

SALA Virtual Open House

Graduate Programs Q&A Report

Q: If my previous Bachelor degree (Literature, Philosophy, and Theatre) was not in the field of design, would my application to MARCLA be at a disadvantage?

A: Short answer is no. You would enter the MARCLA program as a “non-AP” student. Your materials would be evaluated against other students entering as non-ap. I would also offer that if you are interested in MLA or MARCH as possible courses of study, you should apply to one or both of those degrees in addition to MARCLA. Students accepted into MARCLA are accepted into both MLA and MARCH, however, you can be accepted into one of the more focused graduate degrees even if you are not accepted into MARCLA.

Q: Bridging from the previous response, is applying to MARCLA, MLA, and MARCH be three separate applications or one application? Is it a cost for three applications or cost of one? Can the same portfolio and references be used for the tri-application?

A: It would be three separate applications, each with an application fee. You could use the same portfolio, but I think it’s probably better to alter based on the program you’re applying for. Referees will be sent requests for each program that you apply for.

Q: Hi, I am coming back to school a number of years in the workforce. Are my undergrad grades as important if we can demonstrate how our last x years of work experience contribute to being a student of the program?

A: The bachelor’s degree is the basis of admission to a graduate program. Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has a minimum GPA requirement that is quite strict, so in that sense the bachelor’s degree is still important no matter how long ago your degree was.

Q: Are there any alumni that have completed the program as a mature student making a career pivot?

A: Yes, while it is not as frequent, we have had students who have come to the program after having spent time in other careers

Q: This might be a bit of a taboo question but - can an international student gain CA residency to be able to pay resident tuition after the first year of study?

A: It took me 2 years to get PR status in Canada, so maybe could apply to your second or third year if you get on top of PR application. For immigration and residency status questions I

would contact the International Student's office at <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/international-student-advising>

Q: As someone who is interested in possibly combining my interests in film and architecture, are there any particular opportunities or studios that SALA offers that could help me explore that?

A: Depending on which program you are applying to you will have a number of elective classes to take which you could take in other departments, such as film studies. The studio topics vary from year to year so I am unsure if there would be one on that specific topic. Your graduation project is also an independent project so you could focus on this topic there.

Q: I'm really interested in design-build opportunities, I'm hoping you can share some of the experiences you may have had/share the kinds of opportunities that might be available for grad students (MArch)

A: You can find more information on SALA's design-build program here: <https://sala.ubc.ca/academics/enriched-educational-experiences/design-build>

Q: I have a background in urban design and environmental planning, but that is obviously different than landscape arch. How much support is given to students in the first year regarding design software?

A: There are Design Media courses built into the core curriculum which introduce key software - you definitely don't need to worry about familiarity with technical or design programs!

Q: For the entrance application, are there portfolio guidelines?

A: You can find them for the MLA program here: <https://sala.ubc.ca/admissions/master-landscape-architecture> (Scroll down and expand the Portfolio header)

Q: I would be returning to school as a 'mature student'. I graduated with my B.F.A in 2004. (Shock!) I think in a lot of ways this is an advantage, but I'm having trouble securing academic references. I hope this won't disclude me, any suggestions?

A: We do require two of the references be academic. These do not necessarily have to be from your undergrad. If you have taken any courses or programs more recently the referees can be from those as well. One of the references can be professional.

Q: Are there options for those without graduate degrees wishing to study Urban Design either through the M.Arch, or L.Arch. programs.

A: Both the MLA and MARCH integrate aspects of Urban Design into their curriculums. You are able to use your elective courses to take courses in the Urban Design program as well.

Q: My academics are a little below the 75% requirement, so would I still be eligible to apply?

A: The minimum academic requirement is 76%. Grad Studies is quite strict about this requirement. Applications below the requirement are not normally considered for admission. If you have done another degree (masters or bachelors) that meets the requirements that could be used as the basis of admission instead.

Q: Is there instruction in Vectorworks Landmark?

