

PHD ADMISSIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APPLICATION PROCESS

When is the application due?

The deadline for DCRP's Ph.D. application is 8:59pm PST on December 1st, 2022.

Do I need to connect with a faculty advisor before applying?

It is not necessary to select an advisor before applying, however, we strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with faculty research and identify faculty whose work fits with your own interests, both substantively and methodologically. You can find the faculty list [here](#).

How much weight do you give to the General Record Examination (GRE)?

FOR THE FALL 2023 ADMISSIONS CYCLE, THE GRE IS OPTIONAL FOR APPLICANTS TO THE M.C.P. PROGRAM. Though applicants are *not* required to take the GRE, if included, these scores will be considered as part of a comprehensive, holistic admissions review that examines your general academic record, letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, research experience and professional achievements. It is most important that you therefore take the time to draft an excellent Statement of Purpose—allowing the committee to get to know you, your research interests, and plans for PhD study—and that you select recommenders who can speak to your academic performance and potential for PhD study.

Can I apply for an application fee waiver?

You must be a U.S. citizen or current permanent resident to be eligible for the graduate admissions application fee waiver. There are two ways in which you may qualify for an application fee waiver:

1. [You can demonstrate financial need](#), or
2. [You have participated in certain programs that qualify for a fee waiver](#).

(If you are undocumented student living in the United States and the above does not apply to you, contact the Office for Graduate Diversity at undocugrad@berkeley.edu.)

What evidence of English language proficiency is required?

Only applicants (domestic and international) who have completed their previous degree(s) in a country or political entity in which the official language is NOT English are required to submit official evidence of English Language Proficiency. This requirement applies to institutions from Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Latin America, the Middle East, Israel, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asian countries, most European countries, and countries in Africa in which English is not the official language.

Applicants who need to prove English proficiency have two test options: the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). For Fall 2023, the test used must be dated after June 1, 2021. The minimum TOEFL score required by UC Berkeley for graduate admission is 570 on the paper-based test (PBT), 230 on the computer based test (CBT), and 90 on the Internet Based Test (iBT). The minimum score for the IELTS is an overall band score of 7; there are no minimum scores for the individual bands. Applicants with scores below these will not be admitted.

Am I required to submit a writing sample?

Yes, a writing sample is required for PhD applicants. You may submit published articles, a graduate thesis/capstone project or portion thereof, papers written for courses, or material written in a professional capacity. The writing sample should give evidence of your ability to think critically and analytically, and will ideally be relevant to your research interests; it should not be purely descriptive.

Who reviews my application?

The PhD admissions process begins with three initial reviews of your application: the two faculty members you list as preferred advisors and one member of the PhD admission committee. The admission committee then meets to review all applications as a cohort and make admission/denial decisions.

Are admissions decisions made on a rolling basis?

Admissions decisions are NOT made on a rolling basis. Thus, there is no advantage to submitting your application before or on the day of the deadline. All applications are reviewed after the deadline.

Why are faculty members unresponsive to my emails?

Faculty receive hundreds of emails from potential applicants every year and are unable to respond to all individual queries. Please contact dcrpgrad@berkeley.edu if you have questions not answered by the [program statement](#).

FINANCIAL AID

Is the Ph.D. program fully funded for doctoral candidates?

The program provides all Ph.D. admits with five years of basic funding: This includes four years of support through a combination of fellowships and work as an [Academic Student Employee \(ASE\)](#), and an additional year of support for field work or dissertation writing via the Doctoral Completion Fellowship (DCF). For more information on graduate fellowships and awards, see [the Graduate Division page found here](#).

Where can I obtain more information on tuition and fees?

For up-to-date information about tuition and fees, please visit the [UC Berkeley's Registrar's Website: Fee Schedule - Graduate: Professional - College of Environmental Design](#). We also encourage you to view the [Graduate Cost of Attendance](#) and [available financial aid and scholarship opportunities](#).

On what basis are fellowships offered, and how can I obtain one?

In addition to fellowship semesters offered in financial aid packages upon admission, students in the PhD program have also been successful in securing funding from a range of other internal and external sources. Among these are the fellowships from research centers at Berkeley, the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, the National Science Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and Fulbright scholarships.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Is the Ph.D. program STEM eligible?

Unfortunately, our Ph.D. program is not STEM eligible.

Is there a special Masters-to-Ph.D. program track within DCRP?

There is no special track from MCP to Ph.D., since a masters degree is a prerequisite for the Ph.D. program. Once you're nearing completion of the MCP, you can apply for the Ph.D. program.

What is the duration of the Ph.D. Program?

For a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley, normative time (or the time to complete all requirements) takes five years. However, many candidates take longer to earn their PhD degree. The University requires all doctoral students to fulfill a minimum residency requirement of two years and 48 units of coursework. Full-time students are expected to take four courses, or 12 units, per semester.