CALS
Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) Student Handbook
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Administration

Graduate Field
At Cornell, graduate study is organized using a field structure. Fields are composed of faculty members from a number of departments who come together around a shared intellectual interest, and may draw from different campuses or colleges. Graduate students are admitted to fields of study. Within each field, they select major and minor subjects, which are research interests or concentrations. Fields span departments and even disciplines.

Graduate field assistants (GFAs) help students, faculty advisors, and the Director of Graduate Studies. The GFAs serve as liaisons between students and faculty members. They are familiar with campus resources and can answer many questions about the degree process.

- Graduate Field Assistant – Kristie Oplinger, klo28@cornell.edu
- Director of Graduate Studies – Josh Cerra, jfc299@cornell.edu

Faculty Advisor
Each student selects or is assigned a faculty advisor. The role of the faculty advisor is to support the student, advise on course selection, and lead the student in the MLA thesis development and completion should the student choose that path. Students are welcome to change their advisor over the course of their academic career at Cornell.

CALS Office of Professional Programs
The Office of Professional Programs is committed to providing a top-notch experience for the CALS Professional Master’s community; in the following degree programs Master of Professional Studies (MPS), Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) and Biological and Environmental Engineering – Master of Engineering (BEE-MEng) students.

The office provides comprehensive student and career services support and resources. Throughout the academic year they hold events, workshops, alumni panels and a professional skills course to enhance each student’s Cornell CALS experience.

Location: 211 and 212 Kennedy Hall
Student Collaboration Space: 211 Kennedy Hall.
All CALS professional master’s students have access to the space 24 hours a day/7 days a week using their Cornell ID card.

Staff:
- Janet D. Anderson, Director, 607-255-9246, janet.anderson@cornell.edu
- Soledad Almeida, Program Coordinator, 607-255-1572, sa2242@cornell.edu
- Cindy Grey, Student Services Coordinator, 607-255-9649, cindy.grey@cornell.edu
- Jennifer Micale, Corporate Relations and Career Services Manager, 607-255-0689, jjm368@cornell.edu
- Maria Witlox, Administrative Assistant, 607-255-2215, mpr13@cornell.edu
**Degree Requirements**  
**First Professional Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) – 90 credits**

The first professional MLA degree is accredited by NYSED and LAAB and is a first-professional, landscape architecture, license-qualifying degree intended for those students who do not hold a first-professional degree in landscape architecture or architecture or pre-professional degree including, but not necessarily limited to, Bachelor of Landscape Studies, Bachelor of Environmental Design, Bachelor of Design, or Bachelor of Architectural Studies. Typically students complete the degree in six semesters.

The following are specific requirements for the first-professional MLA curriculum:

- Completion of 90 credits
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5
- Registered, full-time student on the Ithaca campus for a minimum of five semesters (full-time = 12 credit minimum)
- A student’s final semester before graduation must be completed at the Cornell Ithaca campus
- Completion of 6 studios or 5 studios and a thesis
  - Studios must be taken in the following sequence: LA5010, LA5020, LA6010, LA6020, LA7010, LA7020
  - Student must receive a grade of C- or better in studio courses to advance to the next studio in sequence
  - Two studios or studio & thesis course may not be taken during same semester
  - A thesis if elected by a student must be taken during their final semester at Cornell

- Following courses are required, unless waived via petition:
  - LA4100 – CAD, Construction Documentation
  - LA4120 – Professional Practice
  - LA4910 – Creating the Urban Eden I
  - LA4920 – Creating the Urban Eden II
  - LA6160 – Site Engineering
  - LA6180 – Site Assembly

- Completion of 5 History/Theory courses are required as noted below:
  - LA5900 – Theoretical Foundations
  - LA6900 – Methods of Landscape Architecture Inquiry
  - LA6910 – Design of Landscapes
  - Student’s choice from approved list
  - Student’s choice from approved list
  
  Approved list, see website pdf here:  
  [https://landscape.cals.cornell.edu/sites/landscape.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/HistoryTheoryCourses11.01.16.pdf](https://landscape.cals.cornell.edu/sites/landscape.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/HistoryTheoryCourses11.01.16.pdf)

- 10 additional elective credits toward a concentration chosen by the student and approved by the faculty advisor
  - Includes LA 6030 – 1 credit concentration course

- Physical Education (PE) credits will not be counted towards the total 90 credits
- A maximum of 12 credits below 4000 level are permitted for concentration, free electives and history/theory requirements
Post-Professional Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) – 60 credits

The post-professional MLA degree is accredited by NYSED landscape architecture, license-qualifying degree intended for those students who hold a United States or Canadian, LAAB accredited first professional degree in landscape architecture or architecture including BLA, BSLA, or BArch degrees. Students with an extensive design degree obtained internationally are evaluated and may be admitted to the post-professional degree on a case-by-case basis. Typically students complete the degree in four semesters.

