



*Landscape architecture is the planning,
design, and management
of the
built and natural environment.*
American Society of Landscape Architects

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE PROGRAMS

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Introduction

Welcome to the University of Cincinnati! We are honored that you have chosen our Landscape Architecture Program for your graduate studies. We are proud of our program and its commitment to "...the contemporary practice of landscape architecture and its broad applications of regenerative planning, design, and stewardship, and the synthesis of art and science to balance human activity with natural systems" (LAND Vision Statement).

Your potential influence in the future of our world's natural and human landscapes has never been more important. We hope to provide a positive, productive, and inspiring environment for you to design your role.

Our Landscape Architecture Program's motto is

Volo enim dicitur ad differentiam ipsorum.

Eu quero fazer a diferença.

Quiero hacer la diferencia.

我想有所作为

Wǒ xiǎng yǒu suǒ zuòwéi

Je veux faire une différence.

मुझे एक बदलाव लाना है

mujhe ek badalaav laana hai

I want to make a difference.



Photo by UC

UC Graduate School, UC International, and Student Responsibilities

This Handbook for the Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) program in the School of Planning (SOP) in the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP) contains the specific rules and regulations that apply to students in the Master of Landscape Architecture program.

The contents of this Handbook comply with the rules and policies of the Graduate School of the University of Cincinnati, which is charged with oversight of all graduate programs at the University of Cincinnati. Know your rights and responsibilities regarding Graduate Study at the University of Cincinnati by familiarizing yourself with the contents of this Handbook and the [UC Graduate Student Handbook](#).

- Ensure that you have a plan of study and are working with your academic advisor on a regular basis.
- Ensure that you receive an annual review (see link to form later in this handbook)
- Be aware of all University deadlines (registration, fees, thesis submittal, graduation, etc.)

College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP)

DAAP is the home of four Schools: Design (SOD), Architecture and Interior Design (SAID), Art (SOA), and Planning (SOP). The MLA Program is in SOP. DAAP offers graduate degrees in Design, Architecture, Interior Design, Art Education, Art History, Fine Arts, Community Planning, City Planning, Landscape Architecture, and Regional Development Planning. The role of the DAAP Office of Graduate Studies and Research is to support DAAP's graduate programs by assisting the School, updating policies and procedures from the University and the College, ensuring graduate student awards are distributed in a responsible manner, and mediating/resolving conflicts.

School of Planning (SOP)

The [School of Planning](#) (SOP) is charged with both undergraduate and graduate education and is committed to excellence in teaching, learning, research, creative works, service, and leadership. In addition to the Master of Landscape Architecture, Master of Science in Landscape Architecture, Master of Community Planning, Master of City Planning, Master of Urban Design, and PhD in Regional Development Planning, SOP offers a Bachelor of Science in Urban Studies program, a Bachelor of Urban Planning and a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture. Most of an MLA student's administrative business will be addressed by the MLA Program Director with the assistance of the School of Planning and the DAAP Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

Cincinnati and Its Environs

The City of Cincinnati is an attractive city on the picturesque Ohio River. Cincinnati boasts an accessible and pleasant downtown area; a fine resident symphony orchestra and ballet company; accomplished amateur and professional theater groups, and a summer opera series, as well as professional sports teams, such as the Reds and the Bengals. An outstanding system of historic and contemporary city and county parks makes outdoor recreation both inexpensive and convenient.

The Cincinnati Art Museum and Contemporary Arts Center bring a modern and experimental dimension to the art life of the city, while the famous Taft Museum is among the best private collections open to the public. The Museum Center in historic Union Terminal is home to the Cincinnati Historical Society Library, the Natural History Museum, the Duke Energy Children's Museum, and the Robert D. Lindner Family Omni-Max Theater Center, as well as an Amtrak connection. The Museum Center also houses an interpretive model of historic Cincinnati provided by the Cincinnati Railroad Club. Cincinnati's National Underground Railroad Freedom Center provides exhibitions of historic and contemporary relevance to local and international topics of freedom.

Within the metropolitan area, there are many city, county, and regional planning agencies, a variety of private architecture, landscape architecture, and planning consulting agencies, environmental agencies, a variety of health service organizations (both public and private), and many health-related agencies that provide opportunities and resource contacts for the developing professional.

Landscape Architecture Program Vision Statement: I Want to Make a Difference

Today's Landscape Architecture Program was founded in 2017, but the University of Cincinnati was actually one of the first universities in the United States to have a landscape architecture program in the early 1900s. The early program's community did not recover from the impact of World War II. The remaining faculty created a planning program, which eventually became the School of Planning.

In the historic tradition of the iconic Midwestern landscape architects Jens Jensen, A.D. Taylor, and Genevieve Gillette, the practice of landscape architecture in Cincinnati continues to provide the planning and urban design of livable communities that are suited to the environmental and cultural conditions of this metropolitan region. The landscape architecture program at the University of Cincinnati is founded on the regional resources, assets, and challenges of the Cincinnati region and the Ohio River Valley, the

contemporary practice of landscape architecture and its broad applications of regenerative planning, design, and stewardship, and the synthesis of art and science to balance human activity with natural systems.

Landscape Architecture program Accreditation:

Our accredited program with the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board (LAAB) prepares graduates to pursue licensure to protect the public health and welfare and to improve the quality of life. This advanced degree program at UC will further the intellectual discourse with research, creative work, cooperative education, and service to support and challenge the public, private, and academic practice of the profession. The Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) program at the University of Cincinnati exploits and enhances the opportunities afforded by its position in the College of Design, Art, Architecture, and Planning and its associations with UC's diverse and complementary disciplines, and as such it will be unique among its institutional peers.

Landscape architects have led the way in sustainable design for more than 100 years. From the residential garden to the regional transportation plan, the practice of landscape architecture spans the spectrum of human intervention on the land as well as the stewardship of the earth's natural resources. Landscape architects are leading projects to implement urban design and green infrastructure, reclaim exhausted and damaged lands and revitalize neighborhoods, and advance projects of local significance for institutional, residential, and commercial land uses. The program prepares graduates for interdisciplinary teamwork to sustain the urban, regional, and global landscape in a prosperous and dynamic equilibrium.

