ecological architecture certificate and there are other certificates available that could probably tailor to your specific interests.

Q: What is an ecological architecture certificate? Is that just a stamp added to your diploma?

A: Ecological architecture is a certificate that focuses on our impacts on the ecological systems around us and there are courses listed in the certificate that you can choose from that might interest you, along with 2 required courses for certificate completion. For our certificates, you receive a separate certificate diploma. It is really just a way to show that you have completed a series of coursework pertaining to a particular area.

Q: Is EBD more design oriented or theoretical? Will we have site visits or tours during the program?

A: there is only one studio; probably more technical. They do have site visits...but you should ask Bill Braham, brahamw@design.upenn.edu, or one of our MEBD students, Shibe Huang, at shibe@design.upenn.edu

Q: Do AAD students have the chances to exchange with AA?

A: I have heard MSDAAD students who have done the AA exchange program before. However you could contact the department of architecture arch@design.upenn.edu

Q: Is there any AAD studio including overseas field trips? Like last two years some studios went to Egypt and Istanbul.

A: It depends on the studio. Most studio include a field trip. Quite a lot of them are overseas. There were Sri Lanka, Istanbul, Germany and many other places this semester

City Planning

Q: Could you please introduce the course requirements of MCP program, like units and internships?

A: There are 19 units required for the MCP program over the course of 4 semesters with a summer internship between years. However, if you wish you can take up to 20 units over the 4 semesters if there is a course that you would really like to take, or two studios your second year.

Q: If I choose to enroll in land use and environmental planning in MCP, is it possible to change my concentration?

A: I'm in the LUEP concentration in the MCP program and I've had a good experience with it. That being said, you can change your concentration as long as you are strategic about your course selection and you have enough room in your schedule.

Q: I wonder if it will be probable for a MCP student to pursue a PhD degree for City Planning in PennDesign? If so, what should I prepare in the next two years? Thank you!

A: We do have our MCP students go on to apply to our PhD. It is very competitive but we do admit our own students!

Q: I'm wondering if there are sufficient job opportunities for students majoring in MCP after graduating from UPENN?

A: There are lots of job opportunities! Especially if you are open to working in any location - you will absolutely find a position after graduation. The office sends out emails regularly alerting students to job openings in Philadelphia and across the country. There are a ton of transportation related positions if that is of any interest to you.

Q: At what point do MCP candidates declare a concentration?

A: Most students come in knowing which concentration they're interested in, but you can formally change it later on. However, all concentrations have a required fall introductory course, so changing your concentration can mess up the course sequencing. If you're unsure of which concentration to pursue, I would recommend trying to take some required courses in both concentrations in your first year, so you don't set yourself back too far.

Q: How many students are in the MCP program per year? And how many international students?

A: The MCP program has an average class size of about 65 students each year and the international student portion makes up about 25% of each class!

Q: How many MCP students pursue MUSA at that same time each year?

A: There are about 5 dual degree MCP & MUSA students each year

Fine Art

Q: I'm curious what the process for applying for materials funding is like through the Sachs program.

A: Unfortunately we don't have an MFA student here this morning, but here is a link about the Sachs grants: <https://www.sachsarts.org/grants/>. You could also check with the program.

Q: I'm wondering if there is a darkroom in the Photography Studio?

A: There is a darkroom in the Adams building that our MFA students can have access to.

Q: If I enroll in the MFA / MSW program is the tuition then doubled as well?

A: You would attend MSW for one year, MFA for one year, and then a combination of them for your final year. So not double, but an extra year.

Historic Preservation

Q: Can MSHP students apply for dual degree? Or is it possible to choose like a design studio?

A: Yes, I'm a dual degree student with city planning. There are also dual degree students with MLA (landscape architecture) and MARCH (architecture). Some students also chose to pursue a certificate in Real Estate Design and Development. The program typically requires students to take the preservation studio, but there are opportunities for taking courses (and possibly studios) in other programs.

Q: Can MSHP students apply for dual degree?

A: Yes!

Q: I found that there are four Concentrations for MSHP, should I choose one of them to focus on or I can take any course I like?

A: MSHP concentrations are focused, but not strict. There are typically one or two courses that are required with one or two additional recommended courses. Even if you take all of the courses recommended in one of the concentrations, you'll have plenty of room in your schedule for elective courses outside of that concentration (and even outside of the program and school!).