The following are specific requirements for the post-professional MLA curriculum:

- Completion of 60 credits
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5
- Registered, full-time student on the Ithaca campus for a minimum of four semesters (full-time = 12 credit minimum)
- A student’s final semester before graduation must be completed at the Cornell Ithaca campus
- Completion of 4 studios or 3 studios and a thesis
  - Studios must be taken in the following sequence: LA6010, LA6020, LA7010, LA7020
  - Student must receive a grade of C- or better in studio courses to advance to the next studio in sequence
  - Two studios or studio & thesis course may not be taken during same semester
- Following courses are required, unless waived via petition:
  - LA4910: Creating the Urban Eden I
  - LA4920: Creating the Urban Eden II
- Completion of 5 History/Theory courses are required as noted below:
  - LA5900 – Theoretical Foundations
  - LA6900 – Methods of Landscape Architecture Inquiry
  - LA6910 – Design of Landscapes
  - Student’s choice from approved list
  - Student’s choice from approved list
  - Approved list, see website pdf here: [https://landscape.cals.cornell.edu/sites/landscape.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/HistoryTheoryCourses11.01.16.pdf](https://landscape.cals.cornell.edu/sites/landscape.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/HistoryTheoryCourses11.01.16.pdf)
- 10 additional elective credits toward a concentration chosen by the student and approved by the faculty advisor
  - Must take LA 6030 – 1 credit concentration course
  - Students in this track may elect to have History/Theory course count for concentration if relevant to concentration
- Physical Education (PE) credits will not be counted towards the total 60 credits
- A maximum of 12 credits below 4000 level are permitted for concentration, free electives and history/theory requirements
Dual Degree: MLA/MRP – 120 credits

*Meet with Landscape Architecture Director of Graduate Studies for dual degree planning.

The following are the specific requirements for the dual degree program:

- Completion of 120 credits
  - 90 for the MLA degree requirements (see first-professional degree requirements above)
  - 30 for the MRP degree requirements
- Registered student for a minimum of 8 semesters
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5
- All requirements for the MLA and the MRP must be complete before the degrees will be conferred

Academic Plan
Every student, under guidance of the faculty advisor, will review and outline their courses for each semester using the curriculum planning sheets for their degree program. This ensures the development of the most successful path to degree completion.

Curriculum planning sheets are accessible to each student in Cornell Box. All coursework should be documented on the sheet and saved in Box at the end of each advising meeting. A minimum of one curriculum planning meeting between student and advisor should take place per academic year, typically at the beginning of the fall semester. Curriculum planning sheets will be reviewed by the Graduate Field Assistant.

Faculty Advisor Selection
Every student is assigned a faculty advisor upon matriculation at Cornell. Students may choose to change their advisor during their academic career at Cornell. Students pursuing a thesis should change their advisor to the name of their thesis committee chair. These changes can be made in Student Center.
Steps to adding advisor in Student Center:

1. Log-in to Student Center.
2. Click the down arrow next to the Advisor on the right side of the screen.
3. Click on “Graduate Committee Selection”.
4. “Add new member” will come up and click there.
5. Select role as advisor.
6. Choose your advisor and click “Save”.
7. Click “Submit Committee Request”.

Studios
Studios are structured to be taken in sequential order and the last studio completed before degree conferral must be on the Ithaca campus, unless approved via petition. For the complete studio sequence, refer to the degree requirements section. A student must receive a grade of C- or better to advance to the next studio in sequence.

There are two alternative options for graduate students to the standard sequence. Students are eligible to pursue these options after successfully completing LA 6020:

- Summer studio in NYC: LA7005-Studio and LA7006-Seminar are available for students to apply for permission to enroll. LA 7005 replaces either 7010 or 7020, while LA 7006 can be used as a history/theory course. There will be an application process open in the spring semester for interested students.
- AAP in NYC: ARCH 5201 – Professional Practice is a full semester experience in New York City and is accepted as a studio. See Course Roster for full description of course.

Course Enrollment
Student Center
Student Center is the Student Record system utilized by Cornell University. Student Center is available to help students plan their academic program of study, enroll in classes and track progress toward completing requirements. Academics and Enrollment tools in Student Center are organized under My Academics, My Planner, and Enrollment tabs.

Credit load per semester
The Master of Landscape Architecture program is a rigorous program. Therefore the number of credits attempted each semester should remain in a reasonable range. The faculty advisor will guide the student on the appropriate coursework; therefore all course choices and elective choices should be approved by the faculty advisor. The suggested range of credits per semester is between 15 – 19. Students seeking to take more than 19 must receive faculty advisor approval.