Unique Attributes of the UC MLA Program

In addition to our unique [cooperative education program](#), unequaled in any other Master of Landscape Architecture program, we also have a curriculum that is closely linked to the [Sustainable Sites Initiative \(SITES®\)](#). Our students get training from GBCI, Inc. certified instructors to prepare them to become SITES Accredited Professionals (SITES AP).

The Landscape Architecture Community

The UC Landscape Architecture Program sustains associations with professional organizations that represent the profession of landscape architecture in several dimensions, including the following:

The [American Society of Landscape Architects](#) is the primary organization representing the professional community of landscape architecture. ASLA Student Membership is evidence of a student's commitment to their profession and its ethics, standards, and values. Our program has an affiliation with the ASLA through its UC Student Chapter of the ASLA (UCSCASLA). Students must be members of the national ASLA to include this professional distinction on their signatures, resumes, and portfolios. If the student is a member of the national ASLA, "Student ASLA" is the appropriate designation (eg. Jane Doe, Student ASLA).

The [Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture](#) (CELA) is the scholarly community of educators and practitioners who advance the knowledge and skills of the profession. MLA students are encouraged to participate in CELA's annual conference as presenters and attendees.

The [Landscape Architecture Foundation](#) (LAF) supports the profession with research and advocacy. At their website, students will find scholarship opportunities, the [Landscape Performance](#) series, and [The New Landscape Declaration](#).

The [Cultural Landscape Foundation](#) is the repository and advocate for the history and culture associated with landscape architecture. At this site, you can find video interviews with prominent landscape architects and other great information about the projects and places shaped by landscape architects.

Licensure

In the United States, landscape architecture is known as a "licensed profession," similar to professions like architecture and environmental engineering, which are charged with protection of the public's health, safety, and welfare. As such, the practice of landscape architecture and the use of the title "Landscape Architect" are regulated on a state-by-state basis with a unifying foundation of ethics and standards that is common to all state regulations.

There is a long and rigorous path to becoming a licensed landscape architect, including a professional degree that is accredited by the [Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board](#) (LAAB), a 2- or 3-year period of internship, and a rigorous examination called the Landscape Architects Registration Examination (LARE). Once licensed, a Landscape Architect is required to obtain continuing education. Visit the website of the [Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards](#) to learn about the path to licensure. As an accredited first-professional degree from LAAB, our MLA program meets all standards and procedure requirements. Our next accreditation visit is planned for Spring 2027.

Facilities, Classrooms, Technology, and Course Expenses

Facilities

The College's Main Office is housed in the Aronoff Center, a 164,000-square-foot addition, which opened in 1996 and linked together the previously existing Alms, DAA, and Wolfson buildings. Designed by renowned architect Peter Eisenman, the Aronoff Center has generated much national and international attention.

The college's classrooms are equipped with state-of-the-art video projection systems. In addition to studios, workshops, laboratories, lecture and seminar rooms, the college has a number of specialized facilities which support its programs. Among these are:

DAAPIT Computer Lab (aka Computer Graphics Center or CGC)

A 50 work station 24/7 computer lab on the 4000 level, with high end computer workstations suitable for the vast array of professional graphics software used in all our disciplines.

Rapid Prototyping Center (RPC)

[The Rapid Prototyping Center](#) is home to several computer numerical control (CNC) machines used for creating three-dimensional representations of computer models, on the 5000 level.

Photo Lab

[The Photo Lab](#) on the 4000 level contains dark rooms and facilities for processing film-based photography in addition to supporting output of high-end digital photography.

Build Lab

[The Build Lab](#) on the 3000 level contains numerous wood and metal working machines including saws, drills, welding equipment, hand tools and work surfaces.

DAAP Galleries

The [DAAP Galleries](#) consist of the Dorothy W. and C. Lawson Reed, Jr. Gallery on the 5000 level and the Phillip M. Meyers, Jr. Memorial Gallery in the Steiger Building. Rotating exhibitions feature local, regional, and national artists.

Robert A. Deshon and Karl J. Schlacter Library

DAAP has a [branch of the UC Library System](#) on the 5000 level next to the Main Office. The collection includes books and periodicals from all areas of art and design.

Art Store

Follet runs a art store on the 4000 level, stocked with art and modeling supplies, as well as convenience items.

Cafe

The DAAP Cafe is located in the main atrium on the 4000 level and serves a variety of food and drinks.

Classrooms

We strive to provide fully equipped, secure, safe, comfortable, and clean space for teaching, learning, and making in each classroom, studio, and in the DAAP facilities. It is each student's responsibility to foster a culture of good stewardship of these resources. In studios, we provide an individual workstation for each

student, and it is that student's responsibility to maintain that workstation and the space around it in safe, clean, and original condition.

Technology

Keeping pace with technology is essential to studying in the MLA program. The MLA program requires all students to own a laptop computer. We recommend that your laptop should meet the minimum specifications listed below:

- Dell system 3 or 4
- HP system 3 or 4
- Mac Book Pro 4 or 5
- 32 GB of RAM

DAAP IT provides free access to all required software in the Computer Graphics Center (CGC) and through remote desktops in DAAP and CECH. CECH provides virtual access to basic software including Adobe Suite. The DAAP machines are loaded with other graphic software such as ArcMap, AutoCAD, SketchUp/V-Ray, etc. That said, these remote desktops are limited by availability and network capability. We recommend getting as many applications directly onto your computer as practical. UC students also have access to many software training resources via [Linked-In Learning](#).

Software requirements are listed below. Please install all the free software in your laptop before your classes start and wait to install fee-based software when your instructors advise you. Students entering the MLA First Professional program are advised to achieve basic competence in as many of the software programs listed here as possible prior to beginning their courses in the program.

