

FAQ

Prospective Master Students

Application requirement questions:

Q: Who in the department can I speak with regarding questions about the Graduate program?

A: Contact the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Nancy Wells, at nmw2@cornell.edu or 607-254-6330.

Q: When is the application due?

A: December 1st.

Q: Can I apply for the M.A. & M.S. program at the same time?

A: No, you must make a choice at the time of application

Q: If I apply to another Cornell department and do not get in, can I switch my application to DEA?

A: Yes, the Graduate School can help with this, but you must still adhere to our requirements and deadlines.

Q: May I apply in the Fall to start in January?

A: No, we only have one admission cycle, applications are due in December for Master's; students start in the Fall semester.

Q: To whom do I send my materials to (Rec. Letters, etc.), and where do I send my payment?

A: Applications are submitted online via the Graduate School's application system (available on the web at: <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/applying/apply-now>). Cornell strongly encourages applicants to submit as much material online as possible (by uploading it into the system), but if you cannot upload an item and need to send transcripts, letters, etc., to us, please send them directly to D+EA at the address listed on the field page: <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/academics/fields-of-study/field/design-and-environmental-analysis>.

Q: Is a portfolio required?

A: A portfolio is required for the MA in Design (both the Interior Design concentration and the Sustainable Design Studies concentration), but not for the MS degree.

Q: Is funding provided for Master's degrees in D+EA?

A: Funding is not provided for the MS or MA degrees.

Q: Does D+EA have any scholarships I can apply to?

A: No, D+EA does not offer any scholarships. We encourage you to identify outside scholarships and apply for them.

Q: On an average, how much of the tuition fee is waived for a student who has a scholarship?

A: Scholarships vary. In some typical tuition waiver can be 50%.

Q: How can I apply for assistantships?

A: D+EA does not provide assistantships to Master's students.

Q: Do current or former D+EA graduate students need to resubmit transcripts, GRE's and TOEFL scores?

A: Yes. Note that GRE and TOEFL scores must be less than five years old.

Q: Must recommendation letters come from faculty members?

A: No. Academic letters of recommendation are valuable; however recommendations should be from people who can best assess the qualities, characteristics, and capabilities of the applicant.

Q: What are the Educational Testing Service (ETS) codes for Cornell and for DEA?

A: Cornell's institutional test code for ETS is 2098. DEA's department code is 4499.

Q: What is the minimum GRE score and what happens if my GRE score is lower?

A: D+EA recommends a combined verbal/quantitative GRE score of 310 (new scoring system effective November 2011) or a combined score of 1200 (old scoring) but this is not an absolute cutoff. Candidates with strong applications, but scores below this level, may be considered. You may submit scores to D+EA more than once if you re-take the test. Your scores may not be older than 5 years.

Q: Can GRE's be retaken?

A: Yes GRE's can be retaken, but scores must be submitted by the application deadline.

Q: Can scores for GRE/TOEFL/IELTS tests be submitted AFTER the application deadline?

A: We strongly encourage you to take the GRE and TOEFL/IELTS tests early enough in advance that your scores will be received by our application due date. We *may* allow some latitude, however. If your *official* scores have not arrived by the due date, but your *unofficial* scores have, we may hold your application if approved by the DGS. Your scores are automatically reported to Cornell by the testing service (ETS) as soon as they are ready, and the Graduate Field Assistant will automatically add them to your packet.

Q: Am I required to take the TOEFL?

A: According to the Graduate School:

"Applicants whose native language is not English must take the TOEFL and have the official score reported to Cornell from the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Only students who have studied full-time for two or more years at a college or university where English is the language of instruction located in a country where English is the native language are exempt from the TOEFL." The official link used by the Grad School to determine if a student needs to take the TOEFL is: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2098.html>.

Note that if a student has completed a *one and a half year* graduate program in the U.S. (or other English-speaking country) prior to coming to Cornell, he or she must take the TOEFL. However, if at the time of application, a student has completed 1 ½ years of a 2 year program, but will have completed the two year program by the time of admission to Cornell, then he or she is not required to take the TOEFL.

Q: What are the minimum required TOEFL scores?

A: D+EA and the Cornell Graduate School have different minimum requirements. *The overall D+EA minimum is 105 (combined score)* for the internet-based test (ibT) TOEFL. The graduate school minimum is 77; as described here: <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/applying/english-language-proficiency-requirement>: The Graduate School has set the following minimums for individual section scores for admissions: Writing: 20, Listening: 15, Reading: 20, Speaking: 22.

Q: Am I required submit both IELTS and TOEFL scores?

A: As an international applicant, you must demonstrate proficiency in the English language by taking a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) exam. Please see the requirements on the Graduate School website for more information: <http://gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/prepare/english-language-proficiency-requirement>

Q: Do you accept IELTS scores and what is the criteria?

A: The Graduate School requires an overall band score of a 7.0 or higher on the IELTS.

- When you register for the exam, you may select up to five institutions to which you would like to have your Test Report Form (TRF) mailed. You may also submit a request to your test center to have additional TRFs sent to institutions not originally listed on your registration form.
- Have IELTS send your Test Report Form (either by postal mail, or electronically) to *Cornell University -- Graduate Admissions*. Please do not e-mail a scanned copy, or mail a photocopy of your TRF.