Pre-enrollment
Students have the opportunity to pre-enroll for classes for the next semester approximately halfway through the current semester. Information on pre-enrollment will be sent to all students prior to the time period. For specific dates by semester, refer to the “Important Dates” for the semester.
Adding/Dropping Courses
Courses can be added and dropped by the student via Student Center for a set amount of time at the beginning of each semester. For specific dates by semester, refer to the “Important Dates” for the semester.

Changes after Add/Drop
Extenuating circumstances may lead to a need for adding/dropping a course after the designated time period. For processing, students need to complete the Course Enrollment Petition form and submit it to the CALS Office of Professional Programs Student Services Coordinator for processing. No courses will be added after the 6th week of the semester. Courses dropped after the 9th week will receive a “W” grade (withdraw) and a course enrollment petition is required.

Time Conflict
Occasionally a student may wish to enroll in two courses which overlap by a small amount of time. Student Center will not allow the second course to be added with a time conflict. For enrollment in the second course, students need to complete the Time Conflict form and submit it to the CALS Office of Professional Programs Student Services Coordinator for processing. Instructors for each course should approve this possibility before submitting the form.

Grading Options
Some courses allow a student to choose their grading option of letter grade or S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory). When enrolling in the course a student can choose their preference if it is available. Not all classes offer this option. Studio, technical and core history/theory courses must be taken for a letter grade.

Incomplete (INC)
A professor may assign an incomplete (INC) grade if a student has equity in a course and has had an extenuating circumstance that prevented the student from finishing all of the coursework by the end of the course. This should be discussed with the professor and a plan for completion, written out and agreed upon. However, instructors are not required to do this and may instead deduct unfinished work from your final grade.

• Changing an ‘Incomplete’ or ‘No Grade Reported’
Students have one year from the end of a course to satisfy the completion plan decided on by the professor. When the coursework is complete, the professor will change the grade from “INC-incomplete” or “NGR-no grade reported” to the earned letter grade. The grade will appear with an asterisk on the transcript. If the course requirements are not satisfied, the INC or NGR becomes a permanent grade on the transcript. Retaking the course may be an option if it is offered, however both the INC or NGR and the most recent grade will be noted on the transcript.

Auditing Classes
Auditing a class means a student regularly attends the class, but does not participate in all aspects of the
course. No credit hours will be received and the course will be marked with a “V” on them transcript. Some courses do not lend themselves to auditing, and in such cases, instructors may not allow it.

Petition for course waiver
Students who feel they have taken prior coursework covering similar content as that in required courses may request a course waiver. Students requesting a course waiver must email the Graduate Field Assistant and Director of Graduate Studies with the following information about the previously taken course:

- Syllabus
- Transcript
- Samples of work from class

The petition will be reviewed by the graduate committee and the student will be notified of their decision. Should a course be successfully waived, all other degree requirements still apply. For example, completion of 60 or 90 credits and/or completion of five total history/theory courses.

Student Status
Registration
All students are required to be registered during each semester of the degree program until the degree is conferred. Any interruption of continuous registration is considered a withdrawal. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure s/he is registered. International students should contact the International Students and Scholars Office if they have any questions about maintaining a student visa status.

Pro-rated tuition
Students who have successfully completed the necessary full-time semesters of coursework for the degree program (refer to Degree Requirements) may be eligible for pro-rated tuition should they need to take an additional semester above and beyond their specified time to degree. It must be their FINAL semester only. Status is by application-only to CALS Professional Programs Office.

Leaves of Absence
Students may request a leave at any time for personal or medical reasons.

- Leaves are granted for a period of up to 12 months; however they can be extended. Health Leaves of absence are automatically renewed upon request of the student. Personal Leaves are renewed at the discretion of the field.
- The maximum number of years allowed for a leave of absence is four. If the period of the leave has been exceeded, the student may re-apply for admission, but the Field is not required to re-admit. Students returning from approved health leave within the four-year window are guaranteed any financial support remaining from their original offer of admission, although the specific duties associated with that support may be adjusted.
- A student who takes a leave of absence may not receive payment in the form of a fellowship, teaching assistantship or graduate research assistantship and relinquishes access to campus facilities and personnel that normally accompany student status.
- Time spent on leave of absence does not count toward time-to-degree limits.
In Absentia
A student may petition for in absentia status only for legitimate academic (not personal) reasons, for instance; serving as an intern or performing research elsewhere. Application for in absentia registration is granted only if the student's program can best be fulfilled by work at an institution or location other than Cornell. Students seeking in absentia should consult the CALS Office of Professional Programs Office Student Services Associate for further guidance.

Withdrawal
Students may withdraw from their program at any time. Withdrawal is appropriate for students who do not intend to resume studies or to complete an advanced degree at Cornell University. Any interruption of registration is considered a withdrawal unless the student has been granted a leave of absence.