- Microsoft Office (FREE to students through the [UC Student Software Website](#))
- Autodesk AutoCAD (FREE to students through the [Autodesk Education Website](#))
- Adobe Creative Cloud (7 days FREE, then US\$19.99/month). If you would like to purchase this software for your computer, we recommend you to wait until the digital visualization class starts.
- SketchUp (FREE through [Sketchup](#) website)

Additional software may be required in some courses:

- Rhino (3 months FREE, then US \$195 for students)
- V-Ray (30 days FREE, then US \$99/year for students)
- Lumion Pro Student (FREE, through [Lumion Pro Student Website](#))

Course Expenses

The Landscape Architecture program does not provide its students with texts, studio materials, software, hardware, or other equipment other than a studio desk and chair. Your DAAP fees support the CGC and other facilities, so you are encouraged to take advantage of these important resources for on-campus or remote technology. When texts, materials, travel, or events are required course assignments, students are responsible for the expenses. Every effort will be made to limit expenses to those essential to effective learning.

Professional Values, Studio Culture, and DAAP Works

Professional Values

In all our courses, in our cooperative education experiences, and in our interactions together, we support an environment of professionalism. Professionalism is developed over time and tempered with experience, as with any skill or characteristic. The interactive nature of the MLA curriculum provides the opportunity to practice professionalism in an environment that simulates the professional office and the interdisciplinary relationships that support sustainability.

We consider the social, economic, and environmental contributions and consequences of our work.

We foster respect for each other as faculty and students, and we respect the work of the staff, custodians, and countless others behind the scenes whose work makes our work possible.

We rely on each other to be fully present and mutually committed to sustaining an open and positive environment.

When we see a better way to go forward, we strive for constructive discontent and share our ideas and feedback in a positive, productive manner that is in the best interest of the individual, the group, and the program.

We appreciate the contribution of guest reviewers, guest speakers, stakeholders, and others to our learning environment, and we are grateful for and respectful of their time.

We engage in the opportunity to enlarge our learning with distinguished guests who share their time and unique perspectives in our lecture series and reviews.

Our professional aspirations are evident in our courteous attention, appropriate attire, and respectful demeanor.

When we interact with those external to the program in the context of our courses, cooperative education, or professional occasions, we are ambassadors of our program and the University of Cincinnati.

Studio Culture

The topic of “studio culture” has engaged practitioners, faculty, and students for decades in an ongoing dialogue about the unique learning environment of the traditional Bauhaus studio model and its influence on professional work ethics. Universally, the studio hosts the most dynamic exploration of design, innovation, risk, play, and the synthesis of history, theory, systems, methods, materials, and processes. It has long been acknowledged that the studio culture that is absorbed by students in college has the potential to manifest in lifelong work habits that are ultimately unproductive and unhealthy. In the college studio, this may be cultivated by disproportionate time spent on studio assignments and neglect of other courses, physical and emotional stress, social isolation, and poor time management.

The time scheduled for studio each semester is intentionally the largest single portion of class time in support of exploration. Conversely, as a portion of the entire curriculum, the grade point average, and the topic areas of the Landscape Architects Registration Examination, the knowledge imparted in studio is one portion of the profession’s body of knowledge. The studio course should not overshadow other required

or elective courses which provide enhanced or critical knowledge and skills beyond those acquired in the studio.

Students are expected to sustain a balanced approach to time management when prioritizing their work for studio and other courses in alignment with stewardship of a healthy lifestyle. This approach will serve them well the length of their careers.

DAAP Works

DAAP celebrates its graduates with an exhibition called [DAAPWorks](#) every spring. Each School and its degree programs are represented with the display of graduating students' capstone, thesis, and thesis project work. The Landscape Architecture program's graduating students are expected to prepare their work to the highest standards possible, cooperate with the exhibition organizers, and participate in scheduled events associated with DAAP Works.

Landscape Architecture Program Awards

The faculty of the Landscape Architecture Program gives annual awards for scholastic achievement each spring semester. This recognition is based on merit and any award may not be awarded each year.

DAAP Outstanding Student in Landscape Architecture: These students are selected by their faculty based on their academic achievement, professional activities, and participation in the life of the University through service to the program, college, and/or University. Students are nominated by the Landscape Architecture faculty and voted on by the SOP faculty.

DAAP Cares Award in Landscape Architecture: The mission of DAAP Cares is to foster improved quality of life by identifying humanitarian issues and working as interdisciplinary teams that connect design, architecture, art, planning, and other disciplines to conduct research, create new theoretical frameworks and generate productive, inspiring solutions. The DAAP Cares award will be given to one or more MLA students who participate in the DAAP Cares program. This award is recognized in the annual DAAP Works exhibition.

DAAP School Directors' Choice Award in Landscape Architecture: DAAP's four School Directors review all of the work exhibited in DAAPWorks and recognize one student per degree program for this distinction. MLA faculty contribute input to the selection. This award is recognized in the annual DAAP Works exhibition.

SOP Outstanding Student in Landscape Architecture: Students are nominated by the Landscape Architecture faculty and voted on by the SOP faculty.

SOP Graduate Assistant Award in Landscape Architecture: Students are nominated by the Landscape Architecture faculty and voted on by the SOP faculty.

SOP Orville Simpson Urban Futures Award: Students are nominated by the SOP faculty and voted on by the SOP faculty.

Design and Creative Work Award: Recipient demonstrates a commitment to the best of design and creative work and the communication of those, taking initiative within a course and exceeding course requirements, or taking initiative via independent study. Nominations from faculty are voted on by Landscape Architecture faculty.

Scholarship Award: Recipient demonstrates an exceptional pursuit of knowledge and communication of that knowledge. Nominations from faculty are voted on by Landscape Architecture faculty.

History and Theory Award: Recipient demonstrates outstanding accomplishments in history and theory courses. Nominations from faculty are voted on by Landscape Architecture faculty.

