Urban Design

The Master of Urban Design (MUD) degree program is a one-calendar-year, advanced, interdisciplinary program of study for students with a prior professional degree in architecture, landscape architecture, or city and regional planning. The program’s goals are to further train designers who can work effectively in teams across a large range of scales and who have a well-developed understanding of urban places and the interdependencies of the fabric of buildings, landscapes, public ways, and the social interactions that shape them.

The Program in the Design of Urban Places, leading to the Master of Urban Design degree, is a unique, interdisciplinary program of advanced study in which exceptional architects, landscape architects, and planners holding professional degrees partake of an intense, focused learning experience of 12-month duration. Students share working methods, acquire additional skills, and explore new avenues of development under the supervision of an interdisciplinary group of faculty members in the College of Environmental Design drawn from the Departments of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, and City and Regional Planning.

The program addresses the need for professionals who are specifically concerned with the design of varied urban areas open to public use. The activities of urban design are diverse in both type and scale. Urban designers may be concerned with settlement patterns in urbanizing areas, town layout, the restructuring of inner cities, and the design of streets and open spaces, buildings, and landscape patterns that establish neighborhoods and provide the settings for public life. They may shape the form and space of specific places such as civic or shopping centers, or they may design citywide systems such as streets, lighting, signing, greenways, or bicycle and pedestrian ways. They may work on infill in older towns and cities, or they may prepare plans, guidelines, or standards to manage extensive new development at the metropolitan growth edge.

Admission to the University
Minimum Requirements for Admission

The following minimum requirements apply to all graduate programs and will be verified by the Graduate Division:

1. A bachelor’s degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution;
2. A grade point average of B or better (3.0);
3. If the applicant comes from a country or political entity (e.g., Quebec) where English is not the official language, adequate proficiency in English to do graduate work, as evidenced by a TOEFL score of at least 90 on the iBT test, 570 on the paper-and-pencil test, or an IELTS Band score of at least 7 on a 9-point scale (note that individual programs may set higher levels for any of these); and
4. Sufficient undergraduate training to do graduate work in the given field.

Applicants Who Already Hold a Graduate Degree

The Graduate Council views academic degrees not as vocational training certificates, but as evidence of broad training in research methods, independent study, and articulation of learning. Therefore, applicants who already have academic graduate degrees should be able to pursue new subject matter at an advanced level without the need to enroll in a related or similar graduate program.

Programs may consider students for an additional academic master’s or professional master’s degree only if the additional degree is in a distinctly different field.

Applicants admitted to a doctoral program that requires a master’s degree to be earned at Berkeley as a prerequisite (even though the applicant already has a master’s degree from another institution in the same or a closely allied field of study) will be permitted to undertake the second master’s degree, despite the overlap in field.

The Graduate Division will admit students for a second doctoral degree only if they meet the following guidelines:

1. Applicants with doctoral degrees may be admitted for an additional doctoral degree only if that degree program is in a general area of knowledge distinctly different from the field in which they earned their original degree. For example, a physics PhD could be admitted to a doctoral degree program in music or history; however, a student with a doctoral degree in mathematics would not be permitted to add a PhD in statistics.
2. Applicants who hold the PhD degree may be admitted to a professional doctorate or professional master’s degree program if there is no duplication of training involved.

Applicants may apply only to one single degree program or one concurrent degree program per admission cycle.

Required Documents for Applications

1. Transcripts: Applicants may upload unofficial transcripts with your application for the departmental initial review. If the applicant is admitted, then official transcripts of all college-level work will be required. Official transcripts must be in sealed envelopes as issued by the school(s) attended. If you have attended Berkeley, upload your unofficial transcript with your application for the departmental initial review. If you are admitted, an official transcript with evidence of degree conferral will not be required.

2. Letters of recommendation: Applicants may request online letters of recommendation through the online application system. Hard copies of recommendation letters must be sent directly to the program, not the Graduate Division.

3. Evidence of English language proficiency: All applicants from countries or political entities in which the official language is not English are required to submit official evidence of English language proficiency. This applies to applicants from Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Latin America, the Middle East, the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, most European countries, and Quebec (Canada). However, applicants who, at the time of application, have already completed at least one year of full-time academic course work with grades of B or better at a US university may submit an official transcript from the US university to fulfill this requirement. The following courses will not fulfill this requirement:
   • courses in English as a Second Language,
   • courses conducted in a language other than English,
   • courses that will be completed after the application is submitted, and
   • courses of a non-academic nature.
If applicants have previously been denied admission to Berkeley on the basis of their English language proficiency, they must submit new test scores that meet the current minimum from one of the standardized tests. Official TOEFL score reports must be sent directly from Educational Test Services (ETS). The institution code for Berkeley is 4833. Official IELTS score reports must be mailed directly to our office from the British Council. TOEFL and IELTS score reports are only valid for two years.

Where to Apply
Visit the Berkeley Graduate Division application page (http://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply).

Admission Criteria and Prerequisites
Admission to the Master of Urban Design program requires:

- A prior professional degree in architecture (BArch or MArch), landscape architecture (BLA or MLA), or city and regional planning (MCP or MUP with a strong design background).
- Evidence of high-quality academic and professional work, including GRE and minimum TOEFL/IELTS score requirements.
- Two years of professional experience after completion of the professional degree is recommended but not required. Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality of their work.
- Recommended: A course in history/theory of urban form (comparable to CY PLAN C240). Students without this course will be expected to enroll in CY PLAN C240 during the program.

