

Q: MArch - Most common portfolio pitfalls and how to avoid them?

A: be sure to put in your best work. We're not so much interested in your progress as we are your skills and competence.

Q: As an international student from India, I have been facing issues with the WES evaluations, especially related to attestations. Is it possible to forgo the process and just send in scans of our transcripts?

A: Unfortunately, the WES evaluation is mandatory and cannot be waived. What problem are you having as far as attestations go?

Q: MS - Is there any suggestions for word counts in the sample of writing that MS need to submit?

A: if your sample is too long, it may not be read. I would say several pages at most.

Q: MCP- How does the School of Design, versus an engineering, policy, etc. school, uniquely shape the planning program?

A: I'm not a planner, but I am in a planning class this semester. It's different than those other options because you can choose concentrations within the program and that will essentially shape your experience in the School of Design. That may not answer your question fully, but you can reach out to one of our Planning students, Anthony-
ajreije@design.upenn.edu

Q: MCP and the MBA dual degree program - is there a suggested program to complete during the first year?

A: you would typically do the first year MCP, second year MBA, then mixed.

Q: some suggestions for the content of statement of purpose

A: Your statement of purpose should describe what your goals at Penn would be or what you would like to accomplish. It often helps if you list certain faculty members, you're interested in working with/learning from

Q: how many students do MS normally accept? Will it be a large class?

A: the MS Arch is a very small program, usually about 2 to 5 students.

Q: MFA - are there any important changes to know about faculty and visiting professors/lecturers for 2020-2021? How do general electives work - can MFA students

take MArch classes without a background in architecture (or other departments) or is it recommended to take classes at the undergraduate level? Also, what are the studios like?

A: you can take other classes as electives (generally just graduate classes) including architecture classes (not studio). As for next year's visitors, those haven't been set yet. You could follow up with the Chair, Ken Lum, at kenlum@design.upenn.edu. Studios are in several buildings, and you have 24/7 access to them.

Q: -how many pages of portfolio are appropriate? Is the cover page include in the total pages?

A: 20 pages (maximum page size 10 x 12") or 10 pages (maximum 10 x 24") if you use spreads. Cover pages or table of contents do not count towards total pages.

Q: I have completed my B.Arch. in 2019 and looking forward to studying MCP at UPenn. I don't have any work experience in the field but have a couple of college projects and have done related online courses. How good are my chances of admit and what does it depend on?

A: we have quite a few students that come in to the MCP without work experience. If your GPA and GRE scores are strong and the faculty admissions committee feel you have a good idea of what you want to get out of the MCP program and the area in which you want to practice planning, that is what makes you a strong applicant.

Q: - When submitting our portfolio. Should we include context with the image or is there an option to include that separately with each page.

A: you can include a bit of text with the image, especially if it explains your project. all text should go on the spreads in your portfolio. Try to make the text work with the entire visual set of the portfolio. No additional attachments are allowed.

Q: Do asking for dean scholarship effects my application?

A: applying for the Deans diversity scholarship will NOT affect your admissions decision what-so-ever

Q: How many students are admitted for the MArch 3 year standing?

A: we have about 70 students entering the MArch program each year.

Q: For the MCP, what is the main concentration that students choose?

A: Community and Economic Development (CED) is the most popular, but we always have a good cohort of students in each of the concentrations.

Q: is the general GPA when you consider choosing a student?

A: we like to see a GPA of 3.3 or higher but we don't have cutoffs. We look at all parts of your application, especially the portfolio.

Q: Can u please give me more information regarding the fee structure for fall2020 classes?

A: Tuition for the 2019-2020 academic year is \$53,466. you can also see a breakdown of estimated costs along with tuition here: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/graduate-admissions/tuition-and-financial-aid>

Q: If my teacher has already sent the letter of recommendation to the system, will i be able to cancel it?

A: unfortunately, once it is submitted, you cannot cancel it.

Q: For the dual MCP/MBA program, how many students apply?

A: we don't really have any idea how many students APPLY to the dual MCP/MBA because you have to apply separately to the Wharton School for the MBA, and we don't have access to their admissions. However, we usually have 1-2 students studying in that specific dual degree each year or two. both the MBA and MCP are competitive programs to gain admission so that's why it's so rare.

Q: What is the average financial aid package for MFA students?

A: generally, our MFA scholarships range anywhere from \$5,000-\$40,000

Q: What resources are available in the workshop?

