OU
CHRISTOPHER C. GIBBS
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE
The UNIVERSITY *of* OKLAHOMA

Frequently Asked Questions

Graduate programs at OU-Tulsa
The University of Oklahoma
College of Architecture

What is Urban Design?

Urban design is a creative discipline integrating aspects of architecture, city planning, civil engineering, landscape architecture and behavioral sociology. Urban designers often engage in the design of urban spaces, streetscapes and large-scale developments. They may be asked to provide visions for neighborhoods, districts, and even entire cities.

What is the Urban Design Studio?

The Urban Design Studio is a flexible learning environment bringing students of different backgrounds, disciplines, and skills together to explore urban issues and develop design abilities.

How is the Master of Urban Design program structured?

The program consists of 32 credit hours of course work. The core requirements consist of 15 credit hours of studio work. The first-year students work in the studio as a team on multi-dimensional urban projects. The second-year students research, define and complete a professional project. The remaining 17 credit hours of coursework consist of lectures, seminars, independent studies and electives.

How long does it take to complete the program?

Typically, it takes two calendar years to complete the program taking six credit hours per semester. The schedule is designed to allow students to work full-time while in the program. It is possible for students to complete the program in eighteen months if going to school full-time.

When do classes meet?

Class schedules are arranged to accommodate students working full-time and the full cycle of courses is offered every two years. Studio classes meet on Saturdays from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm. Lecture classes meet on weekday evenings from 5:30 pm to 8:20 pm.

How long has the program been in existence?

The program was founded in 1988; to date there have been over 140 graduates.

What type of student attends the program?

One of our strengths is the diversity of our students. We have students and alumni hailing from Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Maryland, and Washington, as well as India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Iran, Ghana, South Korea, Greece, Canada, Japan, Vietnam, China, England, Venezuela, Brazil, Zimbabwe, Mexico and Nigeria. Some of our students are non-traditional students with significant practice experience. Also, students come from a variety of educational and professional fields, including city and regional planning, social work, public administration, and engineering.

How many students are enrolled in the program?

At any given time, the Urban Design Studio has ten to fifteen students enrolled, the optimal number is twelve. Typical studio class sizes range from three to ten students; typical lecture course sizes range from three to fifteen students.

What types of projects does the Urban Design Studio do?

The studio selects projects that benefit the local community while teaching students planning, design and communication skills. To this end, a variety of projects have been attempted. Some projects are research oriented; projects of this type have included a parking study for Downtown Tulsa and a feasibility analysis for burying overhead utilities on arterial streets. Other projects have a real estate development emphasis; examples of this project type include proposals for rehabilitating older Tulsa buildings and design schemes for numerous infill sites. Many projects concern urban space and the studio has developed neighborhood plans, streetscape designs and urban design guidelines.

What is a professional project?

The professional project is an original contribution, intellectually or creatively, to the disciplines of architecture, planning or urban design. Equivalent in scope to a Masters Thesis, the professional project is a flexible format for creative work, as well as scholarly research. The professional project must meet four criteria: first, it must address an urban issue or urban design problem; second, it must pose a research problem or contain significant practical research; third, it must engage the community in a meaningful way; and finally, it must have enough interest, depth and rigor to occupy the student for the one-year course of the project. The professional project is defended before a committee of the faculty upon completion.

What types of professional projects do students do?

Students have done a broad range of projects, including neighborhood plans and studies for public improvements. Professional projects are archived on the studio website at: http://tulsagrad.ou.edu/studio under the archive tab.

What lecture courses are offered?

Lecture courses offered include Real Estate Development I, Real Estate Development II, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design Theory, Research Methods, Urban Transportation Planning, Historic Preservation, Public Policy and Legal Framework for Design.

Who teaches the courses?

Full-time faculty who are world-class researchers or adjunct faculty that are practicing experts in their fields teaches all courses. For instance, Kevin Anderson, a practicing real estate consultant and broker, teaches the real estate courses, Jay Chandler, a partner in the law firm of Wohlgemuth, Chandler and Downdell, teaches the legal framework course and Arjan Jager draws on years of teaching, practice and worldwide travel while presenting the Urban Design Theory course.

How well equipped is the studio?

