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.

What is the Master of Science in Architectural Urban Studies Degree?

The M.S.AUS degree replaced the M.Arch degree with emphasis in Urban Design at the request of the National Architectural Accreditation Board so the degree would not be mistaken as a first professional degree in architecture. Students in the M.S. in AUS program are not required to have a professional architecture degree, although some do.

How is the Master of Science in Architectural Urban Studies 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 120 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, Iran, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, South Korea, Greece, Canada, Japan, Vietnam, China, England, Venezuela, Brasil, 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 five to twenty 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 have 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, Urban Transportation Systems, Research Methods, 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. We also employ professors of practice working in private industry or public service to work with students in the design studio.

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, Revit, 3DStudio Max, Rhino, Sketch-Up, Adobe Creative Suite, and ArcINFO. The studio has color and black and white 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 just finished building a Rapman 3D printer. 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, College of Architecture does offer a 64 credit hour accredited Master of Architecture degree at its main campus in Norman. The MSAUS 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 also fully 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 bachelor’s degree from an accredited university.

You must have a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale.

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 $40 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
Can I take some courses without being admitted to the program?

Yes, you can take courses for one semester and earn up to eight hours of credit before being admitted. You still must meet all admission requirements at the time of application.

How do I enroll?

Once you are admitted you can enroll via the Internet at http://ozone.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 $16,000 for the entire course of study. Tuition and fees for non-residents are approximately US $34,000 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 three dedicated scholarships available to our students. Grants and loans are 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 primarily upon established 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 or contact Ms. Krista Pettersen in Tulsa at 918.660.3474 or e-mail at kpettersen@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 J, Room 33.

Ten reasons why you should pursue a graduate degree in urban studies at OU-Tulsa?

We work at the intersection of many disciplines involved in the creation of the city. Our courses are taught by practicing professionals in civil engineering, architecture, real estate development, planning, landscape architecture and law to give you a wide range of perspectives and introduce you to how each discipline approaches problems of urban design.

We honor the importance of place. While developing the technical skills that lead to mastery of knowledge and professional competence, our students also learn the importance of history, the ethical responsibilities of civic design and the effects of policy on quality of life for future generations of inhabitants.

We help communities and give back through meaningful work. All of our projects involve partners from municipal government, non-profit agencies or community organizations. Our two Tulsa studios, the Urban Design Studio and the Community Health and Environmental Design Studio, are places where students take on real projects which can be implemented by our partners.

The world is rapidly urbanizing. More than half of the world’s population lives in cities, more than 80% in the United States and other developed countries. By 2050, over six Billion people will live in cities. The magnitude of these numbers means enormous challenges to meet the demand for human settlements, economic development and infrastructure while protecting the environment and respecting principles of social justice. Professionals that understand how cities are created and work will be in high demand in a variety of fields.

We recognize the connections between public health and better design. Our recently founded Community Health and Environmental Design Studio is located in the Wayman Tisdale Specialty Health Clinic. Students have the unique opportunity to work with doctors, nurses, public health officials and allied health professionals to learn about evidence-based practice and improve community health.

We nurture childhood dreams of making. We explore the application of the latest technology to city design and research, including geographic information systems, procedural modeling and telecommunications. Our Urban Design Studio includes rapid prototyping equipment, a laser engraver and a new 3D printer built by our students.

We encourage a diverse studio culture of creativity and camaraderie. Students and faculty collaborate on research and creative projects in teams of equals to tackle problems often without definite solutions. We
seek individuals from a variety of undergraduate backgrounds and experiences. Our graduates include citizens from over twenty countries.

**We support students with flexible scheduling and affordability.** Our classes meet on evenings and weekends to accommodate students pursuing opportunities for part-time internships or full-time practice. Tuition and fees for the 32 credit hour program are amongst the lowest for private and public research universities.

**Tulsa is a great place to study and live.** A medium-sized city with an awesome art deco skyline, an inexpensive cost of living and a rapidly redeveloping downtown and riverfront, River City has abundant recreational and social activities for many interests from country swing music to opera, from Western Art to new genres and kayaking to baseball. Our student organization, the Society of Urban Design Students, has been active in creating a community of urban designers at many events including Parking Day and Street Cred.

**Hard work and excellence are rewarded.** Our work is of the highest professional and scholarly quality upholding the standards of the University of Oklahoma. Recent graduates are in demand and employed as researchers, designers and officials in local government, private design and consulting firms, academic institutions and social services.

**If you want to learn more about the Master of Science in Architectural Urban Studies please contact:**

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918.660.3493  
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http://tulsagrad.ou.edu/studio  
or visit the Urban Design Studio and CHED on Facebook

The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.