

# URBAN DESIGN, MUD

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## Program Description

The Master of Urban Design (MUD) is an advanced post-professional degree program for individuals who seek a career in urban design practice or for current planning and design professionals who want to enhance and expand their existing practice with urban design knowledge and expertise.

To be accepted into the MUD program, an individual must hold a master's degree in architecture, urban planning, or landscape architecture, or an accredited professional undergraduate degree in architecture, urban planning, or landscape architecture. Students in CU Denver's MARCH, MLA, and MURP programs may be eligible to apply to the MUD program and begin earning MUD credits before they complete their prerequisite master's degree through the MUD Overlapping Dual Degree option (see below).

The MUD program consists of nine courses: one studio and three lecture courses in the fall, one studio and three lecture courses in the spring, and either a travel studio or capstone project in the summer. To earn the MUD degree, a student must complete all nine courses totaling 36 credits. The MUD program is designed to be accomplished in a single calendar year (fall, spring, and summer semesters) as a full-time, immersive experience; however, students with qualifying circumstances or students admitted through the MUD Overlapping Dual Degree option may complete the program over a longer timeframe.

Using Colorado's diverse urban landscapes as a laboratory for real-world learning experiences, our MUD program teaches and trains students to become exceptional urban design thinkers, practitioners, and leaders in their communities; collaborates with urban designers to advance the profession and position it at the intersection of the city-building disciplines; and engages with the community to create great places that are sustainable, inclusive, equitable, healthy, and inspiring.

Graduate Education Policies and Procedures apply to this program.

## Prerequisites

The Master of Urban Design at CU Denver is an advanced post-professional degree. In order to be admitted to the program, an individual must hold (or will hold by the start of their MUD studies) a professional degree in architecture, urban planning, or landscape architecture (minimum GPA 3.00) from an accredited program. Professional degrees in architecture, urban planning, and landscape architecture can be obtained at either the undergraduate or graduate levels.

### Qualifying Degrees:

- Master of Architecture (M.Arch)
- Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch)
- Master of Urban Planning (MUP, MURP, MCP or similar)
- Bachelor of Urban Planning (BSUP, BSURP or similar)
- Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA)
- Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA or BSLA)

The qualifying degree must be accredited through the National Architectural Accrediting Board (for architecture), the Planning Accreditation Board (for urban planning), or the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (for landscape architecture) for programs in the United States. For international applicants, please contact us for more information.

### Overlapping Dual Degree for current CAP students:

The MUD Overlapping Dual Degree option gives students in the MARCH, MLA, and MURP programs at CU Denver the opportunity to apply to the MUD program and begin earning MUD credits before they complete their prerequisite master's degree. By taking MUD lecture courses that qualify as open or cross-listed electives toward their prerequisite degree, students can reduce the total number of credits required to earn both degrees. For details about the Overlapping Dual Degree option, current CU Denver CAP graduate students should contact their Academic Advisor.

## Admissions

The Master of Urban Design program accepts applications for fall semester entry. The program does not encourage entry to the program in any spring semester due to the specific sequencing of the classes.

The priority deadline (consideration for scholarships) for all applicants is Feb 15; final deadline is May 1. The requirements the admissions committee considers are:

- Academic transcripts of the qualifying degree(s)—see Prerequisites section above.
- A minimum 3.00 GPA is required to apply to the MUD program. Applicants with a 3.00 GPA or higher do not need to submit Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) scores. Applicants with a GPA below 3.00 may be required to submit GRE scores.
- A portfolio that includes examples of student or professional projects that show your planning/design-related knowledge and skills, ability to graphically express planning/design and spatial concepts and processes, organizational and communication (written and graphical) capabilities, and competency in various planning/design computer applications.
- A statement of purpose that includes your educational and professional goals and a thoughtful explanation of how a MUD degree will allow you to achieve your goals.
- Resume describing your educational and professional background.
- Three letters of reference, at least one from an academic reference if your most recent academic degree was earned within the last five years.
- International applicants must submit proof of English language proficiency. For more information regarding English Language Proficiency and international transcripts at the CU Denver International Admissions website.

## Transfer Credit

In accordance with Graduate Education policies, coursework that has been applied towards an undergraduate degree or another graduate degree on the same level (e.g., MA to MS) cannot be accepted for transfer credit. Specifically, master's courses applied to one completed master's degree program may not be applied to another master's degree. Credits earned in a Graduate Certificate Program, that have not also been applied to a graduate degree program may be applied to a graduate degree program with program consent. This policy applies to previously completed College of Architecture and Planning (CAP) undergraduate and

graduate programs as well. Please see the Graduate Education Policies and Procedures for more information.

## Program Requirements

The MUD curriculum features a mix of lecture and studio courses that comprehensively cover the spectrum of urban design theory and practice and emphasizes hands-on experiential learning and skills development. The curriculum consists of nine courses: one studio and three lecture courses taken in the fall semester, one studio and three lecture courses taken in the spring semester, and the final requirement—a capstone project or advanced travel studio (student's choice)—taken during the summer. To earn the MUD degree, a student must successfully complete all nine courses totaling 36 credits.

Students entering the MUD program who lack certain design knowledge or skills may be required to take the program's Design Skills Workshop before the start of the Fall semester, as determined by the program's admissions review committee.

