



Master Landscape Architecture & Planning

Information for prospective students 2022-2023

Programme characteristics

Landscape as a system

The starting point for this programme is landscapes as a socio-ecological systems that includes natural processes (climate, soil, hydrology, ecology) and human behaviour. In general, the focus is on the human activities that shape and govern landscapes at various scales:

- Local
- Regional
- Supraregional

Research based

Planning and design are always related to scientific research:

- You learn to interpret research done by others.
- You learn to do research.
- You build your analytical skills.
- You learn how to use research to support your professional planning and design decisions.

The programme is based in the environmental sciences, but it has a strong social sciences component.

Grounded in the real world

In addition to the scientific base, there is always a focus on application of your newly acquired knowledge and skills, and their value for the real world.

Student oriented

The programme offers the opportunity and time to specialize and create an individual profile through optional courses and an individual research project. Thirty percent of first year coursework consists of courses you choose. The second year focuses completely on your individual profile.

Choose one of two specializations

The programme offers two specialisations: Landscape Architecture (LA) and Spatial Planning (SP). You choose your specialization before applying to the programme.



Programme structure

The standard programme encompasses one year of coursework, and a second year for thesis research and a practice project. The coursework is planned during the first year.

Common part

A quarter of the programme is devoted to common courses. These are joint courses in which Landscape Architecture and Spatial Planning students collaborate in groupwork. This reflects the strong interconnection between the specializations in professional practice.

Specialisation

The remaining 60% of the programme is devoted to your specialisation. This includes two specialisation courses in year 1, and in year 2 the thesis research and a 'Practice' project. Practice projects: Internship (for specialisation Spatial Planning - SP); Design Practice Landscape Architecture and Professional Profile course (for specialisation Landscape Architecture - LA); Research Practice at one of the chair groups at Wageningen University.

Optional part

The elective courses take up 15% of the programme and are planned in the first year. These enable you to deepen or broaden your knowledge and create a personal focus. The restricted optional courses can help you prepare for a specific focus in your thesis.

Career tracks

To accommodate different career preferences, the programme offers two career tracks. It is also possible to combine both tracks. For example, if you already have work experience, you can choose to do a Research Practice in the second year instead of the internship (SP) or the Design Practice.

Professional track

The professional track includes the Atelier Landscape Architecture and Planning course and skills modules (Year 1) and an internship (SP) / Design Practice and Professional Profile course (LA) (Year 2).

We advise to choose this track if you wish to:

- Focus on professional spatial planning and design issues.
- Work as a reflective practitioner in the public or private (design) sector.
- Explore the professional practice of landscape designers and/or spatial planners.

Research track

The research track includes an early start of the MSc thesis (Year 1 Period 6), a Research Practice, and the course Research Master Cluster: Proposal Writing.

We advise to choose this track if you wish to:

- Pursue a career in research.
- Continue with PhD research after graduation.
- Work as a landscape researcher.



The programme schedule: professional track

Year 1

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6
Reflections on Planning & Design Practices	Landscape Theory & Analysis	Research Methodology for Planning & Design	Optional (LA) or specialisation course (SP)	Optional	Atelier Landscape Architecture & Planning
Specialisation course	Restricted optional			Optional (SP) or specialisation course (LA)	Skills modules

Year 2

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6
Internship (SP)		MSc thesis (SP)			
MSc thesis + Design Practice + Professional Profile course (LA)					

The programme schedule: research track

Year 1

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6
Reflections on Planning & Design Practices	Landscape Theory & Analysis	Research Methodology for Planning & Design	Optional (LA) or specialisation course (SP)	Optional	Research Practice at other chair group
Specialisation course	Restricted optional			Optional (SP) or specialisation course (LA)	

Year 2

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6
Research Practice (continued)	MSc thesis (LA or SP)				Research Master Cluster: Proposal Writing

Courses

Reflections on Planning and Design Practices

The first common course offers a historical and geographical comparative perspective on planning and design practices. You learn about specific theories and related concepts, methods and skills. Together these provide a toolkit that allows you to observe and reflect critically on planning and design practices.