Landscape Architecture Advocacy Award: Recipient advocates for the profession through volunteerism, liaison with ASLA state and national chapters, or work with local and state governments or non-profit agencies and local interest groups. Nominations from faculty are voted on by Landscape Architecture faculty.

Construction Practice Award: Recipient demonstrates the best representation of construction understanding as it relates to design and the construction methods and materials used to implement that design. Nominations from faculty are voted on by Landscape Architecture faculty.

Teaching Award: Recipient demonstrates the highest potential in the instruction of landscape architecture through teaching assistantship, mentoring, and/or teaching peers. Nominations from faculty are voted on by Landscape Architecture faculty.

Most Improved Award: Recipient demonstrates an intentional effort to advance that is inspirational to peers. Nominations from students and faculty are voted on by Landscape Architecture faculty.

Leadership Award: Recipients demonstrate outstanding achievements in leadership and potential to serve in advancing the practice of the profession. Nominations from students and faculty are voted on by Landscape Architecture faculty.

ASLA Honor and Merit Awards: Student awards from ASLA are managed by the Ohio Chapter ASLA.

Application and Admission to the Landscape Architecture Program

Application

The MLA First Professional Degree program begins each Fall Semester. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all the required materials have been received by January 10 of the year of anticipated enrollment in order to be considered for financial aid or for the MLA First Professional Degree program. Applications submitted after January 10 are only considered for financial aid or admission to the MLA program if funding and positions in the program are available. Applications for admission to the MSLA program will be considered after January 10, and financial support for MSLA students will only be considered if funding is available. Application materials are submitted online at UC's Graduate College website.

Application Requirements

See the [MLA Program Overview](#) for the requirements to apply for the MLA Program.

Students without prior degrees in architecture, planning, engineering or design-related fields are required to apply for entry to the MLA First Professional program in the Fall Term.

Students with prior degrees in (design) architecture, planning, engineering or design-related fields may apply for entry to the MLA First Professional program Fall Term, or for entry into the MSLA program in the Fall Term. Students with prior design studio experience may apply to the Program Director at the time of their acceptance into the program for a waiver of the initial studio and seminar immersive courses, but they will be required to substitute an additional 9 credits of pre-approved graduate elective courses in their place in any semester, such that their total credits to graduate will not be changed by the waiver.

Applicants to the MLA First Professional program are advised to achieve basic competence in as many of the software programs listed previously as possible prior to beginning their courses in the program. This competence should be explicit in the portfolio submitted with the application.

Admission

UC Graduate Admissions Policy – see [UC Graduate Handbook](#). The MLA Program adheres to the University's [Notice of Non-Discrimination](#) in its admission decisions.

Full Graduate Standing

Completed application materials are evaluated by a committee comprised of the MLA Graduate Program Director and selected faculty, who make admission decisions and recommend financial aid award decisions. To be admitted to landscape architecture students must apply through the UC Graduate Admissions Application that requires a non-refundable \$65 application fee (\$70 for international students) and a non-refundable \$500 deposit with these admission requirements:

- 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale at most recently attended academic institution;
- Unofficial transcript(s);
- strong letters of recommendation from individuals who are qualified to assess applicant's academic potential; a professional resume, which may also include a link to a digital portfolio (see below)
- a portfolio that demonstrates strengths, skills, and potential for study in landscape architecture as well as basic competence in the software programs described above;
- an 800 word "Goal Statement" that is carefully crafted describing applicant's broader goals within the professional discipline of landscape architecture, and why pursuing an MLA path is the right path. The applicant should describe significant academic accomplishments and experiences.
- a professional resume, which may also include a link to a digital portfolio (see below)

Other factors which enter into decisions for admission and financial aid include:

- the quality of undergraduate preparation;
- the quality of previous work experience;
- qualification for assignment to teaching, research, or academic assistance;
- and the clarity and thoughtfulness of the completed program application form.

Provisional Admission

Provisional admission may be granted to applicants who lack undergraduate work considered essential for graduate study in the major field. We also give provisional admission to international students who enter the ELS program. Course work, without graduate credit, will be required of provisionally-admitted students to make up such deficiencies before full graduate standing can be granted.

Graduates of non-accredited institutions may be granted provisional admission when their academic records warrant this status. Additional course work will be required of such students when deficiencies in their previous training are apparent.

Graduates of accredited institutions whose scholastic records are below the standards for admission to full graduate standing may be admitted provisionally when extenuating circumstances can be shown to have affected their undergraduate grade point averages or when progressive improvement in the undergraduate program warrants provisional admission.

Students may attain full graduate standing when the deficiencies responsible for their provisional status are corrected. They must also have maintained a satisfactory academic record in all course work taken as part of their graduate programs. Change from provisional to full graduate standing is implemented by the MLA Graduate Program Director in the School of Planning. The basis for change in status is subject to review by the Dean, and that office is therefore routinely notified of each change of status.

International Students

The STEM Code of the UC MLA and MSLA Program is 04.0601.

The [UC Graduate Handbook](#) fully describes the academic opportunities, responsibilities, and resources for international students. International students can be admitted only with full graduate standing. International students must fulfill U.S. Immigration Service requirements and must register with UC International.

For more resources for international students, please see [UC International](#).

English Proficiency Requirement

Completion of the [Online Oral English Proficiency Test for Academic Purposes](#) is required, even if language test scores meet the minimum requirement.

Degree Requirements and Curriculum

Course of Study

See [Master of Landscape Architecture Overview](#)

MLA First Professional Degree - 72 credits

The MLA First Professional Degree begins in the summer term with two semesters of Foundation studies, followed by two semesters of Discovery that include a semester of practicum/co-op, and the final two semesters of Synthesis. This course of study includes core courses that are intended to meet the requirements for accreditation by the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board. This course of study allows for almost one third elective courses and a practicum in support of developing advanced knowledge and skills in the student's area of interest related to landscape architecture, such as urban design, business, art, design, architecture, and other fields, culminating in a capstone project. Electives must be approved as a component of a plan of study by the academic advisor, and when applicable, in consultation with the capstone faculty.

