



STEM DESIGNATION FOR MUD PROGRAM

We are pleased to announce that as of Fall 2021, UVA School of Architecture's Master of Urban Design post-professional degree is STEM-designated.

The Master of Urban Design (MUD) degree at UVA is an approved field of study within the U.S. government's official STEM fields list. The MUD degree is a post-professional, 3-semester, 45-credit hour program that gives students the ability to work closely with faculty and peers across interdisciplinary expertise to address critical real-world urban challenges through innovative research and transformative design practices. The program's STEM-designation (and associated CIP code: 30.3301) allows our international MUD graduates to apply for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' optional practical training (OPT) extension program for F-1 students with STEM degrees.

STEM OPT EXTENSION

The STEM OPT Extension program (also called Optional Practical Training) affords eligible international students holding F-1 visas, upon completion of a STEM-designated degree, the opportunity to extend their stay in the United States by 24 months (allowing for a maximum of 36 months total) to obtain advanced training in their field – enhancing our students' overall educational experience and helping to bridge their experience between academia and practice.

URBAN DESIGN AS A GLOBAL PRACTICE

As Schools of Architecture have continued to evolve their curriculum, looking to the future of the professions, the recognition of urban design as a global and networked practice has become even more paramount. Linked to the Next Cities Institute, our MUD students are directly engaged with urban design research projects that provide opportunities to apply theory and experimentation in specific conditions and contexts. Our work is diverse, in scope and geography, with projects in India, Brazil, the Arctic, China, and many other global sites, that address the paradigm shifts of planetary urbanization, environmental degradation, and the digital revolution. The UVA School of Architecture is strongly committed to providing an expansive, diverse, and global experience for all of its students – through its international research projects, studios, and programs and its international community of faculty, students, and alumni. Our recent STEM-designation also supports our students in opening up critical opportunities for practical and professional experiences. We believe these opportunities will not only positively impact our own students, but also the field of urban design more holistically through the direct promotion of cultural diversity and appreciation. International students are an essential cohort to the vitality of our programs and our community more broadly and we recognize of the value that STEM-designation affords to our students.

OPT + STEM OPT EXTENSION DETAILS

The OPT + STEM OPT Extension application process for students and employers is facilitated through UVA's [International Studies Office](#).

[ISO's F-1 Optional Practical Training \(OPT\) Overview + Details](#)

[ISO's F-1 24-Month Stem OPT Extension Overview + Details](#)