Q: Do current or former D+EA graduate students need to resubmit GRE and TOEFL scores?

A: Yes, and they need to be less than five years old.

Q: Must I have a prior design degree to apply to the Master's program in D+EA?

A: The answer to this question depends upon the degree and concentration to which you apply.

For the *MA in Design, Interior Design concentration*, only applicants with prior degrees in Interior Design or Architecture will be considered. For the *MA in Design, Sustainable Design Studies concentration*, a prior degree in a design-related field is preferred, but not required.

For the *MS in Human-Environment Relations*, no specific prior degree is required for any of the concentrations. Students often have undergraduate degrees in Psychology, Architecture, or Interior Design; but sometimes in English, Economics, Anthropology or other fields.

Q: What is the minimum undergraduate GPA that you will accept?

A: D+EA recommends a GPA of 3.0 (minimum), but this is not an absolute cutoff.

Q: How are transcripts submitted? Are they copies or "official" transcripts?

A: The Cornell Graduate School would like transcripts to be uploaded into the applications database by students. Here are the instructions regarding submitting transcripts:

Transcripts - Transcripts from each college or university previously attended are required.

To submit a transcript, applicants must follow the steps below.

1. Scan all transcripts—one from each college or university previously attended.
2. Upload the scanned transcript into the on-line application as part of the submissions process.
3. **If you are unable to submit your transcript electronically, you must send a transcript from each college or university previously attended directly to the field to which you are applying using the mailing addresses provided on the field of study pages.

Admitted students who accept the admission offer are **required** to submit an official paper transcript prior to matriculation. This requirement will appear on the "response to offer of admission" form.

Q: How do I check the status of my application?

A: It is advised that you periodically check your application on line to see if your application is complete, especially if you are waiting for letters of recommendation to be uploaded. DEA's Graduate Field Assistant may, as a courtesy, send you a reminder if you have missing information when the committee begins to review applications. If you have questions, please contact DEA's Graduate Field Assistant at deagrad@cornell.edu or 607-255-2168.

Master's Program Questions:

Q: Does D+EA offer online classes for the Master's program?

A: No, D+EA does not offer online classes for the Master's program.

Q: What are the program requirements (courses, exams, thesis sequence etc.)? Do I have to have a specific background in order to be considered?

A: For information regarding program requirements, please see:
<https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements-milestones/>

Q: How long should the Master's program take to complete?

A: 2 years

Q: Do Master students have to reside on campus during the entire program (residency requirements)?

A: Yes, M.A. and M.S. students are expected to be on campus for the duration of the 2-year degree. For more information please see:
<https://living.cornell.edu/live/wheretolive/housingoptions/index.cfm>

Q: Can I apply for a Master's and a PhD program at the same time?

A: No, you must make a choice at the time of application.

Q: Will Master students be required to or have the opportunity to teach?

A: Unfortunately, we are unable to provide Teaching Assistantships (TA's) to our M.A. and M.S. students. Occasionally, our students are able to find TA positions in other departments.

Q: Which professors are associated with each of the concentration areas? Does this matter when I'm choosing my thesis committee chair?

A: Note that for the MA in Design, there are two concentrations: 1) Interior Design 2) Sustainable Design Studies; For the MS in Human-Environment Relations, there are four concentrations: 1) Environmental Psychology, 2) Facility Planning and Management, 3) Human Factors & Ergonomics, 4) Sustainable Design Studies).

To be your "chair" (advisor) the faculty member must be a member of the DEA graduate field AND be among the faculty specified for your concentration. For this information, please see:

<https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academics/fields-of-study/field/design-and-environmental-analysis/>

Q: Can professors in design, architecture, or other related fields without a Ph.D. co-chair or serve as a minor committee member?

A: Yes. As long as the faculty member is a member of the graduate field you would like to minor in.

Q: If I am admitted, but find that I need to defer my admission, do you allow deferments, and if so, for how long?

A: Yes, we allow deferments up to one year, but this must be decided when responding to the department's offer. To request a deferral, by the "reply by" date (typically April 15) an applicant must first accept the offer of admission and then request (and provide a reason for) the deferral. Applicants cannot defer admission after declining our offer; instead the applicant must re-apply.

Q: Can I waive a class required for the DEA MS or MA at Cornell if I have already taken a very similar class elsewhere? If so, what are the stipulations for doing so?

A: Yes, but this is on a case-by-case basis, and the D+EA Graduate Faculty (and the faculty member who teaches the required course) will make decisions as to what waivers are allowed or not allowed. Typically, you will need to provide a syllabus for your prior course(s).

Q: **Should I schedule a campus visit, and if so, how do I go about it?**

A: If you would like to schedule a visit, you should first make an appointment with D+EA's DGS. If you would like to meet with other D+EA Faculty, you could also schedule meetings with them while you are on campus. Many students also enjoy taking a walking tour of campus while they are here: http://www.cornell.edu/visiting/ithaca/walking_tours.cfm. Other useful links include the campus map: <http://www.cornell.edu/maps/interactive.cfm> and the Visit Ithaca web site: <http://www.visitithaca.com/>