A: Courses primarily use AutoCAD/Rhino/Revit, but there's also quite a bit of flexibility around which programs you want to use

Q: What CAD program(s) does SALA primarily work with/ teach?

A: AutoCAD/Revit/Rhino are the primary CAD programs used at SALA

Q: Can you provide any thoughts on how the UBC SALA Masters in Urban Design program differs the UBC SCARP Planning Program Urban Design Option?

A: SCARP's Master of Community and Regional Planning is an accredited professional program, which allows you to work as a Planner in the US and Canada. Our Urban Design program is not a planning-based program, but rather a post-professional degree designed for students who have already studied in a field concerned with the built environment.

Q: As a student with accommodations for various reasons... Does UBC SALA have a sort of "Centre of Accessibility Services" who help students with different challenges?

A: Yes, UBC has a Centre for Accessibility: <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>

Q: What bursaries, scholarships, etc. are available for incoming grad students?

A: We have a limited number of entrance awards that we offer to our top-ranked applicants. Through the degree we also have a number of awards for returning students, TAships. Grad

Studies also has an awards database that you can look through at <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/scholarships-awards-funding/award-opportunities>.

Q: Is there any consideration for mental health related issues that have affected our GPA for undergrad? I understand that there is a minimum (and strict) GPA requirement, but I'd love to know if I would still have a chance as an applicant when my GPA has suffered as a result of external issues.

A: We do have a mechanism to propose a rationale to admit a student that is under the minimum requirements but it would have to be an exceptional situation (normally this is a health reason). So if you choose to apply I would advise you to bring this to my attention when you apply by emailing me directly.

Q: My current undergrad degree ends in June 2022, so would I be able to apply for the urban design program?

A: The program begins in May 2022, so you'd be eligible for the May 2023 intake. Applications for the May 2023 cohort will open in September 2022.

Q: Is the GPA requirement calculated through all years of school or just the final year of your program?

A: For US and Canadian schools the GPA is calculated by using the upper-level classes. It would not necessarily be all classes in your last two years, it is based on the course level. For example if your course numbering system is 100 to 400-level then we would use all 300 and 400-level courses.

Q: Do M.arch students have opportunities to pursue their own research through grants, collaborations with other faculties, etc.?

A: All graduate students have a graduate thesis project at the end of the program, for which you would be encouraged to apply for grants and arrange collaborations (although it's not mandatory). It's also possible to apply for grants and arrange collaborations as Directed Studies or independent projects.

Q: What are 'Option studios', how do they work, and how are they listed in the course catalog?

A: You can see the option studio offerings for a couple of our most recent semesters here: <https://sala.ubc.ca/option-studios-fall-2021>
<https://sala.ubc.ca/option-studios-spring-2021>

<https://sala.ubc.ca/option-studios-fall-2020>

The ones for Spring 2022 will be posted in January!

Q: What is the average GPA of accepted students? What percentage of applicants are accepted?

A: I wouldn't say there is an average accepted GPA. Anyone who meets the required 76% will be considered. After that point the entirety of the applications are assessed fairly equally.

Q: For the grade average, is it just the most recent 300-400 classes or all 300-400 classes taken throughout undergrad?

A: All 300 and 400-level classes during undergrad if your scale is 100 - 400-level. Schools have a lot of different scales as well.

Q: Does SALA help with finding internships? what % of students are able to get summer internships?

A: Yes, you can reach out to your faculty supervisor and other faculty if you are interested in an internship. They can help to connect you with the right people at the firms.

Q: Are there classes/studios that focus specifically on the role of Project Architects? I am very interested the role a project architect can play in material/contractor choices during the project phase of a major construction project to reduce the carbon footprint of a building.

A: If I am interested in becoming a project architect, should I state as much in the application?

Q: Are there course requirements that occur during the Spring/Summer terms that are a must? I am a reservist in the CAF, so I have some obligations during the Summer months

A: This depends on the program. For MArch there are required courses in the summer.