A: In our Fab Lab we have a variety of wood working tools (table saw, ban saws, drill press, chop saw, lathe...etc.) We also have 2 cnc machines, 3 laser cutters, vacuum former, spray room, TONS of 3D printers (outside the Fab Lab), and a few powder printers. There are also some metal working tools - they require help from the Fab Lab staff. Which, btw, they are SO helpful. Very knowledgeable and patient. Oh! and we have a robotics lab, but that is usually accessed only through studio professors.

Q: Can I update my resume and TOEFL score post submission of the application?

A: Once you submit your application you cannot make any changes...with the exception of your TOEFL score- when ETS sends us scores electronically your application will automatically update

Q: what's the size of an MCRP cohort?

A: we generally have an entering class of about 65 - 70, but this year was more like 80.

Q: MCP- should my application focus more on my experience and goals academically, professionally, or both equally?

A: I would say both equally. They will want to know what your interests are in your field of study and at Penn in particular.

Q: MArch--what are the design programs students usually use?

A: It varies depending on your professor. Across the board we use Rhino and grasshopper, but some professors use Maya or even get into virtual reality software

Q: I first understand that I can submit up to 4 recommendations; however, I received an email yesterday about it. Is it better to cancel one? I find to pretty rude to my professor though

A: we require 3 but will accept 4, so you don't need to worry about cancelling one of them.

Q: what's the requirement for GRE, by the way

A: We suggest a minimum of 160 Verbal, 148 Quantitative, and 4.5 for Analytical Writing. Keep in mind that these are not cut-off scores as we look at all your supporting material when evaluating your application.

Q: What kind of help is available in the robotics lab?

A: I would suggest that you reach out to Robert Stuart-Smith, the main faculty member in charge of the robotics lab. You can reach Professor Stuart-Smith at rsmith@design.upenn.edu.

Q: MCP - My experience in planning is more curriculum based (academic project, documentation) than from a practical setting (jobs, internships, etc.). Does that affect how competitive my profile might be?

A: I think this shouldn't make a difference...

Q: Do you recommend getting in touch with professors before applying?

A: yes, this is a good idea. Find out which professors share your interests and reach out to them.

Q: Is there an Early Deadline for admissions?

A: no there is no early deadline.

Q:MS - I read through some website and realize that 'Statement of Purpose' and 'Personal statement' is different, should I be really concern about that? Since the application wants Personal statement

A: the statement of purpose and personal statement are the same.

Q: Could you provide some information about the Penn Planning Equity Initiative? I saw on the website that there are various research projects done and courses students can take - is it more up to the student's own initiative to be involved?

A: we unfortunately don't have any students here that can speak to your specific question, but I would suggest reaching out to Lisa Servon, the Chair of the planning program, because I know she is involved in that initiative specifically. You can reach Professor Servon at servon@design.upenn.edu.

Q: MArch-- I also have a degree in civil engineering and I have some experience with civil engineering. So, should I put this part of my experience in my statement of purpose?

A: yes, you can add that to your personal statement

Q: What's the required GRE score for MCP?

A: it is the same for all applicants- We suggest a minimum of 160 Verbal, 148 Quantitative, and 4.5 for Analytical Writing. Keep in mind that these are not cut-off scores as we look at all of your supporting material when evaluating your application.

Q: MS - Do David Leatherbarrow still teaching the MS?

A: Professor Leatherbarrow still teaches although he is no longer the chair of the graduate group. That would be Daniel Barber.

Q: Does the University offer need based scholarships to international students?

A: we don't break out our scholarships into "merit" or "need" categories - both are considered when the chair is awarding scholarships. However, we do see that the faculty prefer to give scholarships based mostly on merit. Though, if you submit the International Financial Aid Application, that will allow the faculty to consider financial need when awarding scholarships.

Q: What would be expected in a portfolio for the MCPprogram?

A: this would be any design work you have, drawings, etc. It is only required for the Urban Design concentration.

Q: MS - could you explain more about how the chair of the program might affect the the directions of the course?

A: The Chair doesn't really affect the direction of the courses that you take. It's the faculty in general, so depending on your interest, you might work closely with some faculty and not the Chair.

Q: MArch - Do you see students after graduating typically join firms in the Philadelphia area or do they go out to other cities to work?

A: it varies depending on your personal interests. Many students like to go to New York, but every year we have a Career Fair where we have a great variety of firms and locations to put you in contact with. Other students also get jobs through professors that they've had for studio. I think it's more typical for landscape to stay in Philly.

Q: Does the university provide aid for students to participate in art residency programs?