MSLA Post Professional Degree - 49 credits

The MSLA Track 1 and Track 2 programs advance the student's background in landscape architecture, planning, design, or a related field that has given the student a foundation from which to develop an area of emphasis at the graduate level. Applicants must work with the academic advisor to select either Track 1, with an emphasis on business and two required co-ops, or Track 2, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary studies and one required co-op. Elective courses are selected to support the development of advanced knowledge and skills in the selected Track, such as business, urban design, art, design, architecture, and other fields and a thesis or thesis project is required. Electives must be approved as a component of a plan of study by the academic advisor, and when applicable, in consultation with the thesis or thesis project faculty.

Transferring within the MLA Program

Students may decide to transfer from the MLA option to an MSLA option or vice versa, provided notice and a Thesis or Thesis Project Plan of Study (if transferring into one of the MSLA Tracks) are given in writing to the MLA Graduate Program Director one full semester or 16 weeks in advance. MLA courses or electives taken previously may not automatically transfer to an MSLA program, unless they are in support of the Thesis or Thesis Project Plan of Study. Students who change options may forfeit any UC scholarship or graduate assistantship funds beginning the first full semester after notice is given. Although every effort will be made to accommodate the transfer from one degree option to another, scheduling courses and faculty to accommodate the change may not be possible within the same or next academic year.

Academic Advising

In the MLA/MSLA programs, the Academic Advisor is the Program Director. Students must consult with the Advisor at least once each semester prior to course registration for the next semester. Early registration for

courses is strongly encouraged to ensure the student's required and elective courses are open and available. Forms will be maintained in the student's file in which the Advisor will maintain a record of advising sessions and a record of academic progress in the program. Students are responsible for monitoring their degree audits and progress in certificate programs.

Credit Hour Requirements

Full time students must be registered for 12 or more graduate credits each semester. A waiver is required to take more than 18 credits per semester. The MLA/MSLA curriculum is designed to distribute the credit load of required courses and elective courses equally over the course of the degree program. Elective courses must be pre-approved by the Advisor. Students will confirm the availability, prerequisites, and schedule of elective courses prior to seeking Advisor approval. Students must work with the Advisor to ensure the elective courses and the required courses are distributed equally, and that the schedule for the required courses is prioritized.

72 credit hours are required to complete the MLA First Professional Degree, and 49 credit hours are required to complete the MSLA Post Professional Degree.

Co-op

Cooperative education is a unique and significant component of the University of Cincinnati's mission. Graduate students experiencing cooperative education are privileged to participate in the exchange of knowledge and skills in the mutually beneficial environment of professional practice, and as such, are responsible for fulfilling the expectations and requirements associated with the MLA or MSLA degree requirements. Courses associated with the Cooperative Education requirement will have the designators "Professional Development" (PD 7041) or "Cooperative Education" (COOP 7041) and are closely aligned with the MLA program's Professional Development courses (LAND 7002/7003). For more information about the cooperative education experience at UC, please visit the website of the [Division of Experience-Based Learning and Career Education](#) (ELCE).

Capstone, Thesis, or Thesis Project

Each graduate student must complete a capstone project (MLA), a thesis (MSLA), or a thesis project (MSLA) to demonstrate their ability to synthesize the theories, special knowledge, and skills obtained in the elective courses, core curriculum, and cooperative education. The objectives of a capstone project, thesis, or thesis project are to:

- enable each student to pursue, in depth and on an individual basis, a subject of their interest;
- provide each student with an opportunity to conceptualize, plan, conduct, and complete an original project which demonstrates creativity, analytic and project management skills, and readiness to enter professional practice or doctoral study, and
- provide each student with the opportunity to use research methods in the preparation of a major product of professional caliber.

Students are required to submit 1 electronic copy (USB) of their capstone project, thesis, or thesis project to the MLA Program Director and one to each capstone, thesis, or thesis project advisor or committee member prior to being certified for graduation.

Capstone project: The capstone project is required for students in the MLA First Professional Degree. This project represents a comprehensive demonstration of fundamental skills and minimum competence in the areas of study required for accreditation by the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board.

Thesis or Thesis Project: MSLA students may elect to do a thesis or a thesis project to satisfy the degree requirements for these program options. Students in these options are required to commit to either a thesis or thesis project before the end of their first semester in order to select elective courses and cooperative education in support of the thesis or thesis project.

The **thesis** is a scholarly, researched document developed with an emphasis on landscape architecture and related areas of study. Students who intend to pursue doctoral studies are advised to complete a thesis according to the procedures and standards of the Graduate School (see Graduate Student Handbook).

The **thesis project** is a comprehensive document with both written and graphic representational components that demonstrates advanced knowledge in an area of study appropriate for a post-professional degree that is relevant to the profession of landscape architecture.

Graduation

For information on deadlines and policies for academic issues, such as grades and the application for graduation, see the [Graduate College website](#). All changes of grade must be completed by the deadline specified for that year. If not, the student can not be certified for graduation. The University requires that all fines (library, parking fines, etc.) be paid before the student can receive a diploma.

Course Registration

Registration

For information regarding registration in classes, adding or dropping a course, changing a course's credit hours, academic deadlines for approvals, withdrawals, refunds, or any information regarding course registration, students are advised to consult the website of the [UC Office of the Registrar](#).

Students will work with the Advisor and register for classes no later than the week before classes begin. All students are required to meet with the Advisor prior to each semester to confirm elective and required courses are on track for the degree. All elective courses must be pre-approved by the Advisor prior to registration. Students are responsible for updating their Tracking Sheet and working with the Advisor to plan their schedules in advance. A sample Tracking Sheet is provided at the end of this document. Each student will be provided with their own digital copy on acceptance to the program.