**The program curriculum is 36 credit hours and consists of the courses shown below:**

| Code   | Title  | Hours     |
|--|--|-----------|
| URBN 6500  | Urban Design Studio I  | 6         |
| URBN 6525  | City Design Fundamentals                                     | 3         |
| URBN 6550  | Design Policy, Process, and Regulation                       | 3         |
| URBN 6575  | Advanced Visualization for Urban Design                      | 3         |
| URBN 6600  | Urban Design Studio II                                       | 6         |
| URBN 6625  | Urban Design Economics and Equity                            | 3         |
| URBN 6650  | Urban Design and the Environment                             | 3         |
| URBN 6675  | Design Practice and Leadership                               | 3         |
| <i>Students choose of ONE of the following 6-credit courses:</i> |  |           |
| URBN 6700<br>or URBN 6725  | Urban Design Advanced Travel Studio<br>Urban Design Capstone | 6         |
| <b>Total Hours</b>   |  | <b>36</b> |

## Program Vision, Mission, and Hallmarks

### THE VISION FOR URBAN DESIGN EDUCATION AT THE COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING:

- We are an international model for training the urban designers of tomorrow and for working closely with urban design professionals and the community to create places that enrich people and the planet.

### THE URBAN DESIGN MISSION IS TO:

- Teach and train students to become exceptional urban design thinkers, practitioners, and leaders in their communities.
- Collaborate with urban designers to advance the profession and position it at the intersection of the city-building disciplines.
- Engage with the community to create great places that are sustainable, inclusive, equitable, healthy, and inspiring, while providing students with real-world learning experiences.

### THE MASTER OF URBAN DESIGN PROGRAM'S FOUR HALLMARKS:

- **Professional Engagement:** Our Master of Urban Design program prepares students for professional practice and positions them for

career advancement through ongoing engagement and partnerships with distinguished practitioners in urban design, architecture, city planning, landscape architecture, and related fields. The curriculum, which balances theory and practice, draws significantly from practicing faculty to elevate the professional competency of students, and prepare them for long-term career success. Students are exposed to the many issues that cities currently face, including elements of planning policy; zoning and development regulations; public realm design; mobility and transportation; economics; social equity and environmental sustainability; and community engagement. This allows students to develop a deep understanding of the role of urban design in the city-building process and learn urban design by engaging with practitioners who are implementing projects and actively working in the delivery and evolution of urban places.

- **Community Engagement:** Our Master of Urban Design program develops sustained partnerships with local communities and organizations to work together to advance the goals of the MUD program, urban design practice, and the broader community through the exchange of ideas and the exploration of creative design concepts. It is critical that the design of cities and the spaces and places that urban designers help shape have people as their central focus. For urban designers to best design cities as people-centered places, they must engage with the community in meaningful ways. These partnerships recognize the wealth of resources and wisdom that already exists within communities and focus on understanding their issues, problems, and challenges. These community partnerships require students and faculty to approach engagement with a "listen and learn" attitude, foster mutually beneficial relationships, and ultimately create lasting positive impacts for all people and places.
- **Environment and Equity:** Our Master of Urban Design program focuses on the connections between urban form, public space, social equity and justice, ecological systems, environmental quality, and public health that exist at multiple scales. From the street to the neighborhood and from the city to the region, students explore the complex infrastructure systems, social networks, and ecosystems that affect our built and natural environments and look to develop new paradigms and design solutions that fight against environmental degradation, climate change, and social and racial inequities. Emphasizing the imperative for multidisciplinary approaches, the MUD program focuses on the triple bottom line of social, economic, and environmental sustainability and resilience in our cities and towns and the ever-increasing role that urban design plays in addressing climate change, disparities and displacement in underserved and historically marginalized communities, and public health and wellness.
- **Leadership:** Our Master of Urban Design program is structured to train students how to communicate confidently with other disciplines, facilitate effective teamwork, and tackle complex urban issues to create the next generation of civic and design leaders. Urban design is positioned at the intersection of multiple professions that participate in the city-building process including architecture, landscape architecture, city planning, civil engineering, and public policy and finance. A strong urban designer has a working knowledge of these allied disciplines and applies a breadth of knowledge to their professional work. The MUD program curates a student's skillset to position them to play critical leadership roles guiding multi-disciplinary teams and to advance the careers of those already working in urban design as well as provide a rigorous and

comprehensive platform for those newly embarking on an urban design career.

## Plan of Study

The MUD program consists of nine courses: one studio and three lecture courses in the fall, one studio and three lecture courses in the spring, and either a travel studio or capstone project in the summer. To earn the MUD degree, a student must complete all nine courses totaling 36 credits. The MUD program is designed to be accomplished in a single calendar year (fall, spring, and summer semesters) as a full-time, immersive experience; however, students with qualifying circumstances or students admitted through the MUD Overlapping Degree Option may complete the program over a longer timeframe.

| Course                    | Title   | Hours     |
|---------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>Year 1</b>             |   |           |
| <b>Fall</b>               |   |           |
| URBN 6500                 | Urban Design Studio I   | 6         |
| URBN 6525                 | City Design Fundamentals  | 3         |
| URBN 6550                 | Design Policy, Process, and Regulation                          | 3         |
| URBN 6575                 | Advanced Visualization for Urban Design                         | 3         |
| <b>Hours</b>              |   | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Spring</b>             |   |           |
| URBN 6600                 | Urban Design Studio II  | 6         |
| URBN 6625                 | Urban Design Economics and Equity                               | 3         |
| URBN 6650                 | Urban Design and the Environment                                | 3         |
| URBN 6675                 | Design Practice and Leadership                                  | 3         |
| <b>Hours</b>              |   | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Summer</b>             |   |           |
| URBN 6700<br>or URBN 6725 | Urban Design Advanced Travel Studio<br>or Urban Design Capstone | 6         |
| <b>Hours</b>              |   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Total Hours</b>        |   | <b>36</b> |