Landscape Theory and Analysis

This course enables you to understand and analyse landscapes from three different theoretical perspectives: landscape as an object, landscape as a cultural construct, and landscape as an experience. You learn to link these theoretical perspectives to the analysis tools you use in planning and design practice.

Research Methodology for Planning and Design

This advanced course challenges you to evaluate the adequacy of research methods for planning and design problems, to choose appropriate methods, and to reflect critically on their feasibility when addressing specific research questions.

Atelier Landscape Architecture and Planning (professional track)

At the end of the first year, you team up with students from other disciplines to address real-world planning and design issues. The project assignments are very diverse and set by real clients from a variety of backgrounds, such as local or regional governments, NGOs or citizen groups. Your team explores the relevant information and interacts with stakeholders, transforming your problem-solving ideas into designs and strategies for implementation. The interdisciplinary team allows you to view the problem and possible solutions from different perspectives. You provide your client with concrete advice on future actions, often in the form of a design.

Skills modules (professional track)

During the start-up phase of the Atelier, you take two skills modules. A wide variety of topics is offered in the fields of research methodology and writing, ethics and philosophy, personal development, sustainability, communication skills, and professional skills.

Research Master Cluster: Proposal Writing (research track)

If you intend to pursue a research career, you can take this course instead of the Atelier plus skills modules. This course helps you acquire and/or improve your skills in writing and defending a scientific research proposal.



Specialisation courses (12 credits)

Landscape Architecture

This specialisation helps you bring your design skills to the next level, and focuses on research-for-design, research-on-design, and research-through-design. It includes two advanced design studios, each with its own design approach and scale level. The *Master Studio Park Design: a Narrative Approach* is about the design of a park, an estate or a public space. You focus on the design of these in a real urban context, using systematic context research: a 'narrative' and the decorative design tradition. In the *Master Studio Regional Landscape Architecture: a Systems Approach*, you focus on a more complex assignment with a regional and/or metropolitan nature.

Spatial Planning

This specialisation addresses current issues in rural-urban planning, the socio-economic performance of landscapes and environmental consequences of spatial interventions. You will deepen your knowledge of planning theory and strengthen your analytical skills. It includes the courses Spatial Planning and Scarce Resources, and Political Dilemmas of Spatial Planning. In the first course students learn all about different land policy instruments to obtain planning objectives and to deal with property rights that make spatial development a very challenging process. In the second course, you gain deeper insights into the nature and goals of spatial planning. Planning activities raise many questions with respect to efficiency, effectiveness, justice, legitimacy, and many more. Students learn to reflect academically on spatial planning and develop their own theoretical planning approach for their research.



Optional part (18 credits)

Restricted optionals

In Period 2, you choose one course from a selection of restricted optionals. The restricted optionals deepen your knowledge and skills within one of the Wageningen University themes:

- Climate and energy
- Climate and water
- Culture and economy
- Food and health

The course Climate-responsive Planning and Design addresses the role of human activities 'influencing' weather and climate on the large spatial and temporal scale, as well as for nested hierarchies of scales.

The course Integrated Water Management helps you to better understand interactions between human interventions and water system functioning, so you can improve management of our water resources.

The course Global Landscapes and Place-Making addresses the global/local nexus in the production, consumption and use of landscapes in the world today. You will learn to understand the implications of geographical, sociological and economic theories and approaches for the planning and design of globalising landscapes.

In the course Foodscapes, Urban Lifestyles and Transition you will learn, among others, to identify various foodscapes and the physical and social characteristics attached to them. You will also learn explain the rationales of competing foodscapes and the underlying lifestyles, and to understand the linkages between public health, lifestyles and foodscapes.

The course Planning, design and management: Public space and transitions, adds a management perspective on public space and transitions. You will get acquainted with different management strategies, public space transitions, life cycle sustainability assessments and an integrated planning, design and management approach.

Free choice electives

The free choice of elective courses (12 credits) at MSc level will usually be within the theme of your restricted optional to create focus, but you are also welcome to broaden your knowledge with new themes. The electives are planned in Period 4 and/or Period 5 in the standard programme.