Course Requirements
Five courses constitute the core of the Master of Urban Design degree program:

- ENV DES 201 Urban Places Advanced Studio—an intensive studio involving collaborative work on problems that are large in scope, yet require attention to spatial organization and design details; projects often involve the exploration of design options for areas under consideration by governmental agencies.
- ENV DES 251 Urban Places Seminar—an introduction to the program, the faculty resources, and issues arising in current urban design practice.
- CY PLAN 298 Urban Places Economic Module, which introduces key economic issues and concepts.
- ENV DES 252 Urban Places Study, a seminar that brings all candidates in the program together to develop and discuss with core faculty their individual thesis projects.
- ENV DES 253 Urban Places Thesis Studio, offered during the summer and led by an urban design practitioner with part-time involvement of MUD faculty. The summer thesis studio provides students with guidance leading to completion of the thesis by late summer and presentation to faculty and students during orientation week of fall semester. NOTE: Because this course is offered only during the summer, the UC Berkeley Academic Guide does not list it. For general and semester-specific descriptions of ENV DES 253, see Environmental Design Courses on the Architecture website.

An additional studio is selected from one of the graduate studios in the three departments. As advanced candidates, MUD students are expected to take a leadership role in these studios, assisting with the preparation, conduct, or evaluation of the studio and relating it to the content of the Master of Urban Design program. Students must also complete a course that offers instruction in methods for urban design practice or research; a course in urban design history or theory; and elective courses related to the thesis topic and selected in consultation with MUD faculty. See the MUD Program Statement for further information, including sample programs.
ENV DES 201 Urban Design Fundamentals Studio 5 Units
Terms offered: Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Fall 2018
An intensive studio involving collaborative work on problems that are large in scope, yet require attention to spatial organization and design details.
The studio course is offered each fall semester and required for incoming graduate students in the Master of Urban Design Program (MUD). The course is also open to College of Environmental Design graduate students of advanced standing in the Master of City Planning Program/Urban Design Concentration, the Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture Programs.
Urban Design Fundamentals Studio: Read More [+]
Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: Students enrolled in the Master of Urban Design program have priority. Others welcome with consent of instructor
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar and 5 hours of studio per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Environmental Design/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.
Urban Design Fundamentals Studio: Read Less [-]

ENV DES 207 Design and Difference 4 Units
Terms offered: Prior to 2007
This course explores contemporary debates around race, gender, sexuality, disability rights and other forms of embodied politics and considers their potential to transform the normative assumptions and practices of the built environment disciplines. Concepts such as self-abstraction, assimilation, and discourses of the "universal" or neutral body will be examined critically in relation to socially situated theories of power, identity, and activism. The course will investigate case studies of everyday objects, buildings and urban space that exemplify the creative limits and possibilities of embodied difference in the design process. Weekly reading responses, class discussions, presentations, and a final project are required.
Design and Difference: Read More [+]
Rules & Requirements
Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Environmental Design/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.
Design and Difference: Read Less [-]

ENV DES 251 Discourses in Urban Design 1 or 3 Units
Terms offered: Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Fall 2018
The course is the first of three courses (ED251, ED252, ED253) directed toward the development of research and design proposals that advance the field of urban design. As the first course in the sequence, ED251 introduces topics and research methods in contemporary urban design. There is a lecture component (Section 1) that is open to the College and campus. Graduate students preparing for theses and professional reports in urban design will enroll in Section 2, which includes attending the lectures as well as a seminar that expands on the lecture topics by exploring various research and design methodologies.
Discourses in Urban Design: Read More [+]
Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: The one unit section is open to all students. The three unit section is for students enrolled in the Master of Urban Design program or those who have obtained the consent of the instructor
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-3 hours of seminar per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Environmental Design/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.
Discourses in Urban Design: Read Less [-]

ENV DES 252 Thesis Research and Preparation 3 Units
Terms offered: Spring 2020, Spring 2019, Spring 2018
Seminar focuses on individual urban design interests, the design and research work that students are pursuing in other courses, and development of thesis or final design projects.
Thesis Research and Preparation: Read More [+]
Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: Students must be in the Master of Urban Design program or obtain consent of instructor
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Environmental Design/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.
Thesis Research and Preparation: Read Less [-]
ENV DES 253 Thesis Studio 4 Units
Terms offered: Summer 2020 10 Week Session, Summer 2018 10 Week Session, Summer 2017 10 Week Session
A studio for Masters of Urban Design students aimed to support students during the final months of their thesis work. Faculty will hold bi-weekly individual desk critiques of student work and organize preliminary reviews to outside reviewers in preparation of the final review scheduled during the late August orientation week.
Thesis Studio: Read More [+]
Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: 252
Hours & Format
Summer: 10 weeks - 3 hours of seminar and 7 hours of studio per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Environmental Design/Graduate
Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.
Thesis Studio: Read Less [-]

ENV DES 298 Environmental Design Group Studies 1 - 4 Units
Terms offered: Fall 2015, Spring 2015, Fall 2014
Topics to be announced at the beginning of each semester.
Environmental Design Group Studies: Read More [+]
Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor
Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring:
4 weeks - 4-14 hours of directed group study per week
15 weeks - 1-4 hours of directed group study per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Environmental Design/Graduate
Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.
Environmental Design Group Studies: Read Less [-]