



Master of Landscape Architecture MLA.LARC:L

MLA PROFILE 2025/2026



School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (SED RD)
Ontario Agricultural College

The Profession of Landscape Architecture

Landscape architecture is a diverse and rewarding design profession. Landscape architects play an important role in shaping our environment, working in collaboration with other designers, scientists, and the public. As a landscape architect, you will be involved in conservation, design, and management of landscapes from the scale of individual sites to entire communities and regions. The possibilities are endless.

Landscape architects are guided by the ideals of sustaining resources for future generations, accommodating human use and enjoyment, and enhancing aesthetic quality in the environment. As professionals, we serve the needs of society and individual clients through public, private, and academic practice.

The profession of landscape architecture was founded in the nineteenth century, growing out of town and regional planning, community design, and public park design. There is a tradition of collegiality and support within our profession, beginning with membership in provincial and territorial associations across Canada. The national professional body is the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA), formed in 1934; the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA), formed in 1968, serves as the provincial body. The International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), which represents the profession on international issues, was founded in 1948.

Academic programs in landscape architecture were first established in Canada in the 1960s, including the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) and the Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) programs at the University of Guelph. The BLA and MLA programs at Guelph are fully accredited by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects. CSLA accreditation is also recognized by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). Our students become licensed professionals when they have earned a degree, interned for two years, and completed professional examinations.

Career Opportunities

Landscape architects enjoy a broad range of career opportunities. Graduates of our MLA program are in demand across Canada and around the world. They become licensed professionals who have exciting careers in the private and public and academic sectors. Many own or are employed by private-sector consulting firms, multi-disciplinary firms, and design-build firms. As professionals, they frequently specialize in a particular area of practice, such as landscape restoration, aggregate resource reclamation, golf course and resort design, community design, heritage conservation or computer visualization. A growing number of landscape architects are employed by resource-based industries, including forestry and aggregate resource management.

The public sector employs landscape architects at the national, provincial, regional, and municipal levels to provide expertise within parks and recreation, community development, transportation, engineering, and planning departments. Many of our graduates also have academic careers, including appointments in Australia, the United States and Canada.

Alumni Employment Profile

Below is a sample of MLA graduates which are employed at the following:

Private Sector:

MBTW Group, Toronto, ON
Shanghai Fanrui Architectural Design Inc., Shanghai, China
NAK Design Strategies, Toronto, ON
Tract Consulting Inc., St. John's, NL
Maruyama & Associates, Vancouver, BC
Aboud & Associates Inc., Guelph, ON
The Planning Partnership, Toronto, ON
Urban Systems, Kamloops, BC
Henry Kortekaas & Associates, Toronto, ON
Colin K. Okashimo and Associates, Singapore
Terraplan Landscape Architects, Toronto, ON
Dogan & Associates, Guelph, ON
Brent Harley & Associates, Whistler, BC
Alexander Budrevics & Associates Ltd., Don Mills, ON
MMM Group Ltd., Ottawa, ON
Outside Planning & Design, Halifax, NS
Earthscape, Wallenstein, ON
Stantec, Saskatoon, SK and Calgary, AB
SCI Landscape Architects, Toronto, ON
Quinn Design Associates Inc., Toronto, ON
Forrec Ltd., Toronto, ON
BENCH Site Design Inc., Kelowna, BC

Public Sector:

Cities of Ottawa, Hamilton, London, and Burlington
Township of Clearwater
Hong Kong SAR Government
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Credit Valley Conservation Authority, Toronto

Academic/Research Sector:

PhD Mining Engineering, University of Alberta, AB
PhD Planning, University of Waterloo, ON
PhD Geography, Western University, ON
PhD, Biology, Laurentian University, ON
Assistant Professor, Cal Poly University, Pomona, CA | University of Guelph
Associate Professor, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX
Senior Lecturer, Lincoln University, Christchurch, NZ

Landscape Architecture at Guelph

The University of Guelph is an internationally recognized centre of landscape architectural education which provides a four-year undergraduate program leading to the BLA degree and graduate level studies leading to the MLA degree.

Landscape Architecture Mission Statement: Our mission is to excel at comprehensive and evidence-based education, innovation, and scholarship in the art and science of landscape architecture and to prepare graduates to lead professional practice into the future.

Landscape Architecture is a Recognized STEM Discipline in Canada: We are proud to have accredited graduate and undergraduate programs in Landscape Architecture recognized as a STEM discipline in Canada. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. It represents a collection of disciplines pivotal to innovation, problem-solving, and societal advancement. STEM fields are dedicated to understanding the natural world, leveraging technology, tackling complex challenges, and applying mathematical principles in practical scenarios. More than an honorary title, it reflects the comprehensive blend of expertise landscape architects contribute. This designation highlights the value of scientific, technological, engineering, and mathematical underpinnings of the profession – and has informed our curricula development for decades, our continued curiosities and wonderment, and the efforts our students and faculty routinely undertake at Guelph; we endeavour to train "stewards of both natural and built environments." Our students have always sought to explore and employ an understanding of ecological systems, design that is sustainable, and create designed spaces that aid community well-being, enhance our biodiversity, and meet the challenges posed by climate change.

The School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (SEDRD) comprises the following programs in Landscape Architecture, Rural Planning and Development, Capacity Development and Extension and Rural Studies. This structure is intended to facilitate cross-disciplinary study in fields related to landscape architecture and expands the resources and opportunities available to students in all three areas of study.

School Atmosphere

Faculty and students in Landscape Architecture are a group of creative, concerned and intensively involved individuals who enjoy the opportunity to work and learn together. Unique in our skills, life experiences and points of view, we share the goal of improving the fit between humans and their physical environment. Discussions and debate are common as students and faculty struggle with the issues raised by this goal and collaborate in evaluating potential solutions.