The University offers a variety of times to register, from Early Registration for Continuing Students to open Web and in-person registration. Information about registration can be found at the [Student Enrollment Service](#) website. Key registration dates are under “calendars.” The One Stop website allows the student to register for classes, check financial aid status, view their bill, check grades, and request a transcript.

Early Registration begins well in advance of the semester and offers the best opportunity for students to enroll in classes. Graduate students are given the first “window” for registration. The dates available for Early Registration can be found on the One Stop Website. Students will also be notified by UC email of their registration windows.

Registration Changes

Check with the [Registrar's](#) website for updated deadlines for adding and dropping classes, refunds for classes dropped, etc.

Auditing a Course

MLA students may not audit LAND courses, but in special circumstances, if resources allow, non-majors may be allowed to audit or register in MLA courses.

Pass/Fail

Pass/Fail is not an option for MLA core courses.

Advanced Standing

Relevant graduate level courses completed at UC or another accredited college or university may be applied toward a degree in the School of Planning. These hours are normally applied to the elective portion of the curriculum. In no case may the number of advanced standing hours be more than one-half of the total number of credits required for the degree. The determination of advanced standing will be made by the Program Director based upon a student-originated proposal no later than the first semester of the student's admission to the Program. The Program Director will petition the Graduate School for advanced standing credits on the student's behalf if the courses are reciprocal or appropriate.

Independent Study

Faculty-directed independent study is approved in special cases when a student's program of study necessitates it or when a student's interest in a special topic is not addressed within the curriculum. Students may not enroll in Independent Study without prior approval by the faculty member who is directing the study and the MLA Program Director. The student and a faculty member directing such study must agree upon a program appropriate to the number of credits to be awarded, and they must negotiate a contract and complete the appropriate forms for approval and inclusion in the student's file prior to the beginning of the semester. The faculty member will submit a grade for the work completed at the end of the semester. The independent study contract form can be found on the [SOP forms page](#).

Course Waiver

A course waiver is defined as permission to not take a specific course, but it still carries the obligation to earn the credits associated with the waived course. Waivers from courses are granted by the Program Director based upon a student-originated petition, supported by the student's academic advisor and the instructor of the potentially waived course. The Program Director will then inform all parties of the decision by letter, with a copy placed in the student's school file.

If a student has taken a course as part of their undergraduate curriculum that is substantially the same as a required course, the student may apply for a course waiver. The student must petition the Program Director, in writing, and provide proof of the claim, such as the syllabus, samples of assignments, student work, and tests, a letter from the instructor, etc. The Program Director will be the sole judge as to whether the proof is sufficient. If granted, the required course is waived, but the student receives no credit hours and is required to complete the credit hours to fulfill the degree requirements.

Students with a prior professional design-related degree or extended professional design experience may be considered for waiver of the first semester summer courses LAND 7041 and/or LAND 7042 upon admission to the program and prior to the beginning of that summer semester of the program following the procedure described above. If the waiver is granted, the student is required to take 9 credits of pre-approved, design-related elective courses to substitute for LAND 7041 and LAND 7042.

Electives and Course Prerequisites

The Academic Advisor in the MLA program is the Program Director. Students will work with the Advisor to plan their core and elective courses for each term of study in advance so that their time in the program is maximized to the students' advantage. Students are responsible for scheduling appointments with the Advisor for curriculum planning and their annual review (see Graduate Student Annual Review below).

Advisor approval is required for all elective course selections prior to registration, including DAAP, Directed, and non-DAAP or certificate courses. Approval will not be given for an elective class after the second week of class.

Students must confirm their eligibility for all electives (scheduling, prerequisites, instructor permission, or other requirements) before seeking Advisor approval.

MLA and MSLA students are required to take DAAP electives. These are courses offered by any program in the College of DAAP that will support the student's professional aspirations as well as professional knowledge and skill development or thesis/thesis project content. Students are strongly encouraged to explore the many opportunities for Study Abroad and the diverse topics provided by the exciting atmosphere of DAAP. Courses not offered in DAAP ("non-DAAP") may be considered for elective course requirements, subject to Advisor pre-approval.

The Advisor must approve elective courses to confirm their applicability for degree requirements and that they are in support of student professional interests or a thesis/thesis project. These courses must be taken for graduate credit (course numbers must be 6000 level or above). For students in the MSLA degree programs, it will be particularly important to select electives that support discovery and synthesis for a thesis topic or thesis project.

Any DAAP course 6000 level or above can be a DAAP elective. Some DAAP courses have both undergraduate and graduate course numbers (eg., HORT 3044/LAND 7057) and MLA students must be registered in the graduate level course. DAAP undergraduate courses may be eligible if the student is registered in a 6000 level or above course such as DAAP 6090 Interdisciplinary Topics or LAND 7064 Graduate Independent Study in Landscape Architecture, and only if the undergraduate course's instructor agrees to supervise the student for graduate level work in addition to and not instead of the required course work for the undergraduate course. The student is responsible for initiating the request to take an undergraduate course well in advance of the semester it is offered.

Certificates

Students may wish to concentrate their elective credits on completion of a certificate. DAAP, non-DAAP, or DIRECTED Electives may include but are not limited to courses for the following Graduate Certificates or programs: Business, Urban Design, Public Art & Placemaking, Study Abroad, or International Field Study. Certificate core or elective courses must be confirmed by the Certificate Coordinator. Most relevant certificates are described at the [Lindner College of Business](#) website or the [School of Planning](#) website.

Tracking Sheets

Students are required to keep their degree Tracking Sheets current. They should be copied to the LAND Program Director before registering for the next semester. Students are responsible for working with the LAND Program Director to confirm courses, monitoring their degree audit, working with Certificate Coordinators to complete Certificate requirements, attending to emails from the LAND Program Director, Certificate Coordinators, and the Graduate School, and applying for graduation.

Each LAND student is issued a Tracking Sheet (see next page) from the LAND Program Director prior to their first semester. The Tracking Sheet should be updated and copied to the LAND Program Director before registering for the next semester's classes. Discussion of the Tracking Sheet is the equivalent of the student's annual review.

