

International Study Opportunities for MUP Students

University of Groningen – Netherlands

Autumn Quarter Year 2

The Department of Urban Design and Planning offers an ongoing exchange program with the University of Groningen, the second-oldest university in the Netherlands, located in the historic city of Groningen in the country's northeast.

This autumn quarter exchange (Year 2) allows MUP students to take courses in Dutch planning and often a field study course, all taught in English. Several field trips are typically included. Upon return, the coursework counts as elective credits toward the MUP degree.

Professor Keith Harris is the faculty liaison and typically hosts an information session each November.

Considerations:

Students must carefully plan their coursework around the exchange, and should consider financial and professional implications:

- Academic:
 - URBAN 518: Qualitative Methods (MUP Core, Autumn Year 2)
 - Option 1: Take a comparable qualitative methods course at the University of Groningen.
 - Option 2: Enroll in URBAN 518 in Autumn of Year 1.
 - URBAN 566: Infrastructure Planning (required for several specializations, Autumn Year 2)
 - In 2026, this course will be offered in Spring, avoiding conflict with the exchange.
 - In years when it's held in Autumn, students may:
 - Take it in Autumn Year 1 (and postpone Intro to GIS), or
 - Enroll in the online summer version through the Master of Infrastructure Planning and Management program (note: summer tuition applies).
 - Urban Design Specialization or Certificate
 - This exchange is generally not recommended for students in Urban Design due to required advanced studio courses held in Autumn Quarter at UW. These studios cannot be replicated in Groningen.
 - Urban Design students should consult with faculty and staff to develop an alternative plan if interested in studying abroad.
- Professional:
 - Consider how participating in the exchange may affect internship timelines, especially for positions based in Seattle during the preceding summer that continue into fall.
- Financial:
 - For this exchange, students pay a [program fee](#) equivalent to 1.5 quarters of their tuition (either resident or non-resident rate), along with the study abroad fee and insurance. It is not possible to use tuition waivers towards the program fee. For example, non-resident students who receive a tuition waiver through a Fellowship or WRGP/WICHE will still need to pay 1.5 quarters of non-resident tuition towards this exchange.

Valle Scholarship

typically Summer Quarter Year 2

The Valle Program at the University of Washington is a fully funded exchange scholarship for graduate students in engineering and built environments, including Urban Design and Planning, supporting exchange between UW and Nordic and Baltic countries. The program was established in 1980 by Norwegian immigrant and construction leader Henrik Valle to promote international exchange in his fields.

Participating countries: Exchange partners are in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) and the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania).

Application process: Student applications are typically accepted annually from October 15 through February 1 of the following year. The application includes a resume, a plan of study, and references.

Funding details: The Valle Program is known for providing generous funding to its participants, including a monthly stipend living stipend, tuition, and round-trip travel to and from the destination.

<https://www.ce.washington.edu/current/abroad/valle>

Scan Design Fellowship Program

typically Summer Year 2 or Autumn Year 3

The Scan Design Foundation provides generous, need-based fellowships to undergraduate and graduate students from all academic fields of study who have been accepted to study abroad in Denmark through any program approved by UW Study Abroad, including exchanges with the University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School, Aarhus University, Aarhus School of Architecture, and the affiliated partner program with the Danish Institute of Study Abroad (DIS). Funding is available through all quarters throughout the year, including direct enrollment through Danish institutions and UW's Fieldwork, Research, and Independent Learning Abroad (FRILA).

Most MUPs who utilize Scan Design pursue research on their thesis through Fieldwork, Research & Independent Learning Abroad (FRILA), which allows students to engage globally while maintaining student status and receiving international travel security coverage:

<https://www.washington.edu/studyabroad/students/new-to-study-abroad/study-abroad-program-types/fieldwork-research-independent-learning-abroad-frila/>

Less common is to participate in the Scan Design Studio through the Landscape Architecture Program:

<https://sdstudio.be.uw.edu/>

Coursework & Field Studies

Mega-City Planning: Seoul, Korea

Autumn Year 2, when available

Students travel to Seoul with Professor Christine Bae for one week in October for lectures and site visits related to mega city planning in Seoul, Korea. Students must also enroll in a related 3-credit course in autumn quarter where they complete a paper related to their experience. The credits apply towards elective credit requirements in the MUP program. The course is offered intermittently as funding from the Korean government allows. Prof. Bae will hold an information session mid-year.

University of Washington Study Abroad – Faculty-Led Options

UW Faculty routinely lead study abroad experiences. Graduate students are eligible to participate in any of the study abroad opportunities available through the University of Washington. However, some options are better suited for undergraduate students and vice versa. Students can explore options at the UW Study Abroad website:

<https://www.washington.edu/studyabroad/>

Students typically pay a program fee, insurance fee, study abroad fee, and travel expenses, depending on the program.

Within the Department of Urban Design and Planning, the following faculty-led experiences are routinely offered:

“Paris 2030: The Future is Green” – Prof. Keith Harris, Summer Quarter

This interdisciplinary program examines Paris’s ecological sustainability efforts, how the city is transforming for environmental goals by 2030, and considers who benefits or is left out in those transformations. 10 UW credits

“The Living Landscape: History, Culture & Agriculture” — Prof Rachel Berney, early fall start (for example, in 2024, it ran from August 18 to September 9)

Focuses on food systems, sustainability, farm-to-table practices, climate change, and the ways agriculture, culture, and landscape intersect in Tuscany.

Open to both undergraduate and graduate students; Typically 5 UW credits.

“Urban Change in Action: Belo Horizonte, Brazil” – Prof. Helen Pineo, Summer quarter

This interdisciplinary study abroad program explores urban sustainability and equity through global collaboration and experiential learning. The 2026 program will take place in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, with future offerings planned in Belfast (2027) and Bogotá (2028).

Built on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation–funded by **Change Stories** project (<https://changestories.be.uw.edu/>), the program emphasizes:

1. experiential, place-based learning
2. non-extractive partnerships with local communities
3. applying global insights to urban challenges in the U.S.

A one-week “Change Stories Fellows” component is embedded within the program, fostering exchange between UW students and urban change-makers from the U.S. and partner countries.

Program dates: June 22 – July 22, 2026 (Summer Term A)

Credits: 10

Open to graduate students (master’s or PhD) in any discipline, with particular relevance for students in built environments, public health, social sciences, arts, and related fields.