The school provides comfortable studios and classrooms as well as computing and computer imaging capacity. Nearby cities and rural landscapes provide the context for many studio projects. Toronto, a city of three million, is approximately one hour's drive from Guelph and frequently serves as a setting for studying urban issues, as does the City of Guelph and nearby mid-sized cities.

Students come from all over Canada and numerous foreign countries, bringing a broad range of undergraduate backgrounds to their studies in landscape architecture. The richness of this mixture fosters an outstanding learning experience.

Landscape Architecture Faculty

Our faculty have been recognized within the University of Guelph as well as nationally and internationally for their expertise and strengths in teaching, practice, outreach, and research. They bring a variety of education backgrounds and interests that span broad areas of the profession, adding significantly to the richness of the student learning experience at Guelph. Associated professionals and faculty from other university programs contribute as well to the education of students in Landscape Architecture.

Afshin Ashari, Assistant Professor and BLA Coordinator. BCS (Islamic Azad University-IAUCTB); MLA (Toronto). Room LA 115, Ext. 52406. Email: aashari@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: Computational Design (generative algorithms, machine learning and artificial intelligence, optimization, and environmental analysis), 3D printing, digital fabrication, and visual communication.

Nadia Amoroso, Associate Professor. BLA, MUD (Toronto), PhD (The Bartlett-UCL, UK). Room: LA 144, Ext. 53192, Email: nadia.amoroso@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: visual communication in landscape architecture (traditional, digital and hybrid), data visualization, creative cartography, geodesign, parametric design, urban design, contemporary design, digital design, 3D printing and fabrication.

Steven Clarke, Associate Professor and MLA Graduate Coordinator. BEnvD, MLA (Manitoba). Room: LA 120, Ext. 52575, Email: steven.clarke@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: artificial intelligence + design, agricultural urbanism, circular economy, climate action, community engagement, convergence by design, design thinking + leadership, design communication, design construction, design sketching + illustration, green infrastructure, interdisciplinary + transdisciplinary collaboration, resilient communities, regenerative design, urban design, urbanism.

Robert Corry, Professor. BLA (Guelph), MLA (Minnesota), PhD (Michigan). Room: LA 113, Ext. 58034, Email: rcorry@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: landscape ecology, landscape pattern measurement, design scenarios, alternative future landscapes, habitat quality, geo-spatial analysis (GIS), rural and small-town landscapes, evidence-based LA, research design, scholarship.

Kearney Coupland, Assistant Professor. BA (Guelph), MLA (Guelph), PhD (Wilfrid Laurier). Room 110A, Ext. 56420, Email: kearney@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: Climate change adaptation, risk communication, planned community relocation and managed retreat, disaster risk reduction, Caribbean islands, Arctic coastal communities, climate migration.

Aaron Hernandez, Assistant Professor (Associated Graduate Faculty). BA (Waterloo), MLA (Toronto). Room 116, Ext. 56239, Email: aaron.hernandez@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: climate adaptation, regional planning, urban design, site design and construction, cartography, cultural landscapes, communication theory.

Sean Kelly, Associate Professor. BLA (Guelph), MSc (Guelph). Room: LA 101, Ext. 56870, Email: sean.kelly@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: destination and amenity environments, design implementation and landscape construction, community design planning, programming, active design, and wayfinding.

[Heather Schibli](#), Assistant Professor. BFA (OCADU), MLA (Guelph). Room LA 105, Ext 53478, Email: hschibli@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: Holistic ecological restoration, multispecies design, green infrastructure, assisted migration/climate adaptation, Miyawaki method, planting for resilience, environmental justice, multifunctional landscapes, interventionist art, kincentric ecology, biocultural landscapes, nature based solutions.

[Brendan Stewart](#), Associate Professor. BLA (Guelph), MLA (California-Berkeley). Room LA 117, Ext. 53483, Email: brendan.stewart@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: heritage conservation planning and design, cultural landscape theory, design history and service learning and participatory design.

2.2 Other Contributing Colleagues:

[Karen Landman](#), College Professor Emeritus | Associated Graduate Faculty. BLA (Guelph), MSc (Guelph), PhD (Queen's). Email: klandman@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: urban greening, urban agriculture, planting design, green infrastructure, landscape stewardship.

[Cecelia Paine](#), Professor Emeritus | Associated Graduate Faculty. BLA (Illinois), MLA (Michigan). Email: cpaine@uoguelph.ca.

Areas of interest: contemporary design, heritage and rural landscape conservation, professional practice, urban green systems, and community design.

Master of Landscape Architecture Degree

Students who hold an honours undergraduate degree or equivalent with high standing in virtually any discipline field may be considered for admission to the Master of Landscape Architecture program. If your undergraduate degree is not in landscape architecture, **you may expect to follow the three-year, six-semester academic program (completed over 32 months)** leading to the professional MLA degree. MLA student's register for Fall and Winter semesters each year and request a scheduled [academic break](#) during the two Spring/Summer semesters to gain practical experience.

Students with backgrounds in biology, philosophy, architecture, planning, engineering, geography, sciences, fine art, music, economics, and many other fields are enrolled in our MLA program.

Recent BLA graduates with a [recognized accredited degree in landscape architecture](#) will be considered for a two-year program of study (four-semesters) to fulfil requirements for the MLA degree.

Programs of Study and Requirements

MLA:LARC:L For Those Holding a Degree Other Than BLA:

The MLA program is designed for individuals with an honour's degree other than the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture. The MLA degree requires six semesters of full-time study over three calendar years (thirty-two months). Students normally register for the Fall and Winter semesters each year and take an [academic break](#) during the two summer semesters to gain practical work experience.

