

# MSUD Handbook



**Department of Landscape Architecture**

**College of Fine and Applied Arts  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

## Land Acknowledgement

We recognize and acknowledge that the University of Illinois is located on the lands of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe and Chickasaw Nations. These lands were the traditional territory of these Native Nations prior to their forced removal; these lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity.

As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge the peoples of these lands and the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution for more than 150 years. We are also obligated to reflect on and actively address these histories and the role that this university has played in shaping them. This acknowledgment and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward for the next 150 years.

[Professor David L. Hays](#), Brenton H. and Jean B. Wadsworth Head  
[Associate Professor Stephen Sears](#), MSUD Program Chair  
[Dr. Lori Davis](#), Academic Affairs Coordinator

101 Temple Buell Hall  
611 E. Lorado Taft Drive  
Champaign, IL 61820

Phone: (217) 333-0176  
E-mail: [LADept@illinois.edu](mailto:LADept@illinois.edu)  
Website: <http://www.landarch.illinois.edu>

*Cover Image: Gabriel Harper Hagen (MSUD Candidate 2023). Detail image from Prairie Loop, Urbana Headwaters Master Plan Node Design. LA 538, Spring 2023.*

## Welcome

The Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) is a community of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to important global design challenges in the 21st century. More than half of the humans in the world now live in cities, driving a global interest in understanding, managing, and designing cities as environments. We are committed to raising awareness about wide-ranging environmental, social, economic, and aesthetic design issues and to responding to those issues through research-based, creative design investigations

This handbook provides current and prospective students practical information about the Master of Sustainable Urban Design program, including curriculum, financial aid, and departmental resources and policies.

UIUC is large, with a total student population of over 50,000 (one-third of whom are graduate students). The Department's context within a major research university affords access to extraordinary resources benefitting the wide-ranging concerns and interdisciplinary nature of landscape architecture, and within that large university context, our department is small enough that students receive direct personal attention from teachers and advisors. In addition to the course curriculum, the Department offers teaching assistantship opportunities, research opportunities, portfolio development workshops, career fairs, traveling fellowships, and professional advising.

The university is nestled between the two cities of Urbana and Champaign, which are vibrant with cafés, restaurants, movie theaters, and parks. On campus, the academic and cultural opportunities are excellent and diversified. For instance, the University Library has one of the best landscape architecture and urban planning collections in the country within a library system that is one of the largest in the nation. Major landscape architects regularly visit campus to serve on design reviews and lecture about their work. The Krannert Art Museum has constantly changing art and design exhibitions; student and faculty work is displayed in Temple Buell Hall and the Link Gallery. The Krannert Center for the Performing Arts offers a wide variety of exciting performances and events throughout the year. The Campus Recreation facilities for students are also extraordinarily well-equipped.

## The University

Since its founding in 1867, the [\*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign\*](#) has earned an international reputation for its distinguished faculty, outstanding resources and academic programs, and broad research capabilities.

Graduate study is offered in more than 100 programs, and enrollment includes over 18,000 graduate and professional students from every state in the United States and from 124 countries. Academic resources are among the finest in the world. Along with those of the Library of Congress and Harvard University, the [\*University Library\*](#) ranks among the largest

public and academic collections in the nation. Its computerized catalog provides easy access to more than 14 million volumes and 24 million other items housed in the Main Library, Undergraduate Library, 26 departmental libraries, and 7 virtual libraries.

## The Graduate College

The [\*Graduate College\*](#) is one of 16 major academic units at the University of Illinois. Staff members at the Graduate College work closely with individual students, faculty, and staff to provide support at all stages of graduate education, from admissions through thesis/dissertation deposit and degree certification. They also administer fellowships and offer special programming to help students compete for prestigious external awards and develop strong professional skills to position them well for future careers. Graduate students and faculty at Illinois enjoy an intellectual environment that reaches across the arts, sciences, humanities, social sciences, and engineering to create, challenge, and transform knowledge. Our graduate community is international in its composition and global in its impact. The Graduate College is a member of the Council of Graduate Schools, the Big Ten Academic Alliance, the Midwest Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS), and the Illinois Association of Graduate Schools (IAGS).

## The Department

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was among the first institutions in the nation to offer an educational program in landscape architecture, with a degree program in place by 1907. Today, the Department of Landscape Architecture maintains one of the leading graduate-level, research-based design programs in the country. The Department of Landscape Architecture offers four degree programs that are STEM designated:

- Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA), LAAB Accredited
- Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA), LAAB Accredited
- Master of Sustainable Urban Design (MSUD)
- Ph.D.in Landscape Architecture.