Practice

In your second year you choose a "Practice". There are three types of "Practices": 1) Design Practice (only for LA); 2) Internship (only for SP); 3) Research Practice (both specialisations).

Specialisation Landscape Architecture

You can choose the Design Practice and the Professional Profile course (professional track) or a Research Practice (research track). In the Design Practice you create a landscape design in close connection to your MSc thesis research. If you have relevant work experience (e.g., an internship during your BSc), doing a Research Practice might be an interesting alternative. This gives you the opportunity to focus on your research skills and experience. The Research Practice is usually done with a chair group other than your 'home' group.

Specialisation Spatial Planning

You can choose an internship if you do not yet have any relevant work experience (professional track), or you choose a Research Practice (research track). The internship has to be relevant to the field of spatial planning. If you have already taken a substantial and relevant internship during your BSc, or have relevant work experience, writing a research paper might be an interesting alternative. This gives you the opportunity to focus on your research skills and experience. The Research Practice is usually done with a chair group other than your 'home' group.

MSc thesis

Individual research project

The MSc thesis demonstrates that you can conduct research or a research-based planning or design project independently. It is an individual project, although you are encouraged to connect with fellow thesis students. The topic should fit within the themes of your chair group's research agenda.

You can find MSc thesis examples on the chair group website in their Education section. See the back of this brochure for links.

Preparing for the thesis

Throughout the first year, you should already start developing your thesis topic. You take preparatory courses to help you understand and do scientific research. You learn about research methodology and analysis, practice your academic writing, and expand your knowledge of field-specific theories. You are encouraged to choose optionals that help you prepare for your thesis.



Thesis characteristics

The MSc thesis is an individual scientific research project, in which you build a theoretical framework and an analytical framework. You collect qualitative and/or quantitative empirical data, and systematically analyse those data. You conclude the project by writing a scientific research report.

Landscape Architecture

The MSc Thesis Landscape Architecture in most cases will be combined with the Design Practice and the Professional Profile course. The thesis research results in a scientific paper or report and concerns doing research for design or research on design, or on testing design alternatives (research through design). The focus tends to be on landscape challenges that have global relevance.

Some examples of research topics:

- Sustainable energy transition
- Microclimate in cities
- Tourism
- Cultural heritage
- Landscape narratives
- Metropolitan agriculture

Spatial Planning

In the MSc thesis in Spatial Planning, students do research on spatial planning practices which results in a scientific paper or report with recommendations for planning practice and research. Projects often – though not always – include case study research.

Some examples of research topics:

- Environmental governance
- Countryside transitions
- Land policy
- Justice in the city
- Sustainable food planning
- Ecological network planning
- Landscape adaptation to climate change
- Technologically sustainable landscapes



Labour market & career perspectives

The current job market for MLP graduates is favourable: most recent graduates find relevant jobs soon after graduation, and employers are enthusiastic about graduates of this programme. The MSc programme incorporates development of professional skills and exposure to practice.

Career preparation

Throughout the programme, you build your field-specific skills – planning skills or design skills – and your general professional skills. You can take modules to work on your management, entrepreneurial, consultancy, negotiation or networking skills.

You will be exposed to realistic cases in all courses. Many courses include one or more excursions. Field experts contribute as guest lecturers in some courses. In common and optional courses you will experience inter-specialist cooperation. Most students choose to go on an internship during the second year.

Alumni employment: jobs & sectors

The most common job titles for our alumni include landscape designer, project manager, strategic policy adviser, consultant, researcher and teacher.

Landscape Architecture

Although most landscape architecture graduates work as landscape designers in their first jobs, their career paths often lead them to a wide variety of sectors and roles.