Most students will follow the following program of courses; however, there is some flexibility in the program depending on each student's individual background. Elective courses may be inside or outside the discipline. These elective courses may be at either the senior undergraduate or the graduate level. An exchange/study abroad may be arranged in consultation with the program. The **MLA:LARC:L** program requires successful completion of 12.00 credits, as follows:

SEMESTER 1: Foundations (Fall)

LARC*2240 Plants in the Landscape (0.5)
LARC*6010 Studio I - Foundational Design & Communication (1.0)
LARC*6430 Landscape Resource Analysis (0.5)

SEMESTER 2: Site (Winter)

LARC*6030 Studio II - Site Design (1.0)
LARC*6340 Landscape History (0.5)
LARC*6470 Integrative Environmental Planning (0.5)

SEMESTER 3: Environment and Application (Fall)

LARC*6360 Professional Practice (0.5)
LARC*6440 Studio III - Environmental Design (1.0)
LARC*6610 Design Inquiry (0.5)
1 Elective (0.5)

SEMESTER 4: Design and Detail (Winter)

LARC*2420 Materials and Techniques (0.5)
LARC*6020 Site Engineering (0.5)
LARC*6040 Studio IV - Landscape Design and Construction (1.0)

SEMESTER 5: Community and Place (Fall)

LARC*6120 Studio V - Community Design (1.0)
1 Elective (0.5)
Design Project Option - LARC*6510 Advanced Digital Representation (0.5) **or**
Thesis Project Option* - LARC*6710 Special Study (0.5)

SEMESTER 6: Capstone (Winter)

1 Elective (0.5)
Design Project Option - LARC*6700 Studio VI – Capstone Project (1.0) **or**
Thesis Project Option* - LARC*6730 Thesis Project (1.0)

* Thesis Project Option: Students interested in doing the thesis project option must approach a potential advisor in Semester 4. It is also recommended that thesis students will take an additional research methods course in Semester 4 or 5 as their elective. A proposal must be prepared and approved by their Advisory Committee (advisor plus one other member) by the end of Semester 4.

MLA:LARC:L For Holders of An Accredited BLA Degree:

Students who have previously completed a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) program accredited by Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB, American Society of Landscape Architects) and Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council (LAAC; Canadian Association of Landscape Architects) will be exempt from 4.5 credits of MLA coursework. Elective courses may be inside or outside the discipline. These elective courses may be at either the senior undergraduate or the graduate level. The holders of BLA will be able to complete the program over four semesters (two years), with successful completion of 7.50 credits, as follows:

SEMESTER 1: Environment and Application (Fall)

LARC*6430 Landscape Resource Analysis (0.5)
LARC*6440 Studio III - Environmental Design (1.0)
LARC*6610 Design Inquiry (0.5)
1 Elective (0.5)

SEMESTER 2: Design and Detail (Winter)

LARC*6040 Studio IV - Landscape Design and Construction (1.0)
LARC*6470 Integrative Environmental Planning (0.5)

SEMESTER 3: Community and Place (Fall)

LARC*6120 Studio V - Community Design (1.0)
1 Elective (0.5)
Design Project Option - LARC*6510 Advanced Digital Representation (0.5) **or**
Thesis Project Option* - LARC*6710 Special Study (0.5)

SEMESTER 4: Capstone (Winter)

1 Elective (0.5)
Design Project Option - LARC*6700 Studio VI – Capstone Project (1.0) **or**
Thesis Project Option* - LARC*6730 Thesis Project (1.0)

* Thesis Project Option: For Holders of a BLA: Students interested in doing the thesis project option must approach a potential advisor in Semester 2. It is also recommended that thesis students will take an additional research methods course as their elective. A proposal should be prepared and approved by their Advisory Committee (advisor plus one other member) by the end of Semester 2.

Overview of Program Structure and Content of MLA Professional Degree

The MLA program features a carefully structured curriculum spanning six semesters, each centered around distinctive themes to provide a cohesive and integrated learning experience. The thematic breakdown and corresponding courses are outlined below:

Semester 1 (Fall): Foundations

In this inaugural semester, students engage with introductory professional courses that delve into the theoretical aspects of landscape architectural design. Topics include design principles and philosophies, the design process and application, an exploration of plants in urban landscapes, and a field-based

course in landscape analysis. Additionally, students gain insights into the principles of landscape ecology and regional landscape planning.

Semester 2 (Winter): Site

Building upon the foundation laid in the first semester, students delve into site planning principles, the influence of social factors on design, and the introduction of planting design and architectural structures. The curriculum encompasses facets such as facilitation and the application of computer tools in design. Furthermore, students explore the history of landscape architecture and are introduced to environmental planning theory and practice.

Semester 3 (Fall): Environment and Application

Moving into the intermediate phase, this semester focuses on the practical application of landscape ecology to address contemporary landscape challenges. Courses delve into the business, legal, and ethical aspects of landscape architecture practice. Additionally, students gain exposure to a diverse range of research methods applicable to landscape planning and design.

Semester 4 (Winter): Design and Detail

The curriculum advances with intermediate courses concentrating on design implementation, materials, and construction methods. Emphasis is placed on the development of construction documents, and students receive an introduction to site surveying, engineering, and construction materials and methods.

Semester 5 (Fall): Community and Place

At an advanced level, students engage in a professional design studio course that investigates contemporary design practice. This semester involves the application and integration of previous coursework, culminating in the practical application of knowledge and skills to urban open space, community design, and comprehensive integrative projects. Also, students are exposed to advanced digital representation tools.

Semester 6 (Winter): Design Project Option OR Thesis Project Option

The final semester is dedicated to the culmination of the program through either the Capstone Stream or the Thesis Stream. The Capstone Stream centres on a studio-based independent student landscape architectural design project, while the Thesis Stream entails independent research on a topic related to landscape architecture. This choice allows students to tailor their concluding experience to align with their academic and professional aspirations.

Course Calendar Descriptions

Semester 1: Foundations

LARC*6010 Studio I Foundational Design and Communications - Fall [1.0]. Studio and field instruction introduces the student to professional skills and knowledge, including design theory, landscape inventory and analysis, application of and the design process to projects at the site scale. Graphic and oral communication includes the development of design and spatial literacy, use of two- and three-dimensional visual representation, and use of analogue and digital media.