Q: There will be a pre-semester for MSHP students, what will we do during the pre-semester? Is there a schedule now?

A: I would contact the MSHP program office to ask about the pre-semester schedule. You can email Amanda Bloomfield: amab@design.upenn.edu.

Landscape Architecture

Q: If I choose to enroll in MLA, is it possible for me to apply for CREDD? It seems that MLA program does not have many open electives. I am worried if I may not be able to complete the real estate certificate at the same time as my degree.

A: Were you admitted to the 2-year or 3-year MLA? With the two-year it would be tough to fit it in with your MLA requirements

Q: How long is the OPT for MLA graduates? Is it one year?

A: Three years

Q: I spoke to a Landscape architect recently and he mentioned that some schools are more design heavy while others focus more on a construction track. My assumption is that Penn is more design oriented. Could someone please speak to this? And what kinds of implications this distinction has on post-graduation careers?

A: It is pretty design oriented, as far as careers go, it prepares you to work in a landscape architecture design firm.

Q: About how many students enroll in MLA2 program?

A: We have about 12 to 15 students entering into the MLA 2 year program each year.

Q: And could I ask how many new students in MLA2 this year?

A: We project about 50 new students, 12 to 15 in the MLA 2 year program

Q: How do I apply for the dual degree with MLA? How many extra semesters will be enrolled in the university?

A: You would need to apply to each program separately and then if you are admitted to both programs you can let us know that you would like to pursue the dual degree. The length of the dual degree depends on which two programs you are pursuing. You can see the complete curriculum and length of each dual degree program in the student hand book here:
<https://www.design.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/2018-2019%20PennDesign%20Student%20Handbook.pdf>

Q: In what way would you say that Penn is particular from other schools, especially thinking about the MLA program? (i.e. particular foci, faculty that specialize on what thing or another, etc.)

A: This is really a question for Richard Weller. We have one of the best MLA programs in the world! But he can tell you why. rjweller@design.upenn.edu

Housing

Q: When is the earliest we can start looking for on campus accommodation? When can we start moving in?

A: Most students start looking for housing in June.

Q: Are there platforms to help Penn students find off campus housing?

A: Yes, please check out <https://offcampushousing.upenn.edu/> Also, Sarah here is suggesting Zillow and checking out local property management companies

Financial

Q: In regards to the tuitions, how does the payment process work? Is it by paying 25000\$ the first semester or 50000\$?

A: Tuition is split between semesters, so you would be charged 1/2 in the fall and 1/2 in the spring

Q: Is there a way I could negotiate my Financial Aid?

A: Each department handles merit-based scholarships for their admitted applicants. We absolutely suggest reaching out to your department directly to try and negotiate your scholarship amount. There are times when departments do have a bit more funds to allocate toward scholarship so it is always worth asking!

Q: Could please estimate the all expense during on academic year in UPENN or in Philadelphia?

A: You can see the estimated living expenses on our tuition and financial aid page here: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/graduate-admissions/tuition-and-financial-aid>

Q: If I enroll in the MFA / MSW program is the tuition then doubled as well?

A: You would attend MSW for one year, MFA for one year, and then a combination of them for your final year. So not double, but an extra year.

Q: In the tuition and expense list online there is a field for health insurance. Is it mandatory we purchase Penn's health insurance if we have outside coverage?

A: You can ask for a health insurance waiver. There's a form to fill out and submit.

Q: Is there extra cost in taking more credit hours for classes?

A: Tuition is charged per course unit. Here at Design, 3-5 course units is considered full time and charged full tuition. If you take anything over 5 course units you would be charged for each course unit that is over 5

Dual Degree

Q: How do I apply for the dual degree with MLA? How many extra semesters will be enrolled in the university?

A: You would need to apply to each program separately and then if you are admitted to both programs you can let us know that you would like to pursue the dual degree. The length of the dual degree depends on which two programs you are pursuing. You can see the complete curriculum and length of each dual degree program in the student hand book here:

<https://www.design.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/2018-2019%20PennDesign%20Student%20Handbook.pdf>

Q: Can I apply for a dual degree after the first semester in Penn?

A: The best is to apply for both degrees before you enroll. However, you can apply for a second degree in the first year of your program. Typically a dual degree is one year less than the total combined length of both degrees. So while a MCP is two years and a MSHP is two years, my dual degree is three years.