The Department has trained prominent practitioners in the United States and worldwide. Many of its students have also gone on to teach in and direct professional programs at U.S.-based and international universities.

The core faculty members of the Department bring a rich range of academic, professional, and personal experiences in regions across the United States and abroad. Faculty are distinguished globally for wide-ranging scholarly, professional, and creative expertise, including community and urban design, ecological and sustainable design, landscape architectural history and methods, cultural heritage, contemporary landscape theory, social and environmental justice, and public health. Opportunities for independent and interdisciplinary study with individual faculty members are available in many areas, which contributes to a dynamic educational

environment and complements the diversity of the students themselves, who come from a variety of academic backgrounds.

Students, faculty, and staff interact in a wide range of other ways, including service on Department committees, attendance at invited lectures, participation in workshops and charrettes, activities of the University of Illinois Student Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), all-department gatherings at the start of each semester, and annual Sasaki Day events—a design competition, distinguished lecture, banquet, and awards and recognitions ceremony held on the first Wednesday of May.

In addition to the tenure-stream faculty, the Department invites prominent scholars and practitioners to participate in the academic programs as lecturers, critics, and visiting instructors, for periods ranging from a day to an entire semester. Affiliated faculty members represent numerous other disciplinary units from across the university.

Additional information may be found on our departmental website: <https://landarch.illinois.edu>

## **The MSUD Program**

The MSUD program is for students with at least one university degree in landscape architecture, architecture, environmental design, sustainable design, or urban design. The program welcomes recent graduates interested in deepening their understanding and skillsets and mid-career professionals seeking new directions.

Sustainable Urban Design is a specialized field focusing on urban-scale issues of the built environment and the systems, processes, and theoretical models of its practice and discourse. The program draws upon the expertise, courses, and resources of the Department of Landscape Architecture, among other units in the College of Fine and Applied Arts, and across campus to provide academic and practical experiences to accommodate the unique interests of each student in the program.

In providing a concise path through which to hone expertise in sustainable urban design, the curriculum is a springboard for pursuing professional opportunities in interdisciplinary design practices, planning and engineering firms, government agencies, and urbanism-based nonprofits.

The 11-month program is completed in two semesters (Fall and Spring) plus one Summer term, undertaken in that order. Matriculation is for the Fall semester only.

## Advising for New and Continuing Students

The Department is committed to supporting all students in their academic, professional, and personal development and to creating an environment in which all students feel welcome and comfortable. Academic Affairs Coordinator Dr. Lori Davis advises MSUD students in selecting classes and navigating institutional processes. Dr. Davis also helps connect students with information and resources to support their development and success. More information can be found on the [Landscape Architecture Advising](#) website.

## Limited / Full Standing

Students who are required to demonstrate English proficiency through TOEFL or IELTS scores must obtain a TOEFL score higher than 102 or IELTS score higher than 7 to be admitted on full status. Students who are required to demonstrate English proficiency and score lower than this are admitted on limited status pending completion of one or two English as a Second Language courses as determined by the [English Placement Test](#) upon arrival to campus.

## Graduate College/Department Minimum GPA

See the Graduate College Policy on Academic Standing in section 3.2 of the [Graduate College Handbook](#) (p. 107).

## Degree Completion and Graduation

To obtain the MSUD degree, each student must complete all requirements within five years of their initial enrollment in the program. After that time, requests to complete degree requirements will be denied.

August and December graduates are welcome to participate in the first May departmental commencement ceremony occurring after the MSUD degree is conferred. Students who wish to participate in the May departmental commencement ceremony prior to degree conferral must be in good standing and on track to graduate by the following August or December.

## Financial Aid

The MSUD program is a [self-supporting program](#) which means students in the program are exempt from all scholarship and fee waiver programs from the University of Illinois. Students are responsible for funding the entire cost of the program. However, students may serve as Research Assistants or hold other campus positions on an hourly basis. MSUD students are eligible for Department-Based awards. Consult the [Graduate College Handbook](#), and the [Tuition Waiver Guide](#) for more information.

## Department-Based Awards

Through the generosity of alumni, friends, and partner organizations, the Department is pleased to offer a variety of fellowships, scholarships, and prizes. MSUD students are eligible for the following awards:

### **Awards based on academic performance and for which no application is solicited include:**

- *Natalie B. Alpert Prizes in Landscape Architecture:* Given in memory of former faculty member Natalie Alpert, these awards recognize student excellence in two areas: history and design. The Natalie B. Alpert Prizes in the History of Landscape Architecture are awarded for research papers written in the course LA 314/513: History of World Landscapes.
- *The Natalie B. Alpert Prize for Design in Landscape Architecture* is awarded for exceptional performance in studio design contexts, the specific context for which is determined annually by the faculty.