LARC*2240 Plants in the Landscape - Fall [0.5]. This course explores the identification and cultural requirements of native and introduced plants in urban landscapes from a design perspective.

LARC*6430 Landscape Resource Analysis - Fall [0.5]. Integrated field and classroom instruction introduces the student to inventory and analysis of biological, physical, social, and cultural elements of the landscape. Projects incorporate principles of landscape ecology and regional landscape planning. Field study requires some travel at the student's expense.

Semester 2: Site

LARC*6030 Studio II - Site Design - Winter [1.0]. Studio and field instruction continues the student's development of professional knowledge and skills at the site scale. Topics include site planning principles, social factors in design, introduction of planting design and architectural structures, facilitation, and computer applications in design.

LARC*6340 Landscape History - Winter [0.5]. This course focuses on the history of Landscape Architecture. The development of oral and writing skills is emphasized.

LARC*6470 Integrative Environmental Planning - Winter [0.5]. Landscape planning emphasizing the integration and interrelationships between bio-physical and cultural resources, with application at a regional landscape planning scale.

Semester 3: Environment and Application

LARC*6440 Studio III - Environmental Design - Fall [1.0]. This course integrates field studio and classroom study to apply landscape ecology to current landscape problems, including analysis of regional landscapes, restoration of degraded landscapes, and application of aesthetic and ecological principles across spatial scales from site to regional scale. Case studies component will require some travel at students' expense.

LARC*6360 Professional Practice - Fall [0.5]. This course focuses on the legal, business, ethical and professional practices of Landscape Architecture professionals. The development of oral and writing skills is also emphasized.

LARC*6610 Design Inquiry - Fall [0.5]. In preparation for the capstone design or thesis project, students will be introduced to a broad array of research methods as they apply to landscape planning and design, with a focus on the connections between research and design. The course includes qualitative and quantitative analysis and interpretation. Students will review, critique, summarize, and explain academic research that is relevant for landscape architecture.

Semester 4: Design and Detail

LARC*6040 Studio IV Landscape Design and Construction - Winter [1.0]. Studio instruction emphasizes design implementation, materials and methods of construction, introduction to green infrastructure, construction specifications and graphic communication using computer applications.

LARC*2420 Materials and Techniques - Winter [0.5]. This course is an introduction to the materials and techniques commonly used for landscape construction. Students will learn to prepare technical construction drawings and will develop a basic understanding of landscape architectural construction specifications and contracts.

LARC*6020 Site Engineering - Winter [0.5]. Lecture and field instruction introduces the student to basic knowledge and skills of site engineering as it relates to landscape architecture. Topics include surveying, principles of site grading and drainage, introduction to materials and methods of construction, and graphic communication.

Semester 5: Community and Place

LARC*6120 Studio V - Community Design - Fall [1.0]. Studio and field instruction emphasizes integration of ecological, social, cultural, and historical factors in the comprehensive design of community. Students will consider issues of decolonization, spatial justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

LARC*6510 Advanced Digital Representation - Fall [0.5]. This course further develops students' visual communication knowledge and skills through the methods, media, and terminology of digital design communication, and provides an opportunity to exercise and develop modes of creative visual representation, through specialized research topics and seminars, and workshops.

Semester 6: Capstone or Thesis Project

LARC*6700 Studio VI - Capstone Project - Winter [1.0]. This studio course reinforces the preparation of independent student landscape architectural design projects. Students will develop a project work-plan proposal, prepare professional design and presentation drawings, and provide formal presentations of their work. Students are encouraged to select problem topics that require an interdisciplinary approach and that integrate the skills and knowledge obtained in previous courses to produce a comprehensive final design project.

LARC*6730 Thesis Project - Winter [1.0]. Students will carry out original and independent research on a topic related to landscape architecture. Students interested in doing a thesis the student must approach a potential supervisor in semester 4 (semester 2 if holder of accredited BLA) and have a proposal approved by their advisory committee to enrol in this course.

Independent Study

LARC*6710 Special Study (Unspecified) [0.50]. Independent study. A proposal for the content and product required for this course must be developed in conjunction with the student's Advisory Committee.

List of Recommended Electives

Senior undergraduate or graduate level electives from other disciplines will require instructor / course restriction consent.

Research:

- RPD*6170 Rural Research Methods, Unspecified [0.50]
- CDE*6000 Methods, Data and Analytics, Winter [0.50]

Environment/Ecology:

- RPD*6080 Environment and Development: Biophysical Resources and Sustainable Development in Rural Environments, Unspecified [0.50]
- RPD*6320 Water Resource Management, Unspecified [0.50]
- ENVS*6460 Environmental Remediation, Winter [0.50]
- GEOG*6340 Human-Environment Relations, Winter [0.50]
- BIOL*3130 Conservation Biology, Winter [0.50]

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion:

- MGMT*6170 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Workplace: Advancing Theory, Research and Practice, Unspecified [0.50]
- ANTH*6270 Diversity and Social Equality, Unspecified [0.50]
- ANTH*6420 Environment, Food and Communities, Unspecified [0.50]
- ANTH*6460 Gender and Development, Fall [0.50]

Indigenous/Settler Relations:

- HIST*6630 Indigenous Research Relations and Methodologies, Unspecified [0.50]
- HIST*7280 Indigenous Histories of Turtle Island Major Seminar, Unspecified [1.00]
- RPD*6290*03 Indigenous Experience & Relations, Unspecified [0.50]
- GEOG*3210 Indigenous-Settler Relationships in Environmental Governance, Summer/Fall [0.50]

Climate Change:

- POLS*6390 Resource Scarcity and Conflict, Unspecified [0.50]
- ENGL*6020 Environmental Writing, Art, and Media, Unspecified [0.50]
- REAL*4870 Sustainable Real Estate, Fall [0.50]
- RPD*6070 Project Development: Principles, Procedures, and Selected Methods, Unspecified [0.50]
- RPD*6450 Recreation and Tourism Planning and Development, Unspecified [0.50]
- AVC*6310 Topics in Art and Visual Culture I, Winter [0.50]

Arts:

- ARTH*3040 Public Art, Winter [0.50]
- ARTH*3150 Space: Roman Art & Urbanism, Winter [0.50]
- ARCH*3230 Critical Issues in Art History, Fall [0.50]
- ARCH*3360 Power of Images, Winter [1.00]

Skills Development / Other:

- CDE*6420 Communication for Social and Environmental Change, Unspecified [0.50]
- CDE*6330 Facilitation and Conflict Management, Unspecified [0.50]
- GEOG*3480 GIS and Spatial Analysis, Fall and Winter [0.50]
- HORT*3010 Annual, Perennial and Indoor Plants - Identification and Use, Fall [0.50]

Admission

MLA applicants who have a 70% (B-) or better average over the final two years (20 credits) of undergraduate study in any honours degree (four-year) program or equivalent will be considered for admission. Applicants holding a three-year university degree or college degree and having a minimum of five years' relevant work experience may be considered for admission through [alternate/special case admissions criteria](#).

Acceptance to the MLA program is based on previous academic performance, references, statement of interest, evidence of creative work (portfolio) and background information provided through a questionnaire (supplemental document called the "MLA Background Questionnaire").

Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to submit the results of a standardized language test. Please see the [English Language Proficiency](#) for acceptable tests and required scores. **The minimum required UofG language test score result is mandatory for MLA admission.**

We look at the 'pool' of applications to make our selection and typically take in a total of 15-18 students annually. **The MLA program has a high volume of international applicants, and we may choose only the top international candidates with overall ranking.**

It is vital that applicants have sufficient funding for your studies. It is the student's responsibility to cover the entire cost of the program and living expenses. Anticipated [Costs of Tuition/Living](#) expenses can be found at the Graduate Studies website. A full schedule of fees applicable to both Canadian and International can be found under **Guelph Graduate Fees** on the [Student Financial Services](#) website. Applicants and in-course students with strong applications / strong marks in the MLA program are eligible to compete for university scholarships.

Application Procedures

Applicants must apply on-line through the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies – Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) at [Applying to Guelph](#). The electronic portfolio submission pertaining to your application for admission is to be sent in PDF format as an attachment via email to mla.portfolio@uoguelph.ca by the deadline required. After a careful review of all submitted materials, the strongest candidates are selected for admission from the pool of qualified applicants.

MLA Application Deadlines

The deadline to receive COMPLETED MLA applications is January 31st for September / FALL entry. Please plan the submission of your application in accordance with the application deadline. ***International applicants are encouraged to have completed applications submitted at least one month prior to the deadline.***

Applicants should note that the online OUAC application system can take up to five working days to process your account. Once your account is processed, you will receive an email with your login information and instructions on how to upload your documents.

Please pay close attention to the required application documents and ensure you upload the materials to the correct areas.

The following documents must be uploaded electronically to WebAdvisor:

- **Transcripts:** Declare and upload all post-secondary education (University level) transcripts. This includes individual transcripts for incomplete studies, transfer credit courses, study abroad (letter of permission and exchanges). Please ensure there is a grading scale for each institution.
- **Two References** (you may submit up to three references).
- **CV / Resume.**
- **Statement of Research/Interests** (interests related to landscape architecture).
- **Supplemental Document which is the “MLA Background Questionnaire”.** Please DO NOT UPLOAD ANY OTHER DOCUMENT TO THIS SECTION.
- **English Language Certification** (for applicants whose first language is not English).
- The **MLA Portfolio** must be **submitted via email** as an **Adobe PDF file attachment** to mla.portfolio@uoguelph.ca. This email address is used only for receipt of the portfolio submission. *Please do not use external pdf links such as Google Docs etc.*

Only complete applications received by the deadline may be considered by the Admissions Committee. Applicants are accepted for entry into the fall semester annually. Course sequencing and space limitations make the winter semester entry point not feasible for most MLA degree students. Late applications will be considered if space is available. Please contact the MLA Graduate Program Assistant and the MLA Graduate Coordinator for details.

International Applicants / Students

English Language and Required Credentials

The MLA program has a strict policy regarding English language scores as you will need a strong command of English to be able to undertake graduate level courses. If your first language is not English, you will be required to submit the results of a standardized language test which can be found on OGPS website under [English Language Proficiency](#). **Due to the heavy volume of international applicants, and to remain competitive with your application, it is expected that you meet or exceed the UofG test score standards.**

The MLA program would typically expect the following minimum English test score results to have a competitive application:

IELTS: MLA typical requirements: Overall score of 6.5 with no individual component below 6.5.

TOEFL: MLA typical requirements: Overall score of 93 with no individual component below 23.

The University of Guelph, School of Continuing Studies offers intensive English language certificate programs – advanced level, for academic studies and corporate training. Courses are designed to improve the speaking and writing skills of international students. For more information, please visit the

[English Language Programs \(ELP\)](#) website. The UofG language program however does not guarantee admission to the program.

International applicants should utilize the UofG's [International Credentials Guidelines](#) before an application to assess your academic background in relation to admission requirements.

International Student Services and Resources

International applicants should review the services and resources available. Of particular importance is the immigration information regarding obtaining a study permit and information on working in Canada.

- [Guelph International in the Student Experience Office](#)
- [Information for New International Students Arriving in Canada](#)
- [Immigration and Study Permits](#)
- [Guelph International](#)
- [Student Housing Services](#)

International Offers of Admission

Typically, international MLA offers of admission will not include financial support. It is important that applicants are prepared to fund the full costs associated with the program of study and living expenses. Please see [Student Financial Services](#) for Tuition and Compulsory Fees.