The Urban Design Studio is committed to providing students the tools to learn and perfect their design skills. The studio is equipped with a local area computer network connecting seven computer graphic workstations running advanced graphic software, including: Autocad, 3DStudio Max, Rhino, Sketch-Up, Adobe Creative Suite, and ArcINFO. The studio has large format plotters, flat bed scanners, digital cameras and miscellaneous other peripherals. We emphasize the physical model as a superior means of study and communication and have extensive model building capabilities including a laser cutting and engraving system and a shop with miniature power tools. We also have a Makerbot 3D printer and a DJI drone. The studio is also equipped with the latest instructional technology including overhead video projectors, elmos and video conferencing capabilities.

What library resources are available?

We have a small, but growing, collection of architecture and urban design books, approximately 500 volumes, in Tulsa. We also collect eight professional journals from around the world. The full resources of the architectural libraries at the University of Oklahoma in Norman and Oklahoma State University are available and materials can usually be obtained in two to three day's time.

Is this an accredited degree?

The National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) does not accredit this degree. This degree is not a first professional degree as defined by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and will not by itself allow applicants to sit for the Architectural Registration Examination (ARE) or qualify for licensure by most state registration boards. The University of Oklahoma offers a 96 credit hour accredited Master of Architecture degree at its main campus in Norman. The degree is accepted by the American Planning Association as a qualification for the American Institute of Certified Planners' examination. All degree programs at OU-Tulsa are however accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities.

Can I get Intern Development Program credit?

Yes, you can earn supplemental IDP value units by completing the program.

What are the admission requirements?

Admission is based on several factors:

You must possess a bachelors degree from an accredited university.

You must have a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale on your last sixty credit hours of undergraduate work, although you may be admitted conditionally with a grade point as low as 2.8.

You must have favorable, verifiable references.

And you must exhibit potential to contribute to the Urban Design Studio.

How do I apply for admission?

The following items must be submitted for consideration:

A completed University of Oklahoma Application for Admission available on the Internet at http://www.ou.edu/admissions/home.html.

A US $50 application fee, made payable by check or money order, to the University of Oklahoma.

Official transcripts from each academic institution attended.

Three letters of reference from professors, employers or colleagues familiar with your scholarly or professional achievements.

A letter of intent indicating what you wish to accomplish by your graduate studies.

A resume or vita.

A personal or telephone interview with the Director of the Urban Design Studio.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) examination scores or equivalent if applying from non-English speaking countries.

Mail or deliver all materials to:

The University of Oklahoma - Tulsa
Office of Admissions
4502 East 41st Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135-2512

How do I enroll?

You can enroll via the Internet at http://one.ou.edu.

If you have any questions contact Ms. Krista Pettersen, Associate Registrar & Director, Enrollment & Student Financial Services at 918.660.3474.

How much does it cost to attend?

Tuition and fees for Oklahoma residents are approximately US $18,000 for the entire course of study. Tuition and fees for non-residents are approximately US $38,000 for the entire course of study. Tuition and fees are significantly lower than many comparable programs.

Is financial aid available?

The Urban Design Studio receives two half-time graduate research assistantships each year. There are scholarships, grants and loans available from college, federal and state sources as well. Some private employers will provide financial assistance while their employers are attending classes here.

How do I become eligible for financial aid?

You must apply for financial assistance before eligibility will be determined. The university based aid is primarily established upon statute determines the amount of aid available to each student. The university considers your course of study, financial need and other factors while determining the availability of funds. Note you must be admitted to an academic program before financial assistance is available from the university.

How do I find out more about financial aid?

Visit the University of Oklahoma Financial Aid website at www.finaid.ou.edu

Can I gain practical experience while I go to school?

Yes, we encourage students to practice while attending the program and many students work full-time in design firms, public agencies and other jobs. Tulsa has a wide range of architecture, landscape architecture, planning, engineering, and real estate development firms ranging in size from a sole practitioner to over five hundred employees. Tulsa has a concentration of firms engaged in retail architecture, as well as practices specializing in higher education, multi-family housing, medical buildings, and even equestrian facilities. We assist students wishing employment with placement and counseling.

What opportunities exist after graduation?

Our students have taken many paths after graduation. Some go on to careers in traditional architecture and planning practice. Others work in allied fields from public service to private real estate development. Still others choose to continue their education and pursue doctorate degrees and/or teaching.

Where is the Urban Design Studio?

The Urban Design Studio is located at the Schusterman Center, 4502 East 41st Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135-2512. The studio is a freestanding laboratory on the south side of the Schusterman Center site. The Urban Design Studio office is located Building 1, Wing H, Room 1H01.

Who do I contact for more information?

Direct inquires to:

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Director

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