Internships
For credit
Students may complete an internship for credit, if the internship is unpaid. The semester after the internship is completed, the student will register for LA 5970 (fall) or LA 5980(spring) with their faculty advisor. They will complete the assignment as required by the faculty advisor to receive the appropriate number of credits and grade.

For pay
Students may complete an internship for pay and receive no credits. If the internship takes the student away from campus during a registered semester, the student will apply for a leave of absence for the semester.

For credit, when paid
Students may complete an internship for pay and receive credits. The semester after the internship is completed, the student will register for LA 5970(fall) and LA 5980(spring) under the section number of the instructor who has agreed to work with the student.

A paper must be written and submitted to the faculty in charge of the Independent Study Paper via email by an agreed deadline.

Length: 800 words per credit
Content: Descriptive (25% of total paper)

- Description of the internship to include:
  Firm/company/organization/agency history: age, owners/partners experience
  Description and business structure – including a structural organization diagram
  Sole proprietorship, Partnership, Corporation, LLC, Government, NGO, Non-Profit, Other
  Number of employees by type: Partners, principals, associates, other
  Types of work performed, eg. analysis and planning, Master planning, Campus planning, Design, Residential, Commercial, Institutional, Parks and open space, Ecological infrastructure, Other
  Locations of work
  Example projects
Speculative (75% of total paper)

- Situate the work of the firm/organization historically and theoretically
- Comparative case studies
- Compare and contrast the work with two other entities of same type/size/body of work to illustrate the lineage of the entities work and its place within the broader historical and theoretical context
- Internee’s responsibilities during the internship
- Specific tasks performed with project examples
- Speculation on future career impact and direction
- What did you learn and how will it impact your future work and career

Citations: Properly cite all sources used

Schedule

Degree Completion and Graduation

Degrees are conferred annually in May, August, and December.

Applying to Graduate

It is the responsibility of the graduating student to complete an Application to Graduate. Completing the Application to Graduate notifies the CALS Office of Professional Program Student Services to initiate a review of your degree requirements.

A completed application with all necessary signatures should be submitted to the Student Services Associate in 211 Kennedy Hall or via email to calsprofprograms@cornell.edu prior to the submission deadline. For specific dates by semester, refer to the “Important Dates” for the semester.

MLA thesis submission process

The student will work with the faculty advisor on completion of the thesis and receive final approval from the thesis committee.

The student will submit the following to the Student Services Associate in 211 Kennedy Hall or via email to calsprofprograms@cornell.edu prior to the submission deadline. For specific dates by semester, refer to the “Important Dates” for the semester:

- A PDF of the thesis
- Signed Attestation Form

ADD IN REQUIRED FRONT MATTER AND FORMATTING OF THESIS. KRISTIE??

Commencement

Cornell Commencement takes place in May and a Recognition Event takes place in December. Every candidate, regardless of graduation date, is invited to participate in the May Commencement ceremony. Please see the Cornell University Commencement website for more information. Diplomas will be printed with your name exactly as it appears on your official records and sent via postal mail. It is the student’s responsibility to verify their name and home address are correct in Student Essentials. This will ensure mailing to the correct address.
Career Services

Advising
A full-time staff member is dedicated to providing professional development to all Professional Master’s students in CALS. To assist you in your post-grad transition, the Corporate Relations and Career Services Manager organizes workshops, events and teaches a career readiness course. Whether your transition to the workforce involves an internship or full-time job, you will receive customized, one-on-one advising for resume reviews, practice interviews, target employer networking strategies and much more.

A variety of career events will be offered throughout each semester, including alumni networking events, panels and career-focused workshops focusing on the many aspects of effective job search strategies.

ALS 5211: Career Readiness for CALS Professional Master’s Students
A one credit, seven week course for all CALS professional master’s students. In the course, students receive engaging and interactive assistance in best-practices for creating an effective career readiness plan. Students practice networking, learn to decipher a job description, prepare interview materials and develop a thorough understanding of how to leverage the Cornell network as well as various internal and external resources.

Important Information

Academic Integrity
Cornell University expects all students to conduct themselves in a responsible and scholarly manner. All students must adhere to the academic integrity policy of the university. More information can be found here: http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/academic-integrity/

Title IX
Cornell University is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning, living, and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff members. Cornell University complies with Title IX of the federal Higher Education Amendment of 1972. More information can be found here: http://titleix.cornell.edu/

Grievance

Courses
A student should talk with the course professor for any issues related to the course. If additional advice is needed, the Director of Graduate Studies/Faculty Lead for the MPS program should be contacted.

General Grievance
Cornell University offers the Office of the University Ombudsman as a safe place for all members of the community to discuss problems and issues within the University. For more information, visit the Ombudsman website.