### **Awards for which applications are solicited annually from interested students include:**

- *Edward L. Ryerson Traveling Fellowship* in Landscape Architecture: Supports international travel and study and is awarded based on the merit of students' proposals and their academic records.
- *George and Dorothy Fiel Fellowship:* Supports student travel and research for the study of historical and contemporary works in the United States. It is awarded based on the academic merit of the student and the intellectual merit of their proposal.
- *Pauline Tilton Kennedy Prize:* Supports the independent study of contemporary and historical landscapes. It is awarded based on the combined intellectual strength of a proposal and the academic merit of the student.

## MSUD Curriculum

Fall Semester	Credits
Fall Graduate Studio (one of the following three): LA 433 Graduate Foundation Studio LA 533 Planning & Design Studio I LA 537 Planning & Design Studio II Students are placed according to level of experience	5
Design Communication Course (one of the following two): LA 280 Design Communications I LA 482 Advanced Communications in Landscape Architecture Students are placed according to level of experience	3-4
LA 589 Sustainable Urban design Theory	4
Urban Design or Urban Systems Elective	3-4
Total credit hours	16-17
Spring Semester	Credits
LA 538 Urban Design Research Studio	5
LA 446 Sustainable Planning Seminar	4
UP 475 Real Estate	4
Urban Design or Urban Systems Elective	3-4
Total credit hours	16-17
Summer Semester	Credits
LA 592 Urban Design Capstone Studio	6
Total program credit hours	38-40

Course Descriptions may be found on the Department of Landscape Architecture [Courses](#) page.



## **Departmental Main Office**

The Department's central office is located at 101 Temple Buell Hall. Normal office hours are 8:30-12:00 and 1:00-5:00, Monday through Friday. Offices for the Department Head, the Academic Affairs Coordinator, and the Office Manager are housed within the central office. The central office suite includes a department library/resource room and a conference room available for use by department members. The confidential nature of office records precludes student access to the central office if no staff member is present.

## **Studio Spaces**

Studio spaces are assigned at the beginning of each fall and spring semester. Students enrolled in design studios are given priority for studio space.

## **Computers**

Students in the MSUD program are required to have a laptop capable of running software used in our courses. Students cannot expect to rely exclusively on university-provided workstations and must have laptops for in-class tutorials and workshops. Recommended specs for equipment are determined by the Department's Space & Tech Committee and kept on file by the Academic Affairs Coordinator. While some software is provided, students should also expect to purchase some applications needed for coursework and not otherwise available through campus services.

## **Access to Temple Buell Hall**

Student ID cards are used to access Temple Buell Hall via the west entrance outside weekday operating hours.

## **Bulletin Board**

Information of interest to graduate students, including employment notices, is posted variously on the north corridor bulletin board on the third floor of Temple Buell Hall and on the [Opportunities Blog](#).

## **Media Equipment, Printing, Fabrication, and Software Resources**

Some media equipment is available for use in conjunction with department coursework. Any student borrowing equipment is responsible for its proper use and care, including the repair or replacement of items damaged or lost during the time of the loan. Equipment is issued by the Department's Office Manager at 101 Temple Buell Hall. Overnight use must be approved by a faculty member and coordinated with those who may be reserving the equipment for the following day.

Printing services are available through the [Print/3D Print Labs](#) at 20 Temple Buell Hall.

With permission of the School of Architecture and requisite orientation/training, MSUD students are normally granted access to the School's [Woodshop](#) and [DigiFab Shop](#).

With permission of the School of Art and Design and requisite orientation/training, MSUD students are normally granted access to the wide range of labs supported by the School. See the School's website for [current information about access, training, and fees](#).

Other useful fabrication resources are available at the [CU Community Fab Lab](#), located on campus adjacent to the School of Architecture Woodshop and DigiFab Shop.

The [University of Illinois Webstore](#) serves as a resource for select software packages available to students at little or no cost. Click on the 'Free Software' button for a list of products for eligibility requirements and license information. Click on each product to see availability, download links, and instructions.

## University Libraries

The City Planning & Landscape Architecture Collection and the [City Planning & Landscape Architecture Virtual Library](#) are located within the [Funk \(ACES\) Library](#). A wide range of landscape-related works and resources are also available at the [Main Library](#), the [Undergraduate Library](#), and the [Ricker Library of Architecture and Art](#). All of these libraries are located within one block of Temple Buell Hall.