You should expect to follow the **three-year (six-semester) academic program (completed over thirty-two months)**, leading to a first professional MLA degree. The MLA program has a scheduled [academic break](#) in the summer semesters (no courses offered), which may allow international students on a study permit to gain employment on or off-campus. You will be eligible to apply for some scholarships, awards, and to apply as a graduate teaching assistant (when not on a scheduled academic break).

Please refer to the **Student Experience** website under [Immigration Information](#) for details. The [Global Pre-Arrival Support Advising](#) (GPS Advisors) support new graduate international students in navigating each step of the pre-arrival process from acceptance, to advice on study permit applications, to registration and beyond.

As part of the study permit application process in the province of Ontario, all international students, (unless exempted by IRCC), are required to submit a [Provincial Attestation Letter \(PAL\)](#). You must **first accept an offer of admission BEFORE applying for the PAL (you must have the PAL document to apply for a study permit application)**. Details are available on the [Provincial Attestation Letter webpage](#) and the [Government of Canada – Immigration and Citizenship](#) (IRCC) website. **Please ensure to check [IRCC study permit processing times](#) where you are applying from in relation to the MLA program start date (September) and allow sufficient handling time.**

We strongly encourage international students to order their final/official transcripts in advance to avoid a delay in processing final requirements and meeting the conditions of their offer of admission. Once you receive notification of our decision, you will have the required documents in hand and will be ready to send final official copies of documents to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Student Registration

Registration information is supplied to each entering and in-course student by the Office of Graduate Studies, Registrarial Services and the Landscape Architecture program. Students should consult with either the MLA Graduate Coordinator, the MLA Graduate Program Assistant, or the SEDRD Academic Coordinator (CBM) for questions or matters of concern regarding their program.

The MLA program does not allow Winter semester entry and is not amenable to part-time study, particularly in early semesters.

Advanced Placement

Most applicants will complete the six semester MLA program of study requirements if they do not hold a BLA accredited degree. Requests for advanced placement are considered on their individual merits. For the MLA program this may include course equivalency. If a student wishes to seek an exemption for a required course, the student will contact the instructor of the course or the MLA Graduate Coordinator before the start of the program or before the semester in which the course is offered (at the latest within the add/drop period); and no later than the beginning of the second registered semester.

Advising/Supervision

Students entering the MLA course-based master's program do not require an Advisor/Advisory Committee. This information does not need to be declared on your MLA application (in OUAC).

In-course students that have approval to switch to the thesis stream in semesters five and six will select an Advisory Thesis Committee, from faculty members whose interests are aligned with their research topic. Students who switch to degree by thesis are to choose their Thesis Advisory committee by the end of your fourth semester of study (semester 2 if holder of accredited BLA).

Scholarships and Financial Aid

Applicants to Landscape Architecture and in-course students are eligible to compete for scholarships and bursaries available to University of Guelph graduate students. **The school does not offer full funding. It is vital that you are prepared to cover the full cost of the program.**

A listing and description of internal and external awards is maintained through the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies under [Scholarships and Awards](#) and with Student Financial Services under [Scholarships and Financial Aid](#). The Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) section lists the internal awards available to graduate students in our School. International students should also review the [International Student Support](#) website.

MLA applicants with a high GPA average and a solid research agenda are encouraged to apply prior to entry for government funded awards such as the [Ontario Graduate Scholarship](#). The OGS scholarship

requires that you have a completed MLA application and the OGS application submitted by January 31st. More detailed information and eligibility is available from the University of Guelph website.

SEDRD Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA's) including landscape architecture GTA's are awarded each semester based on the needs of instructors and available funds. These positions are posted in July (for Fall semester) and November (for Winter semester) of each year. The estimated value of a typical 0.5 level Graduate Teaching Assistant position is approximately \$3,000.00 CDN. Some Research Assistantships (RA's) may be available, depending on funding obtained by faculty. Individual faculty members should be consulted regarding these.

Student Financial Aid and Ontario Work Study Programs provide a way for students with financial need to work part time on campus. Work study enables you to earn money and gain work experience. To qualify, you must be enrolled in at least three courses and have an established financial need.

Financial aid is administered through the University of Guelph - [Student Financial Services](#) office and is based on a financial needs assessment which all students are encouraged to complete.

For more information, please view [Funding Graduate Studies](#) from the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website.

Additional Information

Additional information regarding Landscape Architecture at the University of Guelph and the MLA program can be found from the following links:

["7 Common Questions About Applying to the MLA Program"](#) (YouTube Video)
[School of Environmental Design and Rural Development](#)
[Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies – Prospective Students](#)

For information on the profession of landscape architecture, visit these websites:

[Ontario Association of Landscape Architects](#) (OALA)
[Canadian Society of Landscape Architects](#) (CSLA)
[Landscape Architecture Canada Foundation](#) (LACF)
[American Society of Landscape Architects](#) (ASLA)
[Landscape Architecture Foundation](#) (LAF)
[International Federation of Landscape Architects](#) (IFLA)
[Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture](#) (CELA)
[Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards](#) (CLARB)
[Landscape Architect Registration Exam](#) (LARE)

["Your Path to Landscape Architecture"](#) (ASLA)

Frequently Asked Questions: MLA Program at Guelph

Which semester can I start the program?

Applicants are accepted for entry into the fall semester annually (September) only. Course sequencing and space limitations make the winter semester entry point impossible for most MLA degree students.

What are the requirements for my referees?

Two Referee Assessments must be submitted with the application submission. You can submit up to three references. You should try to include at least one reference from one of your professors or an academic source. We are looking for how a referee would evaluate you as a potential graduate student. Referees for international applicants should also comment on your English language ability.

What about transcripts? When am I required to provide a transcript?