Student Work / Employment

Q: Do you know of anyone who is working part time while being a full time student?

A: I am actually currently working 2 part-time positions while enrolled full time. I worked about 10 hours a week my first semester and am currently working 16 hours a week now in my final semester. It definitely possible to do, I would just ease into it if you can! Most students work 10-12 hours each week at an internship gaining professional experience while in the program.

Q: Any MArch students here who were able to work during the program? Would you recommend working during the program?

A: It depends on how you organize your time! Some of us find that we are able to work part-time and some us not. I would suggest waiting to find work after you start your program so that you can determine whether or not you can handle the extra time commitment of part-time work.

Q: Does the university provide carrier fairs/ placement counselling? And do companies come to the campus to recruit students?

A: Yes we have career fairs and also a dedicated career services person who organizes visits to firms, mock interviews, etc.

Q: How do students find employment after graduation? Is it through the career fair, internship experience, Penn alum at other firms?

A: Yes, all of the above! Many of our students get jobs where they interned. We have a dedicated Career Services person here at PennDesign.

Q: Does Penn subsidize summer work opportunities?

A: If you are awarded Federal work-study, you might be able to get summer work-study. There's also one or two fellowships that subsidize unpaid or under-paid summer experiences.

Q: Are there any limitations as an international student in regards to internships and work-study?

A: Federal work-study is not available for international students. There are, however, or work opportunities on campus for international students. Internships requirements are determined by whoever is offering the internship. Depending on your visa status and other things you may or may not be able to pursue a paid internship

Other

Q: What is the process if I wanted to transfer some of my credits from my BFA Architectural Design for some of the first year MArch requirements?

A: We don't accept transfer credit. That being said, if you have taken the equivalent of our technology courses, it is possible to waive out of them and replace them with electives.

Q: Is there an Admissions process for the certificate degrees that you have to be approved for? Or can we just gear our electives towards the Certificates automatically?

A: You apply through the admissions office. They help you with the process and will send out email reminders and more information around mid-September. The application is due November 1st.

Q: What is required to get into Wharton classes? Do they look at grades?

A: we do have a dual MAR/MBA program. You might want to consider applying to that. Otherwise, as i said, it's difficult to get into their courses because they only have slots for their own students.

Q: How do you apply for the Real Estate Design and Development certificate?

A: Once you are studying here you can apply for Certificates on our web page here <https://www.design.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/Certificate%20Application%2018-19fillable.pdf>

Q: If a portfolio has 5-10 projects, could you give me a sense of how long/extensive this whole portfolio should be? Summary and highlights vs. more comprehensive description?

A: You should include your best work. The portfolio should be no longer than 20 pages.

Q: If I choose to defer for a year, which was offered by the program chair, what would that process look like in terms of procedure and timeline?

A: If you are granted a deferral, we ask that you check back in with us in December to confirm that you are still interested in enrolling. After that, we assume you will be entering the new class and you would get communications closer to the summer for incoming students.

Q: Is it possible to transfer from City Planning to the MUSA program? (Possibly by focusing on MUSA relevant courses the first semester and moving the second?) I've learned more about MUSA recently and think it would be the more appropriate program for my skills and interests/

A: We could not technically transfer a student, you would need to apply to MUSA and be admitted. If you began your studies as MCP, and then applied to and were admitted to MUSA in your first year you would not have to re-take any required courses. You could also apply to the dual degree once you are here.

Q: What is the process of selecting studios? What should I do if the studio that I am interesting is very popular?

A: First you attend a studio presentation and decide which studios you like after the presentation. It is basically a lottery process and you have to come up with an order of the studios that you want to attend. To better your chances you better not put all your eggs in one basket because some studios are really popular!

Q: Where can I find list of open electives?

A: Some degree programs list courses on their page on the PennDesign website, but you won't be able to see the final list of courses to choose from until you have your PennKey and can log into the course registration system. Some electives and studios are presented at the beginning of the semester, especially for the architecture and landscape architecture programs. You can always reach out to the individual program or department for a list of courses if you don't find them online.

Q: How long is the OPT for MLA graduates? Is it one year?

A: Three years

Q: Are there any computer-labs at the faculty? Or is it recommended to bring your own desktop and computers?