A: I'm not sure to be honest. I think they might for some (Skowhegan) but to make sure, please contact ken Lum @ kenlum@design.upenn.edu.

Q: MArch-- What are the concentrations for MArch and when should students choose them?

A: we don't have specific concentrations. We do have certificates and dual degrees to supplement your Architecture studies. The best space to really explore unique interests is during your thesis in your final year. However, there are tons of research opportunities with various professors which can help you really dig into unique topics.

Q: are there any current MFA students I could chat with individually?

A: you can contact Sonnie @Gwooden@upenn.edu or Illya at illya96@upenn.edu.

Q: I was able to specify only one concentration in the application for the MCP program. Can we pick more than 1?

A: you can only specify one, but most students will take coursework across 2 or more concentrations using their electives.

Q: MS- could you clarify the main purpose of the Sample of Writing? Since English is my second language, my style of writing may not be fully developed, and I'm really concern about it

A: The main purpose of your writing sample is for the faculty admissions committee to get a better understanding of your voice and your interests.

Q: For MCP. Should students decide their concentration before applying?

A: you may select 'Undecided' as your concentration on the application if you are not sure. But, if you do select a concentration, you may also change your concentration in your first year of the program if you decide that another concentration fits your career interests better.

Q: MCP- Should my application express my interest in general subject areas, or more granular research questions?

A: if you have a specific interest, it is a good idea to express this. Otherwise, general is ok.

Q: MArch - What portion of the coursework/projects are collaborative?

A: every year has some portion of collaboration. In 501 (first year, first semester), you work on a group project for the first assignment, in 602 (second year, second semester) it's a partner studio, and then your 3rd year is in collaboration with other degrees, so depending on the professor it could also be partner projects.

Q: If I'm picking a concentration other than Urban Design, but feel my portfolio would help present my skills and interests, can I still upload it?

A: you would be able to upload your portfolio, but it probably wouldn't be looked at.

Q: Is it a mandatory requirement for students to live on campus?

A: no, not at the graduate level. In fact, it is generally more expensive to live on campus so many students live off campus.

Q: Do I need to do dissertation within a year of studying?

A: there is a thesis rather than a dissertation for the M.S. program. While the program is meant to be completed in 1 year, some students do extend into the fall term for the M.S. if their thesis research will take longer.

Q: Did anyone answering questions enter as a 3-year MArch student? If so, what was your undergraduate/professional background and what was that first year like? Did you form a strong bond with other 3-year students?

A1: As a dual you would start in the 3-year course work for each program you are accepted into. My background was in architecture. There are always a handful of students who start the 3-year program without architecture background, and they do just as well. The first year was an interesting challenge. I learned a lot about digital design and working with 3D printers. While currently taking courses in landscape I still hang out with some of the friends I made in architecture. Overall as a school I would say Penn is very friendly!

A2: my background is a B.A in architecture with a minor in landscape architecture. My first year was very informational. The first year of the M.ARCH is to get everyone in the program on the same page in terms of design software, language, and refreshers on structures/construction. Our studio structure is designed to be very communal so you can always see what other studios are working on, and it lets you get to know your studio classmates. Digiblast (the required 2 week summer program) also gets you familiar with others that will be in MARCH with you so when you start school, you already see familiar faces and you are most likely already friends :)

A3: I entered as a 3-year MArch then applied to the Dual-MLA in my first semester here. My background was a 4-year B.S in Architecture then a year internship in urban design. First year was a whirlwind! The beginning - from digiblast all the way through the end of fall semester - is really about getting everyone up to speed with software, design technology, etc. Lots of fast moving projects, one of which is a design build. Spring semester is a bit slower with one major project (a library). Here we were really able to explore our own agendas with a variety of professors with very different pedagogies. Although this year I am currently in Landscape Architecture, I still quite frequently talk to my Architecture friends. Very close. Very good studio culture.

Q: Will there be an alert if GRE scores arrive to the school?

A: no, there is no alert. They usually automatically link to your application within 24 hours and you can monitor your application supporting material once you submit your application.

Q: And what's the page limit for the resume? Is there a format we need to follow?

A: we recommend just one page., and no particular format...

Q: MS- what is the main achievement from studying MS? the course seems selective; can I select from any program?

A: I'm not sure what you mean. It is an opportunity for you to pursue research in a subject that you are interested in. Often, MS graduates go on to PhD programs.

Q: How many recommendations can we upload?

A: we require 3 but allow 4 to be uploaded.