Spatial Planning

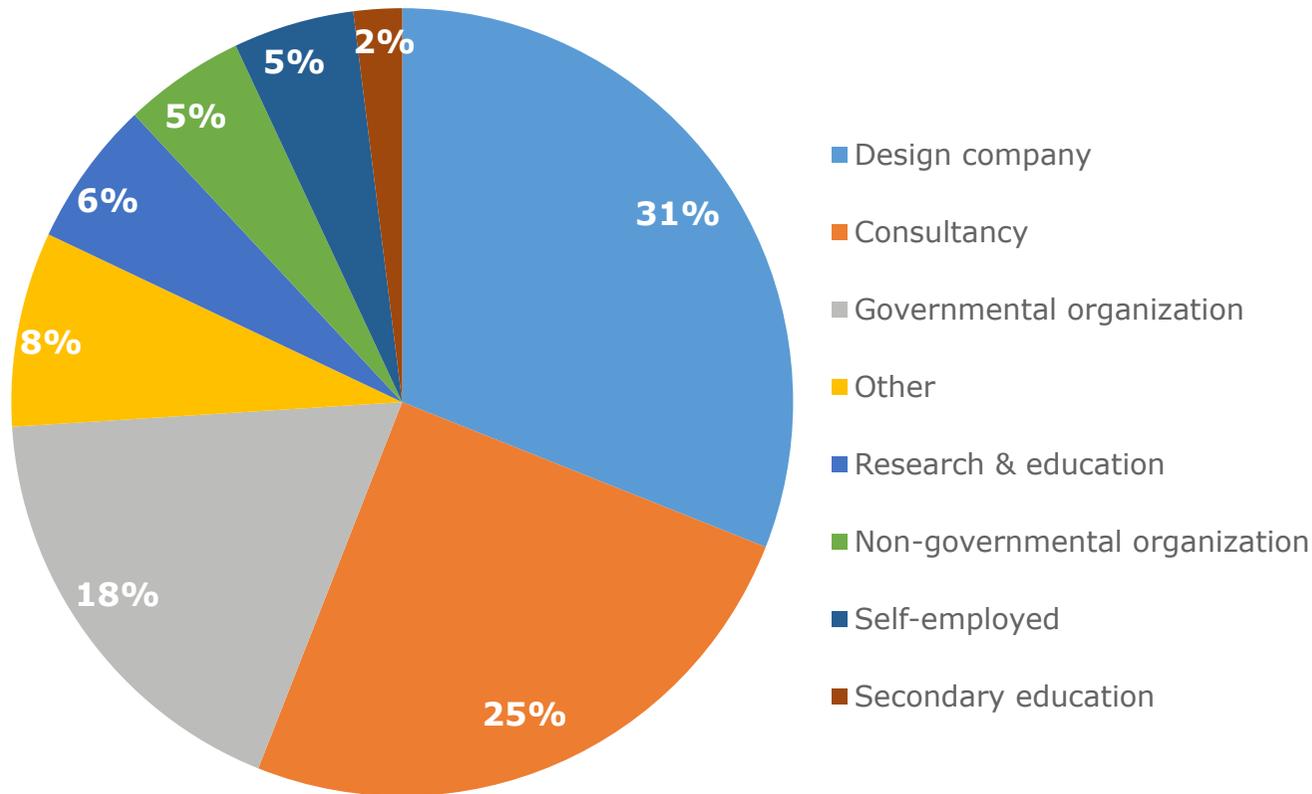
Spatial planning graduates often work as project managers, policy advisers or consultants with a focus on a spatial plan or a specific theme, such as energy transition or heritage. Some graduates choose a career in research and academia, or to become a geography teacher in secondary education.

Sectors

A 2019 survey showed that graduates from both specialisations can be found in a variety of sectors. Most notably, they work in consultancy, design companies, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and research & education.



Alumni employment sectors



Architects' title protection (Landscape Architecture)

Dutch law

After completing the specialisation Landscape Architecture, you are qualified as a landscape designer. The title of landscape architect is protected by the Dutch Architect's Title Act. To enter the Dutch Register of Architects and carry the title, you must complete a Professional Experience Programme (PEP) after receiving your MSc diploma. This professional traineeship lasts two years if you work a minimum of 32 hours a week. You take several modules next to your job, and develop a portfolio under the supervision of a registered mentor.

Registration is not required

It is not necessary to register: many of our graduates have fulfilling careers as landscape designers. However, if you wish to start your own company, or lead competitions and tenders, you may feel the need to qualify for registration.