A: Yes, there are communal computer labs available for our students but it is highly recommended to have your own lap top. In fact in some programs, like landscape architecture, it is mandatory to have your own computer. Here is a link with information about the MLA computer requirement:
<https://www.design.upenn.edu/welcome-landscape-architecture-students#page-section-2188>

Q: For the application portfolio, could you please kindly elaborate more on what you are looking for? My understanding is that it is to show creative thinking and artistic design skills. At the same time, I am a little confused because I've seen other schools say previous students have submitted, "Poetry, science abstracts, design work, built work..."

A: simply put, we are looking for your best work, whatever that may be to you.

Q: What kinds of jobs will students in MCP get after graduating from UPENN?

A: MCP students find a range of job opportunities. Many go on to work in municipal or federal positions, while others enter either the public or private sectors. It's a very diverse field with lots of interdisciplinary opportunities available post-graduation.

Q: In the form of jobs, teaching, continuing-education, what do graduates end up doing 1-10 years out of graduation?

A: I believe that most of our graduates go on to architecture firms. Most teaching jobs (at least tenured track) go to students graduating from our PhD program.

Q: What is the process of selecting your studio professor for each semester?

A: It is basically a lottery process where you submit a list of all the studios from top to bottom with the order of your preference. Placing the studios that you like the least in the bottom is quite important to be honest

Q: What do students typically do in the summers?

A: Most students (including those in architecture) do a paid internship over the summer.

Q: In the tuition and expense list online there is a field for health insurance. Is it mandatory we purchase Penn's health insurance if we have outside coverage?

A: You can ask for a health insurance waiver. There's a form to fill out and submit.

Q: Are medical examinations for international students required before enrollment?

A: Yes and you must show proof of immunization as well.

Q: I managed to be admitted in Ph.D. of City and Regional Planning after MCP, how long will it be before the graduation?

A: You would need to complete the MCP first and then begin the PhD. It would be 4 to 7 years for the PhD.

Q: What is the recommended date to arrive at Penn? I mean, how long before the first day of the semester?

A: It depends on if you decide to attend the pre-semester workshop or not. Most rents start the first of the month so students typically move in for August 1st. I would recommend coming at least a week in advance to give yourself time to explore the city and get adjusted.

Q: I'm going to work in real estate. Can you give me some advice? How to prepare for this dream? I hear it's a little difficult for international architectural graduates to find a job in real estate.

A: We're not sure about the real estate field. While we offer a certificate in real estate, the students only take one or two real estate courses.

Q: Speaking of the laptop, I will carry one to school but I want to buy a desktop or the Dell Workstation, is it possible and easy to buy and place it before the summer preparatory studio begin?

A: That is perfectly fine. So you'll have your own station/desk over the summer to have that type of set up, but keep in mind you will have to move it once it's over. I didn't do the summer studio, I only did

the 2 week digiblast, but you won't be able to set up before the studio begins, you'll have to set up after the first day

Q: How long is one semester?

A: Usually 12-14 weeks

Q: What is the average age of students entering the design school?

A: The average age of students is about 25

Q: Would it be better to leave my desktop computer at my in-campus' workstation or would it be better to leave it at home? Do people usually work more in the studios or at home? How is the studio environment in regards to those subjects?

A: It depends on the student! Some like to work in their studios and do keep their desk top at the studio space, others like to work from home. The floors in the building are all locked with access by Penncard only so people's equipment are safe.

Q: I have already received the e-mails reminding me of I20 and visa, but I have no ideas about how to fulfill the medical examinations or any other requirements before enrollment. Will I continue to receive related e-mails? Or can I find the exact information online?

A: Yes, you will continue to receive email. You can also reach out to our International Student Scholar Services office directly with questions at iss@pobox.upenn.edu

Q: I have a Master's degree from 2012. The GRE was taken in 2009. Do I have to take it again if I apply this coming year?

A: You would need to take the GRE again. The exam needs to be taken every 5 years to remain valid/up-to-date

Q: How does one get involved with PennPraxis?

A: PennPraxis will occasionally offer opportunities for students to get involved in projects, which are typically temporary, part-time, paid positions. Some students do this during the semester, while others do work over the summer. It usually depends on what projects they're working on and the number/type of students they need. I worked on a project with PennPraxis and had a great experience!

Q: When can new students begin to enroll in courses online?

A: After you pay your deposit and enroll, you should receive information about setting up your PennKey which will give you access to the student portal where you register for courses. Most students register over the summer.