## Policy Determination

The faculty and designated student representatives hold a Committee of the Department Meeting approximately every other week. This is the Department's primary deliberation and information vehicle: announcements and reports may be made, input solicited, committees assigned, problems discussed, and decisions made on short- and long-term matters. With advance notice, special departmental meetings may be held for major issues. The times and locations of such meetings will be announced to members of the Department in advance using its standard methods of communication.

Each year, student representatives from the BLA, MLA, and PhD programs attend faculty meetings and are responsible for reporting and disseminating information to the student body. There is also student representation on other important committees such as the Student Advisory Committee; the Events Committee; the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee; and ad hoc faculty search committees. Please refer to the Department By-Laws (available at the Main Office) for a more complete explanation of these committees.

## Grievances

Various forms of appeal are available to individual students who feel that they have received unfair treatment in academic or administrative dealings with the department. Students are strongly encouraged to use all appropriate avenues for informal resolution of other grievances, such as alleged inappropriate application of policy or being improperly terminated from a University appointment. If a student is unable to resolve such an issue, they may elect to file a formal grievance.

Consult the [Student Code](#) and the [Graduate College Handbook](#) for more information on grievance policies and procedures.

## University Policy Statements

[University of Illinois System Policies](#):

An overview of institutional policies and procedures.

### ***Academic Integrity***

All students are accountable to the [Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure](#) as defined in the Student Code.

### ***Accommodations***

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids in any course, students should contact both the instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) (1207 S. Oak Street, Champaign, IL 61820, (217) 333-1970, or via email at [disability@illinois.edu](mailto:disability@illinois.edu)) as soon as possible. See also § 1-110 of the Student Code for the University's [Policy for the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#).

### ***Emergency Preparedness Recommendations***

Recommendations about preparing for emergencies can be found at the [Division of Public Safety](#). Campus building floor plans can be found at <http://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/building-emergency-action-plans/>.

### ***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)***

Any student who has suppressed their directory information pursuant to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) should self-identify to the instructor in any course to protect the privacy of their attendance in that course. See <https://registrar.illinois.edu/academic-records/ferpa/> for more information on FERPA.

***Nondiscrimination Statement***

The commitment of the University of Illinois to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity requires that decisions involving students and employees be based on merit and be free from invidious discrimination in all its forms. See the [University of Illinois Nondiscrimination Statement](#) for detailed information about this policy.

***Campus Inclusivity***

The mission of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (OVCEI) is to use the transformational power of our university to lead our campus toward an increasingly diverse and inclusive community that is open, just, and welcoming for all. For more information, see <https://diversity.illinois.edu/>

***Sexual Misconduct Policy and Reporting***

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff members are required by law to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX and Disability Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office will provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options. A list of the University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality can be found at <https://wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential>

Other information about resources and reporting is available through the university's We Care site: <https://wecare.illinois.edu>

## Campus Resources For Well-Being

### ***Student Food Security***

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable him/her to provide any resources he/she may possess.

<https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/resources/students/food-resources/>

### ***Student Counseling Center***

The University of Illinois Counseling Center is committed to serving the mental health needs of students. This includes contacting students through consultations, workshops, and other psycho-educational forms. Outreach requests are available to students, faculty, and staff with sufficient notice (at least two weeks). Various workshop topics covered in the past include time management, stress management, relationship conflicts, and how to recognize depressive symptoms, just to name a few. Please refer to [counselingcenter.illinois.edu](http://counselingcenter.illinois.edu) to request a workshop. OR please contact [Nichole Evans](#), Assistant Director of Outreach and Prevention, at 217-333-3704 with further questions. <http://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>

### ***The Office of the Dean of Students***

Student Assistance Center, Behavioral Intervention Team, Emergency Dean Program, Off-Campus Living Support. <https://odos.illinois.edu/>

### ***McKinley Health Center***

Student Medical Services. To schedule an appointment: <https://www.mckinley.illinois.edu/>

### ***SAFEWALKS + SAFERIDES Programs***

SAFEWALKS is a courtesy service for University of Illinois students, faculty, and staff. To request an escort, call 217-333-1216. You can also use an [emergency phone](#) to contact a dispatcher.

Please give at least a 15-minute notice. SAFERIDES is available between dusk and 6 a.m., the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District offers limited SafeRides by request by calling 217-265-RIDE (7433).

For more information, visit: <https://mtd.org/maps-and-schedules/routes/saferides/>