Application and admission

General

English fluency

This programme has strict requirements for English fluency, in sum: IELTS 6.5 with a minimum sub-score of 6.0 for speaking. For more information, please check the website on general admission requirements for master's programmes at Wageningen University.

Motivation

In your motivation document, please explain at least:

- Why you choose this Master programme.
- Which specialisation you prefer.
- Why you are a suitable candidate for this programme.

Grade point average

Ideally, your BSc grades are on average Dutch 7/10 | US B/B+ | UK 2nd upper. However, the Admission Committee will look specifically at the relevant courses. If your GPA is slightly lower than required, and there are special circumstances outside your control that have negatively influenced your grades, please add an additional document to your admission files to explain this and support your case.

Landscape Architecture: portfolio, admission and pre-master

Does my BSc give access to this specialisation?

This specialisation is only accessible for students with a BSc in a relevant field, usually landscape design. Depending on your BSc and portfolio, and on condition of doing a pre-master the specialisation may also be accessible if you hold a BSc in garden design or architecture. Admission is always based on your BSc (relevance & GPA), English proficiency AND your design portfolio. Work experience is sometimes relevant as a compensating factor.

Portfolio

To complete your admission request, you will need to upload a design portfolio with at least four spatial designs at different scale levels.

Pre-master

Graduates of the WU bachelor Landscape Architecture have direct admission. Candidates with a garden&landscape design bachelor usually require a pre-master to repair deficiencies. If you have not yet completed your BSc, but have been admitted to the MSc programme conditionally, you can also take the pre-master courses as a BSc minor. Please ask the study adviser whether this is an option for you. The pre-master runs from February until July each year and consists of four courses:



Standard courses pre-master Landscape Architecture

<i>SGL24306</i>	Fundamentals of Landscapes
<i>LAR38303</i>	Landscape Aesthetics
<i>LAR37809</i>	Studio Regional Design
<i>YRM21306</i>	Research Methodology for Human Environment Interactions

You do not need to apply separately for the pre-master. The Admission Committee will decide whether you need to take it to start the MSc.

Pre-master as minor

If you are a student of a relevant programme at a Dutch university of applied sciences (HBO), you can in some cases include the pre-master as a minor in your BSc. Always consult your own and the MLP study advisor about this.

Switching from a different field

Do you have a different background, with no or very little landscape design components, but really would like to switch to this field? Please be aware that the relevant BSc courses will take at least 2.5 years to complete, depending on your background. The pre-master courses are advanced courses that are only open to advanced-level garden and landscape design students.

Spatial Planning: admission and pre-master

For direct admission to the specialisation Spatial Planning, you need a BSc in a related field, such as spatial planning, urban planning, urban and regional planning, or human geography.

Pre-master

A pre-master programme may be required if your BSc is not sufficiently related. This pre-master is always made-to-measure. As most relevant BSc courses are taught in Dutch, the pre-master in Spatial Planning is only open to students with a sufficient level of Dutch proficiency. Please ask the Student Service Centre for details.

Switching from a different field

If you are interested in this specialisation, but do not have a BSc in a related field, you are very welcome to contact the study adviser. She can help you choose courses to include in your BSc.



Videos on the Wageningen University YouTube channel

The Master's Landscape Architecture and Planning

The specialization Spatial Planning with student Onne Kask

The Atelier course

From WUR to work: Interview with Landscape Architecture alumnus Arjen Meeuwsen

Websites

[Programme information](#)

[Course descriptions](#)

[Master thesis Landscape Architecture: examples](#)

[Master thesis Spatial Planning: examples](#)

[Chair group Landscape Architecture & Land Use Planning](#)

[Cultural Geography Group](#)

[Start page for future students](#)

[General admission requirements & application](#)

Contact us

[Contact the student coach
studentcoachmlp@wur.nl](mailto:studentcoachmlp@wur.nl)

[Contact the study adviser
mlp.msc@wur.nl](mailto:mlp.msc@wur.nl)

Be a student-for-a-day

NB: Use this option to get in touch with one of our students. On campus availability of this activity depends on government and university policies regarding COVID-19.