The academic record that we refer to as a transcript provides a listing, year by year, of all courses taken and the grade or mark received for each course. All transcripts need to include a grading scale. You are required to provide transcripts from any institution where you have earned (or will earn) a degree, studied for one semester or more, or took courses that relate to your undergraduate degree or graduate study. This will include individual transcripts from incomplete studies/programs, transfer credit courses, letter of permission or exchanges. Your application checklist on WebAdvisor will identify which transcripts you are required to upload. We strongly encourage international students to order their official transcripts in advance to avoid a delay in processing final requirements and meeting the conditions of their offer of admission.

Final official transcript(s) stating when the degree was conferred, program completion dates and awarded degree certificate (if applicable) will need to be submitted as soon as you accept an offer of admission to the program. You will not be able to register until all final documentation has been received. Official/final transcripts must be received before the first day of classes of the semester in which you start your program. International students who receive an offer should plan on ordering official transcripts right away to avoid delay in processing final requirements and meeting the conditions of their offer.

I do not have a design background. What should be included in my portfolio?

Many applicants have not taken any courses related to design. In these cases, submit several samples of writing or other work that represent your critical and/or creative thinking skills. Examples of projects you have designed or constructed should also be considered for inclusion (e.g., woodworking, sewing, art). If you have taken graphics or design classes, or if you have done informal design related to landscape architecture, consider submitting examples of this work. Applicants are encouraged to be selective in the work they submit; it is preferable to send examples of a range of work rather than provide a comprehensive selection of one type of activity. We are looking for evidence of creativity.

Are there opportunities to visit the campus or sit-in on classes?

Please feel free to visit our School and the campus at any time. Parking and building locations can be found on the [campus map](#). The school is housed in the Landscape Architecture building. Faculty and staff offices are located on the first floor and the MLA studio is located on the second floor. The [SEDRD website](#) will announce guest lectures and presentations which are open to the public.

Please feel free to contact the MLA Graduate Coordinator via email to discuss the program in more detail or to set up a visit to the school (so that you can sit in on some classes and meet with faculty and students).

Get to know the Master of Landscape Architecture program by watching the "[7 Common Questions About Applying to the MLA Program YouTube Video](#)".

Where do I find information regarding financial aid and tuition costs?

All our internal funding opportunities are described in the [Graduate Calendar](#). Funding and Fees information is listed in the [Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) website. Financial aid and tuition costs can be found through [Student Financial Services](#). The links will give you direct access to information on tuition fees, employment through teaching, research, and service assistantships.

Do I need to secure an Advisor prior to application?

MLA applicants are not required to find a faculty advisor. Please disregard on your online application. In-course students that have approval to switch to the thesis stream in semesters five and six will select an Advisory Thesis Committee, from faculty members whose interests are aligned with their research topic. Students who switch to degree by thesis are to choose their Thesis Advisory committee by the end of your fourth semester of study (semester 2 if holder of accredited BLA).

How many class hours per week are required in the MLA program?

During the first year, students are in class approximately 28 hours per week. In the second year, the class hours total approximately 12 hours per week. The third year focuses on either the Design Capstone Project or Thesis Project option.

When will I find out if I am accepted into the program?

After the application deadline for submitting your material, complete applications will be reviewed, and acceptance/waiting list notices will be sent out starting in March and into the spring/summer. Official offers of admission from the Office of Graduate Studies will be sent electronically through your WebAdvisor account. Offers of admission have a deadline date, giving you several weeks to respond. Wait lists and late applications will be reviewed if any spaces are still available.

Are there courses or readings that can prepare me for starting the MLA program?

Students can benefit from taking visual arts, ecology, soils, or plant identification courses prior to starting the program, but this is not a requirement. Other areas of activity that you may find useful to explore include freehand drawing, GIS, Photoshop, and Illustrator, Sketch-Up and In-Design. An AutoCAD course at a community college is also beneficial before you enter the program.

What kind of computer or supplies do I need?

Computer: It is expected that MLA students will have their own personal laptop computer in the landscape architecture program as an essential tool both in the design studio and lecture environment. The brand of computer and operating system is your choice. Computers ideally meet the following minimum requirements to handle 3D modelling, rendering, CAD, GIS, and the Adobe Suite. CPU: Intel i7 Dual-Core processor 2GHz or Apple M1 (or faster); RAM: 32GB or 64GB of RAM; Display: 1280x1020

(1920x1080 recommended); GPU: 2GB VRAM NVIDIA Quadro / AMD Radeon Pro or Intel UHD 630 (have a strong graphics card, discrete); Storage: 512GB SSD or higher.

Student software can be purchased with special student pricing for Microsoft and Adobe through the UofG Computing and Communications Services (CCS) software agreements. Check the [Computing and Communications Services](#) (CCS) website once you are registered.

Supplies: The MLA program does not require you to purchase a large amount of studio supplies; however, you will be required to bring your own basic supplies for studio. This will include items such as a set of pencils, drafting scales, felt tip markers, yellow or white trace paper rolls (18"; 24"; 36"), an eraser and drafting tape. Useful but not necessary additions to your supplies would be *Prismacolor* or *Tria* art markers and a 100 ft/30 m surveyor's tape measure. You do not need to possess all these items immediately; however, it gives you an idea of what might be needed throughout the year. Specific supplies will be discussed in class.

[Are there employment opportunities while in the program?](#)

As we have a large undergraduate Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program (BLA), with many opportunities for graduate students to be employed as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) to assist faculty in marking and the delivery of courses. Students may apply for GTA positions for the Fall and Winter semesters. There are also opportunities for faculty to hire Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA). It is recommended that students work no more than 15 hours per week while attending the MLA program. The first four semesters of the program are quite intense, and students usually reduce outside workloads during that time.

International applicants should make themselves familiar with the [Student Experience – Immigration Information](#) in regard to immigration, study permit, visas and working in Canada.