Name: _____

First Year						
Fall 2025						
Course Number	Fall Session	Required Yes/No	Elective	Course Name	Anticipated Credits	Completed Credits
LAND 7041		Yes		Sustainable Sites I Studio	6	
LAND 7042		Yes		Sustainable Sites I Seminar	3	
LAND 7071		Yes		Visualization I	3	
LAND 7051 or 7056		Yes		Landscape History to 1900 or Hist of LA	3	
LAND 7061		Yes		LA Colloquium I	1	
PD 7041		Yes		Prof Devel for Master of LA	1	
Electives				total core credits	17	
none needed				total elective credits		
				total credits this semester		
Total					0	of 72
Spring 2026						
Course Number		Required Yes/No	Elective	Course Name	Anticipated Credits	Completed Credits
LAND 7043		Yes		Sustainable Sites II Studio	6	
LAND 7044		Yes		Sustainable Sites II Seminar	3	
LAND 7072		Yes		LA Visualization II	3	
LAND 7002		Yes		Prof Practice for LA I	1	
PD 7041		Yes		Professional Development	1	
Electives						
1-3 credits?					3-Jan	
				total core credits	31	
				total elective credits	3-Jan	
				total credits this semester	0	
Total					0	of 72
Summer 2025						
Course Number		Required Yes/No	Elective	Course Name	Anticipated Credits	Completed Credits
COOP 7041		Yes		Practicum for Master of Landscape Arch	0	
				total core credits	31	
Electives						
none needed				total elective credits		
				total credits this semester		
Total						of 72

Second Year						
Fall 2025						
Course Number		Required Yes/No	Elective	Course Name	Anticipated Credits	Completed Credits
LAND 7045		Yes		Sustainable Sites III Studio	6	
LAND 7046		Yes		Sustainable Sites III Seminar	3	
LAND 7062		Yes		LA Colloquium II	1	
LAND 7003		Yes		Prof Devel in LA II	1	
				total core credits	42	
Electives						
3-6 credits?				total elective credits		
				total credits this semester		
Total						of 72
Spring 2026						
Course Number		Required Yes/No	Elective	Course Name	Anticipated Credits	Completed Credits
LAND 7007		Yes		Capstone Seminar	3	
LAND 7010		Yes		Capstone Studio	6	
				total core credits	51	
Electives						
3 needed for full-time				total elective credits		
				total credits this semester		
Total						of 72
Summer 2026						
Course Number		Required Yes/No	Elective	Course Name	Anticipated Credits	Completed Credits
LAND 7031		Yes		Ornamental and Native Plants	3	
LAND 7065		Yes		Special Topics LA Studio	6	
				total core credits	60	
Electives						
3 needed for full-time				total elective credits		
				total credits this semester		
Total						of 72

Those students with financial assistance (scholarship and/or assistantship) are required to have a minimum of 12 credits during that semester receiving scholarship and/or assistantship)

Those students seeking certificates must be advised by the coordinator of that certificate

Co-op assignments are advised and developed through Co-op

Total LAND required credits	of 59
Total PD required credits	of 1
Total Co-Ops required	of 1

Certificate title		
Course Number	Required Yes/No	Credits
		Total

Certificate title		
Course Number	Required Yes/No	Credits
		Total

[illegible]

Graduate Credit and Grades

Graduate Credit

Please refer to the [UC Graduate Handbook](#).

Grading

See the UC Office of the Registrar's [Graduate Grading Scale and Description](#).

For information regarding registration in classes, adding or dropping a course, changing a course's credit hours, academic deadlines for approvals, withdrawals, refunds, or any information regarding course registration, see previous page, and students are advised to consult the website of the [UC Office of the Registrar](#).

Academic Progress and Standards

Minimum Standards

A student is considered in good standing as long as reasonable progress is being made towards the degree sought. This generally means that the student continues to exhibit an average of B (3.0 GPA) or better throughout the course of study and registers for at least 12 graduate credit hours each semester. I and/or IP grades should appear infrequently.

Graduate Student Annual Review

Students are required to complete an annual review with their academic advisor. The review form is available on the [DAAP forms page](#).

Students are responsible for making appointments with their Academic Advisor to assess their plan of study, performance, expectations, and goals for each academic year. Ideally, students would meet with their advisor prior to the beginning of each year to make a plan of study and at the end of each academic year for an annual review, including the year that graduation is pending. Using the form provided to guide the meeting, the student will take notes and provide a typed summary of the meeting to attach to the annual review form. Both the student and the advisor will sign and keep copies of the annual review form, which will reside in the student's academic file in the School of Planning. Students are advised to take this as an opportunity to share constructive feedback about the academic, co-op, professional, and social aspects of their UC experience.

Probation and Dismissal

A student who is maintaining an overall average of B but who has received a grade of C or lower in two or more core courses will be placed on probation. When a grade of C is recorded for two or more courses, the Program Director will issue a letter of probation, warning of this status. If a student then receives subsequent grades of C, they will be expected to repeat courses in such manner that no more than two uncorrected C grades remain. Probation will cease upon successful completion of all core LAND or PD courses with a grade of B or above.

Dismissal will occur if the student fails to maintain a B average for two successive semesters. After the first semester in which the cumulative average falls below an average of B, the Program Director will issue a letter of probation, warning of this status.

A student who has a Graduate Assistantship and is placed on probation may lose the position. A student with a UC Graduate Scholarship Award for tuition must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA.

Leaves of Absence, Withdrawal from Program, Changing Degree Programs

Policies are described in the UC Graduate Handbook. Transferring from one LAND degree option to another is described on p.16.

Tuition and Financial Support

Tuition

For information about UC Expenses, see the Graduate Financial Aid website.

Financial Support

LAND graduate students may obtain financial support from several sources.

The University of Cincinnati provides merit-based graduate awards in the form of tuition scholarships, graduate assistantships (including teaching and research assistantships), and program-specific scholarships and fellowships. The Graduate School has a description of the [typical award types](#).

