

# MASTER OF ARTS IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

## Introduction

The Master of Arts in Landscape Architecture (MALA) program balances theory and practice to prepare students to create health, well-being, and environmental resilience through design in the public realm. This non-accredited post professional provides advanced design training and the possibility of adding additional specialized credentials while it takes full advantage of our location in the heart of Denver and the rapidly growing metro area. The program builds on the required professional accredited BLA which is required for consideration and offers distinctive opportunities for students to engage in meaningful projects that impact our communities and our built environment. We educate landscape architects to lead the design and planning process; successful graduates pursue diverse practices and occupations in public and private arenas around the world.

Our students study relevant issues through classes and immersive experiences that challenge them to think critically about the applications and implications for the work we do. While grounded in design and professional skills, the curriculum is structured to fluidly address evolving concerns for our profession, our communities, and our environment through topics such as health and well-being, water in the west, food systems, and emerging sustainable practices.

## The Degree

The Master of Arts in Landscape Architecture (MALA) curriculum revolves around a sequence of design studios and electives which may be used to complete any one of a wide array of certificates.

The studio sequence for each student will be determined based on portfolio, space available, and the prospective student's interest in the immersive studio experience. Once admitted, MALA students will set out a course of study in coordination with the department chair and advising staff.

Our program balances theory and practice and emphasizes design to create health and well-being and environmental resilience through design in the public realm. The curriculum fosters an ethic of responsibility grounded in natural systems and processes and an understanding of cultural and community values. Students learn skills working on relevant urban and civic projects in both local and global contexts and at a variety of scales. Studios and courses engage current issues, define future trends, and explore the role of landscape architecture in a rapidly changing world. Throughout the program, our students learn and apply design and planning skills, approaches, and technologies to enhance community, foster equity and environmental balance, conserve, and regenerate resources, and create places that hold value for current and future generations.

Denver's vibrant professional design and planning community supports our students through guest lectures and participation in design reviews, internships and mentor programs, and opportunities to visit offices and meet practitioners and leaders in our fields.

## Program Objectives

The department has developed five broad program objectives in support of our educational mission. These objectives identify what students

should know and be able to do by the time they graduate and are linked to a series of measurable student learning outcomes. The five categories are:

- **Design:** Students will be able to formulate questions and arguments about landscape and its role as a significant cultural medium and determine processes and practices that lead to transformative actions based on ethical, communicative, and content knowledge criteria.
- **Students will be able to create and employ appropriate representational media** to effectively convey ideas on subject matter contained in the professional curriculum to a variety of audiences, and to articulate and convey ideas orally and in writing.
- **Professional Ethics:** Students will be able to critically evaluate local and global ramifications of social issues, diverse cultures, economic and ecological systems, and professional practice as guiding principles for design thinking and implementation.
- **Content Knowledge:** Students will be able to develop a critical understanding and application of the histories, theories and practices of landscape architecture and its role in reflecting and shaping culture and environments.
- **Research:** Students will be able to develop and apply diligent and systematic critical paths of inquiry in support of design and scholarship.

## Central Themes

The MALA program offers students who have previously attained a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture graduate-level design education and prepares students to address current and future problems and challenges in local, regional, and global contexts. An issues-based approach ensures that students will be exposed to and participate in the development of new responses to emergent and ongoing crises and opportunities, emphasizing environmental and social justice as a key element for the design of livable, sustainable, and resilient places and landscapes. Examples of this are deep in the department's work over the past forty years, with examples such as working for five years with the local community of the Lower 9th Ward in New Orleans addressing issues around recovery after Hurricane Katrina, and the Learning Landscapes initiative that recently won a Student ASLA award for a design-build project in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. We address issues of water, food scarcity, and urban agriculture, the redesign and recovery of post-industrial sites and mining landscapes throughout the state, and issues of health and livability in marginalized and under-served communities and neighborhoods. Many of these projects involve multiple courses over several years and have made major impacts on the places and communities they have engaged. Students are immersed in interdisciplinary opportunities to not just learn, but to make meaningful change, and interact with community members and professionals from many different backgrounds and disciplines, gaining invaluable experience and skills in working and communicating in interdisciplinary teams.

## BIG THINKING

We believe that the issues, challenges, and opportunities landscape architects face are interrelated, spanning all scales from a small private yard to neighborhood to city to region to the world, and involve a wide range of social, cultural, ecological, and economic systems, requiring critical and creative thinking that transcends scales and is cross-, trans- and interdisciplinary.

## CRITICAL ISSUES

We strongly believe that Landscape Architecture is uniquely positioned to make major contributions to the big and urgent questions and issues that affect human and non-human systems. Climate change, resource scarcity, water and food are as critical as the design and building of landscapes and places that are about more than just sustainability and resilience and provide opportunities for people to thrive.

## MEANINGFUL CHANGE

While the functioning and performances of human and non-human systems are critical, good design does more than just provide solutions to problems. It provides opportunities for people to interact with places over time, and it empowers them to understand the dynamics that affect their environments and to participate in the ongoing processes of changing place and changing communities, thus becoming authors and co-authors of the places they shape and inhabit.

## Dual Degree and Certificate Options

There are many dual degree and certificate options available to MA.LA students. For more information on currently available programs, please visit the CAP website (<https://architectureandplanning.ucdenver.edu/>).

## Program Requirements

The Master of Arts in Landscape Architecture (MALA) is a non-LAAB accredited degree that provides graduate-level design instruction for students who have already completed an accredited undergraduate degree in landscape architecture (BLA). Students must have completed their BLA prior to beginning the MALA.

In addition to three graduate-level studios as core requirements, students have the opportunity to pursue their own interests across a varied offering of electives, extend existing technical skills within the field of landscape architecture, or complete a related certificate within the 30 credit degree requirements for the MALA. The studio sequence for each student will be determined based on portfolio, space available, and the prospective student’s interest in the immersive studio experience. International student admissions are not available at this time. Once admitted, MALA students will set out a course of study in coordination with the department chair and advising staff. Potential certificates within the College of Architecture and Planning include:

- Geospatial Information Science Certificate (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-architecture-planning/graduate-certificates/geospatial-information-science-graduate-certificate/>)
- Historic Preservation Certificate (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-architecture-planning/graduate-certificates/historic-preservation-graduate-certificate/>)
- Interior Design Certificate (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-architecture-planning/graduate-certificates/interior-design-certificate/>)

The MALA is designed as a full-time one-year, in-person degree program, which starts in the fall. No transfer credit is available for this degree. Though flexible options with regard to course sequence and the initial semester are available, remote options are not available. Depending on course scheduling, the completion of a certificate may require additional semesters of part-time enrollment.

## Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
<b>DESIGN STUDIOS</b>		<b>12</b>
LDAR 5503	Landscape Architecture Design Studio 3	
LDAR 6607	Landscape Architecture Design Studio 7	
LDAR 6608	Landscape Architecture Design Studio 8	
<b>HISTORY &amp; THEORY</b>		<b>3</b>
LDAR 6620	Landscape Architecture Theory and Criticism	
<b>ELECTIVES</b>		<b>15</b>
12 Hours of Open Electives		
3 Hours of Landscape Architecture Electives		
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>
Course	Title	Hours
<b>First Year</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
LDAR 5503	Landscape Architecture Design Studio 3	6
LDAR Elective		3
Open Elective		3
Open Elective		3
<b>Hours</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
LDAR 6607	Landscape Architecture Design Studio 7	3
LDAR 6608	Landscape Architecture Design Studio 8	3
LDAR 6620	Landscape Architecture Theory and Criticism	3
Open Elective		3
Open Elective		3
<b>Hours</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>