Q: Could you elaborate on the format of the thesis? Is it a full year project and are you taking other courses during that year/semester?

A: It's broken into two parts (GP1/GP2). GP1 is in the first term of your final year, and focusses on gathering literature and defining your design project. You usually are doing a full course load and an option studio during GP1.

You develop the design proposal in GP2. At this point, you usually only take one other course (professional practice), and will already have completed your studio credit requirements.

Q: Who would you speak to about the possibility of transferable credits from previous course work? Or challenging some courses? (Upon acceptance to the program obviously).

A: You can reach out to the Student Services Coordinator.

Q: Do all B.Arch degrees from a Canadian school of architecture qualify for advanced placement into the M.Arch?

A: The degrees that automatically receive advanced placement are listed on the admissions page of our website <https://sala.ubc.ca/admissions/master-architecture>. Other programs that are less well known by the faculty are assessed by the Admissions Committee. Offers of advanced placement are given in the admission letter.

Q: Does the MLA prepare me for BCSLA's LARE?

A: The MLA is a professional degree which allows you to enter the LARE exams after you have completed the required hours of internship/practice
More information here: <https://www.bcsla.org/content/landscape-architect-registration-examination-lare>

Q: Are there any mature students that have graduated from the program that we could reach out to about their experience in the program and career trajectory afterwards.

A: While we don't have a list of alumni that have volunteered to do this, I think it is a great idea. You might reach out to Tara Deans to inquire about possible connections. Or, to respective professional bodies to see if there are connections to be found there

Q: Who can I reach out to for advice in the program? I have interest in both MArch, MLA, and MARCLA. But unsure on which one to proceed with.

A: You can reach out to arch@sala.ubc.ca for MArch and larc@sala.ubc.ca for MLA and MARCLA.

Q: To clarify, did you say, Kees, 6-8 students accepted per year?

A: That's roughly the correct number, yes

Q: How many international students are admitted in M.Arch program?

A: This differs from year to year, but I would say on average about 20%. There is no quota or limit.

Q: Do you have office hours at the school if we wish to ask further questions, or do you prefer email for now?

A: arch@sala.com

Questions Answered Live:

Q: How would I make the MLA program's course of study work for me as a part-time student?

Q: From applicants with a non-AP background (applying for MArch) what are you looking for in the portfolio and statement of intent? What should we be focusing on?

Q: What should references focus on when writing their reference letters? (Asking for professors that have experience writing MFA reference letters but not MArch)

Q: I hold two undergraduate degrees in civil engineering and music, and I'd like to combine my interests in music with my graduate studies in architecture. Would the M.Arch program at UBC allow me to explore the intersection of music and architecture in any capacity? Or does SALA have a different design philosophy or emphasis that wouldn't necessarily allow me to explore this?

Q: Can you elaborate more on the study abroad options? Are they directly incorporated into studio selections or do are they more independently sought out? As well have any of these resumed since COVID?

Q: Have studio classes returned to in person learning and what is the plan going forward for return to campus?

Q: I've been following the HiLo Lab's work on Zippered Wood for a few years now, and I'm wondering what kind of opportunities are available for master's students to take part in the research of this lab or others, whether as part of the curriculum or as extracurricular.

Q: What does your study abroad program look like? Do you partner with specific universities? This is for MLarc or MArcla

Q: To the current students, how many hours do you spend on campus on the average day? What is your commute like, and is there time left in your day to spend on things outside your studies (e.g. family/personal life, hobbies)?

Q: If you are accepted, Is there an ability to defer by a year?

Q: Would we be able to participate in a study abroad summer program as an incoming student (prior to on-campus study)? e.g. with the aforementioned Japan program that was recently proposed (but remains up in the air due to COVID restrictions)

Q: How does competition for the MARCLA work? Are you compared to both the MARCH and MLA applications, or are there "spots" within these programs set aside for potential MARCLA students?

Q: Are thesis students responsible for approaching a thesis advisor or is it internally delegated?