Landscape Architecture, MLA

Department: Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning Department
College: College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences

Overview

About This Degree

USU offers the oldest and leading MLA program in the Intermountain West, and the 13th oldest program in the nation. According to *Design Intelligence,* USU's MLA is ranked in the top 15 programs of its kind in the nation and has the eighth lowest tuition nationally. The program for the Master of Landscape Architecture emphasizes traditional site scale planning and design, as well as broader areas of the profession, such as large-scale regional landscape analysis and planning and utilizing computer-aided design and planning techniques.

The department features four areas of concentration that students may choose to study, which are: open space conservation planning and green space design, cultural and historic landscapes, community planning and urban design, and sustainable landscapes. Students may choose one of these areas to study, or they can create an individual course of study specific to their interests.

Career Options

Graduates with an MLA have a wide variety of career options available:

- Licensed landscape architect Arborist
- Federal employment with USFS, NPS, BLM and others
- Visual/scenic landscape analyst
- Transportation planner
- Community planning and residential design
- Land development
- State park design
- Design campgrounds and trail systems
- Golf course architect
- Work in consultation with civil engineering or architecture firms
- Design of resorts and theme parks
- Design green roofs/rooftop gardens
- Historic preservation
- Sustainability coordinator
- University campus planner/landscape architect
- Protection of endangered species through habitat preservation
- Assist with the survey of archeology sites
- Promote forest sustainability in domestic and tropical forests
- Extension landscape architect
- Stormwater manager
- Virtual media design (graphic design, designing virtual landscapes for computer games)
- Academic positions in landscape architecture and horticulture programs
- Artist or sculptor
- Gardener or grower of nursery stock
- Nursery operator

Many other career opportunities are available depending on the student's thesis emphasis, interests, and undergraduate degree.

What it takes

Admissions Requirements

Students with any undergraduate major may apply. Students admitted from a background in landscape architecture will be admitted to the advanced professional program, and students with other undergraduate degrees will be admitted to the first professional degree.

Application Requirements:

- Complete the online application
- Pay the $55 application fee
- Score at or above the 40th percentile on the GRE
- Have a 3.0 or higher GPA on your last 60 semester or 90 quarter credits
- Provide transcripts of all college/university credits
- Provide three contacts for letters of recommendation
- Portfolios are recommended but not required of the First Professional degree; however, portfolios ***are*** required for the Advanced Professional degree. Advanced professionals should submit examples of most recent work. Team projects must clearly note your contribution to the project.

International students have additional admissions requirements.

Admissions Deadlines

The department has the following deadlines:

- Fall semester - March 15
- To be considered for scholarships, students must have their applications in by February 1.
- Applications submitted after March 15 will only be considered if there is space available in the program.

Master's Degree Plan Options

Students can receive the MLA by pursuing one of two options:

- In the **Plan A** option, students complete graduate-level coursework and must write a thesis.
- The **Plan B** option requires the production of a paper or creative work of design and is expected to reflect equivalent scholarship standards as a thesis.

Financial Assistance

The majority of students in the department receive funding through faculty grants and contracts. The department also offers scholarships to students underway in the program. For more information on these, contact the department.

A variety of additional funding opportunities are available, including fellowships, scholarships, assistantships, tuition awards, and travel support. Additionally, students may be eligible for subsidized health insurance through qualifying assistantships.

Program Requirements

Click here to see course requirements for the **Master of Landscape Architecture**.

Every year, the department holds a pre-semester orientation for incoming MLA students, usually the week before classes begin in the fall. This orientation is a chance for students to get to know the faculty as well as the peers they will be working with throughout the program.

Students participate in the Annual Charrette, a week-long event where students and faculty are divided into teams and work on projects for various communities and organizations throughout the state. This event not only gives students valuable hands-on experience in community and landscape planning, but it is a way to jumpstart projects for communities across Utah.

Graduate students are also involved with organizing and bringing in speakers for the Sustainable Landscapes Conference each year.

Contact

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Get Involved

Professional Organizations, Honor Societies, and Clubs

American Society of Landscape Architects: ASLA is the national professional association for landscape architects, representing 17,000 members in 48 professional chapters and 68 student chapters. The society's mission is to lead, to educate, and to participate in the careful stewardship, wise planning, and artful design of our cultural and natural environments.

Sigma Lambda Alpha: This is a scholastic honor society recognizing academic achievement among students in the field of landscape architecture. Sigma Lambda Alpha honor society has 51 active chapters across the United States and a total membership of approximately 8,000.

Labs, Centers, Research

Rural Intermountain Planning Program: The Rural Intermountain Planning Program provides planning and design services to communities, counties, agencies, and special interest groups throughout Utah and the Intermountain West that cannot afford or are not ready to hire consultants. Community master plans, downtown redevelopment plans, streetscapes, community entries, parks, and open space plans are some examples of services provided.

Swaner Green Space Institute: SGSI is a multi-disciplinary research and service unit within the department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning. Established in 2003, the SGSI focuses on the research of open space issues and provides research assistantships and learning opportunities to students.

Swaner Preserve and EcoCenter: The Swaner Preserve and EcoCenter, located in Park City, Utah, consists of a 1,200-acre land trust in the Snyderville Basin and a 10,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility dedicated to environmental education. The preserve protects critical wetland and foothill terrain in the heart of one of the state's fastest-growing areas. The EcoCenter, completed in 2009, is a multi-use facility with space for educational and community activities. The facility is LEED platinum certified, the highest standard for design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings.

Utah Botanical Center: The UBC, located in Kaysville, Utah, is home to research and demonstration projects focused on sustainable living in the Intermountain West. Studies of water conservation, horticulture, water quality enhancement, wetland ecology, integrated pest management, urban forestry, agriculture, fish and wildlife, highway enhancement, and storm-water management combine to make the center a living laboratory.

Utah Center for Water Resources Research: The UCWRR facilitates water research, outreach, design, and testing elements within a university environment that supports student education and citizen training.