[What can I do to gain practical experience while in the program?](#)

The Landscape Architecture Community Outreach Centre offers some design assistance directly to communities, organizations, and individuals. Students are also encouraged to use the summer months to gain professional work experience within a landscape architecture firm or a government department. Job postings, internship positions and student competitions etc., are emailed for students to pursue.

[Can I switch from the design project option to the thesis project option?](#)

Students interested in conducting research with a thesis project must approach a potential LA faculty advisor in semester four (semester two if holder of accredited BLA) and have a proposal approved by their advisory committee by the end of semester four (semester two if holder of accredited BLA).

Why Choose the MLA Program at the University of Guelph?

Guelph's Reputation:

The BLA and MLA programs at Guelph enjoy a world-wide reputation as a centre for landscape architecture education. Our faculty and associated professionals are recognized internationally for their contributions to teaching, research, writing, practice, and professional service. Faculty bring a broad range of experiences to the learning environment. They hold degrees in landscape architecture and many related fields and have practiced in a variety of settings. Both BLA & MLA degree programs are fully accredited by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects and fully accepted by the American Society of Landscape Architects. An accredited degree from Guelph's programs facilitates membership in Landscape Architecture professional associations across North America.

Design:

Our students get hands-on experience through community-based studio projects with real clients. There are many options for our students to study abroad through the University's international exchange program. Summer employment opportunities provide students with paid professional experience in some of North America's most prestigious firms.

Degree by Coursework:

The MLA course-based master's (CBM) degree in landscape architecture can offer several advantages, depending on your goals, preferences, and learning style. Here are some reasons why you might consider our program:

1. **Structured Curriculum:** Our well-defined and structured curriculum can be beneficial if you prefer a clear path of courses and a set schedule to follow throughout your program.
2. **Efficiency:** completing our CBM shall allow you to focus solely on coursework without the added time and research requirements of a thesis project.
3. **Practical Skills Development:** our program has an emphasis on the development of practical skills that are directly applicable to professional practice. This can be advantageous if you are seeking a program that prepares you for a career in landscape architecture with a focus on practical knowledge and skills.
4. **Networking Opportunities:** The structure of our program involves interaction with fellow students, professors, and professionals in the field. This will provide valuable networking opportunities, which is essential in a competitive profession.
5. **Broad Exposure:** through our themed semesters, you shall be exposed to various aspects of landscape architecture. This breadth of exposure can help you develop a well-rounded understanding of the field.
6. **Professional Development:** Our program is designed to enhance your professional skills and knowledge. This is beneficial if your goal is to advance or transition within your career.
7. **Design or Thesis Project Focus:** If you prefer hands-on learning and application of concepts rather than in-depth research, the design project option may be a better fit for you. This is because it typically does not require an extensive research thesis. However, we have designed our program to allow you to choose a thesis project if better aligned to your research and educational needs.

Research:

Faculty and students at the University of Guelph make a significant contribution to research in Landscape Architecture. Research is published widely in the top international journals of the discipline, as well as professional/industry periodicals. The MLA program offers research opportunities, travel, and field trips experiences. The faculty have been recognized within the UofG as well as nationally and internationally for their expertise and strengths in design, teaching, practice, outreach, and research.

Graduates/Alumni:

Our graduates are in demand from employers who value their education in both theory and practice, and because of experience gained through practical experience and community outreach projects. Our alumni have exciting careers in the public, private and academic sectors worldwide. The LA program has a strong relationship with the largest group of alumni in Canada and the connection to a diverse alumni base and other employers who want to hire Guelph grads. Graduates of the University of Guelph work all over the world.

Atmosphere:

The faculty and students in Landscape Architecture are a group of creative, concerned and intensely involved individuals who enjoy the opportunity to work and learn together. Housed in our own building, we provide comfortable studios and classrooms, as well as computing output. The Landscape Architecture Student Society (LASS) and the SEDRD Graduate Student Society (GSS) organizes many social and educational student events throughout the year.

The MLA program gives graduate students an opportunity to be a Graduate Teaching Assistant in our BLA program or in other programs across campus.

We provide top-notch education in an atmosphere where people work to help each other, build upon each other's strengths, and create a community where everyone will know your name. We strive to provide you with knowledge, skills, values, and experiences that will last a lifetime through engagement with professors, fellow students, professionals, alumni, and staff. We have a vibrant atmosphere engendered by a combination of graduate programs within our School, and strong connections to other programs across the University.

The Beautiful UofG Campus:

Our safe, friendly, walkable campus is a mix of charming traditional buildings and new facilities, set in a lovely landscape that forms a learning landscape for our students. The University's Arboretum includes almost every tree and shrub indigenous to southern Ontario in an area covering 165 hectares (408 acres). Food Services at UofG is recognized as a Canadian leader for sustainability initiatives within university food service and retail operations and has won numerous local food awards. University students rank Guelph as Number One in food quality. There are also excellent athletic facilities, and many Landscape Architecture students are varsity athletes. Our library also houses the Centre for Canadian Landscape Architecture Archives.

The Community:

The [City of Guelph](#) has big city appeal with a small town feel and is consistently rated as one of Canada's best places to live in Ontario. It is a vibrant community population of over 153,000 with a

lively downtown, abundant shopping opportunities and dynamic cultural activities. Guelph students have unlimited access to Guelph transit for travel throughout the city, and linkages to surrounding cities.

MLA Program Contacts

If you have further questions regarding the MLA program, or if you would like to arrange a meeting/tour please contact **Steven Clarke, Associate Professor and MLA Graduate Coordinator** at steven.clarke@uoguelph.ca.

If you have specific questions regarding your MLA graduate application, please contact **Diana Foolen, MLA Graduate Program Assistant** at dfoolen@uoguelph.ca.

The **Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies** website [Applying to Guelph](#), will guide you through the application process and provide you with the online application procedures and [frequently asked questions](#).

MLA Profile 2025/2026