Scholarship and fellowship support is also available from a diverse collection of external sponsors at the local, state, national, and international levels. Need-based support may be obtained from federal and state sources.

Awards can only be guaranteed for a maximum period of one academic year, and renewal of a university graduate award is not automatic. The Landscape Architecture Program is not obligated to renew awards for prior awardees, even if previously awarded students meet all minimum guidelines.

Graduate Scholarship Award – College of DAAP

The Graduate Scholarship Award in the College of DAAP is merit-based and highly competitive. Graduate Scholarship Awards are offered for full or partial tuition. University fees are not included in this award. To remain eligible for the Graduate Scholarship Award, a student must be enrolled full time (minimum of 12 credit hours) and achieve a satisfactory level of academic performance (3.0 GPA or better).

Graduate Assistantships – College of DAAP

The Graduate Assistantship is merit-based and highly competitive. The assistantship is a financial stipend for services rendered. To remain eligible for the Graduate Assistantship Award, a student must be enrolled full time (minimum of 12 credit hours) and achieve a satisfactory level of academic performance (3.0 GPA or better). Graduate Assistants are entitled to a discount at the University Bookstore and may be eligible for one of the [Graduate Assistant Health Insurance Awards](#).

Other Awards

The [Financial Aid Office](#) at the University administers a variety of state and federal grants and loans, based on each student's demonstrated financial need.

[DAAP specific scholarships](#) are available to students enrolled in the college's programs. Please check the DAAP website for more opportunities.

The American Society of Landscape Architects, the Landscape Architecture Foundation, and several other similar organizations listed previously have scholarships, fellowships, grants, and other forms of support that are available to MLA students on a competitive basis.

Policies and Procedures

Program Standards

This handbook clarifies minimum university level requirements and policies that apply to all graduate students throughout the University of Cincinnati, as well as outlines the specific requirements, policies, and procedures for the MLA program in the College of DAAP.

Records, Privacy, FERPA, Right to Review Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), is the federal law that governs the release of and access to student education records. FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. For the complete FERPA information, consult the [FERPA and Records Privacy page](#) of the Registrar's Office website.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

The LAND Program of the University of Cincinnati reaffirms its policy that discrimination on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, handicap or age will not be practiced in any of its activities. The full policy can be read here: [Notice of Non-Discrimination](#).

Student Code of Conduct

It is expected that students will conduct their relationships with faculty and others in a professional manner. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) in the UC Graduate Handbook defines the behavior expected of all University of Cincinnati students. In this document, behavior considered misconduct is defined, and the possible sanctions or penalties are outlined to which the students are subject to as the consequences of misconduct.

Students have the responsibility for being honest in carrying out any written, oral, or studio assignment. A student who has been dishonest in coursework will receive a grade of "F" for that course. Typical actions which are considered dishonest include: plagiarism - defined herein as using the conceptual framework and/or words of others without proper referencing; deception of effort; unauthorized assistance; and cheating on exams - defined as both "copying" and "using unauthorized notes". In such cases, the Program Director will issue a letter of warning to the student with a copy placed in the student's departmental record. A second infraction will result in immediate dismissal. Any student who willingly aids another in academic dishonesty will receive the identical penalty.

Responsible Conduct of Research

See [UC Graduate Handbook](#) and [IRB protocols](#).

Graduate Student Grievance Procedures

Grievance procedures have been established to provide graduate students with a formal opportunity to address grievances arising out of their academic relationships with their department, college and University of Cincinnati. Students are advised to recall the Professional Values cited above when contemplating action. See the UC Graduate Handbook for Grievance Procedures.

General Information

Academic and Student Resources

The School of Planning office is housed on the 6000 level in the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning. [Resources for current DAAP Students](#) can be found online.

Please see the Graduate Handbook and the Graduate School website for additional resources.

These and other resources are found on the [UC Campus Life & Resources](#) website:

[African American Cultural & Resource](#)

[UC Women's Center](#)

[LGBTQ Center](#)

Health Insurance

Graduate students are required to have [health insurance](#).

International Students

For more resources for international students, please see [UC International](#).

Criteria for MLA/MSLA Graduate Faculty Standing

Appointment:

- Tenured Faculty Member at the University of Cincinnati (UC) or
- Tenure Track Faculty Member after the 1st reappointment at UC or
- Non-Tenure Track Faculty Member at the University of Cincinnati who is actively conducting research, scholarship, or creative activities, or has had a distinguished professional career in Landscape Architecture or related fields.

Education:

- Terminal Degree in Landscape Architecture or a related discipline.

Research/Creative Activities:

- A continuing record of research/scholarship and/or creative activities disseminated regionally, nationally, or internationally, and an established permanent record in a format appropriate to the discipline, and/or

- A continuing record of excellence at an advanced professional level confirmed by peer recognition in the discipline

Experience:

- The faculty member must have experience mentoring graduate students in the context of research/scholarship/creative work, teaching, independent studies, thesis/thesis project/dissertation committee memberships, etc. or the potential to mentor graduate students demonstrated by previous related experience.

Criteria for LAND Thesis/Thesis Project Committee Chair or Membership:

- To chair a LAND thesis or thesis project committee, the Chair must have the terminal degree in Landscape Architecture and Graduate Faculty Standing at the University of Cincinnati.
- To serve as a member of a LAND thesis or thesis project committee, the member must have an advanced degree such as MLA, MCP, or MArch, or an advanced academic or accredited professional degree in a discipline related to the thesis or thesis project topic.

Faculty and Staff

[DAAP Directory](#)

Forms

[Graduate Student Annual Review](#)

[Independent Study](#)

[Leave of Absence](#)

[Graduate Thesis Committee Agreement](#)

[Graduate Thesis Development Plan](#)

Note: Hyperlinks to forms and other information are included throughout this document. If the links do not work, please go to www.uc.edu and search the UC, DAAP, or UC Graduate School websites.