

PLAN  
OF  
CAPE TOWN.  
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

# MPhil in Conservation of the Built Environment

University of Cape Town

Information for Applicants



# Overview

Welcome to UCT's MPhil programme in Conservation of the Built Environment! We are thrilled that you are considering the programme: please get in touch with our teaching and admin team if you have any questions that are not answered in this brochure.

Heritage, conservation, and the transformation of space are more topical and contested now than ever – not only in South Africa but globally. In the Conservation programme, we do much more than just teach you the technicalities of built environment conservation law and management: we situate these skills within a powerful intellectual and critical framework. We grapple with the intersections between heritage in the built environment, conservation practice, changing cities, spatial and social justice, and transformation. Along the way, we equip students with a range of interdisciplinary skills and forms of knowledge designed to enable graduates to develop strong arguments, conduct excellent research, express themselves clearly and confidently, and hold their own in the spaces of heritage and conservation practice.

We operate from the position that the built environment can only be understood as part of a network of social, political, commemorative, spatial, economic and other meanings. The course aims to enable graduates to practice effectively in the field, supported by a thorough understanding of contemporary debates and issues in heritage and conservation.



## Why do the MPhil in Conservation of the Built Environment?

It's flexible: the programme is specifically structured to accommodate students with full-time jobs, and/or those who live outside Cape Town.

It's good for networking: teaching is through a mix of classes, site visits, and interactions with heritage experts and professionals. We have a good relationship with the Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners, and with other departments in the university such as African Studies, Archaeology, and the African Centre for Cities.

It equips you for many heritage-related pathways. Graduates go on to work in heritage consultancy, heritage management for cities or for private companies, as researchers, and with organisations such as the South African Heritage Resources Agencies, the provincial heritage authorities, and local government. Some students use the degree as a path to a career change, or to add a heritage



specialisation to an existing architectural, design or urban planning practice. Others already work in heritage-related fields but need the specialised training and recognition that comes with a postgraduate degree. And some take the academic route and go on to do PhDs or further study.

As one of the smaller postgraduate programmes in department, our classes are small with plenty of individual attention and support. We are deeply committed to the intellectual and professional growth of all of our students, and are ready to support you in whatever way we can to help you make a success of the programme.

## **Who can apply**

The programme is interdisciplinary, and as such we welcome applicants who have a good four-year or Honours degree in any relevant degree. About half of our students come from built environment disciplines such as architecture, planning, or landscape; but we also welcome those from the humanities, social sciences, arts, archaeology, law and others.

You can also apply if you have a three-year degree and five years relevant work experience; or, in some special cases, any other relevant qualifications or experience that the Faculty and the university Senate agree qualify you for entry. If you would like to apply but are not sure if you qualify, please get in touch with the programme convenor and we can advise you.



## How to apply

The deadline for applications for the following year is **November 30<sup>th</sup>**.

You can apply online at [www.applyonline.uct.ac.za](http://www.applyonline.uct.ac.za). The first time you visit, you'll be asked to set up an online account, from where you can save your application in progress. Follow the steps online, including uploading your supporting documents and paying the application fee. You can also indicate here if you will need to apply for funding.

When indicating your choice of programme that you are applying for, select Masters and Engineering/Built Environment Faculty. In the dropdown menu for Academic Qualification, select MPhil By Coursework and Dissertation (60 research 120 coursework). This will bring up another drop-down menu where you can select Conservation of the Built Environment as your specialisation.

You will be asked to upload your university transcripts, as well as a CV. Your CV should also be accompanied by a short motivation letter, explaining why you would like to do the MPhil in Conservation.

If your application is missing any documents or required attachments, it will not be processed by the admissions faculty, so please double check your submission and reach out to the programme administrator if you have any concerns.



## Programme structure

This is a part-time Masters, which takes a minimum of two years to complete. There are four courses in the first year, and two in the second year plus a mini-dissertation of about 25 000 words.

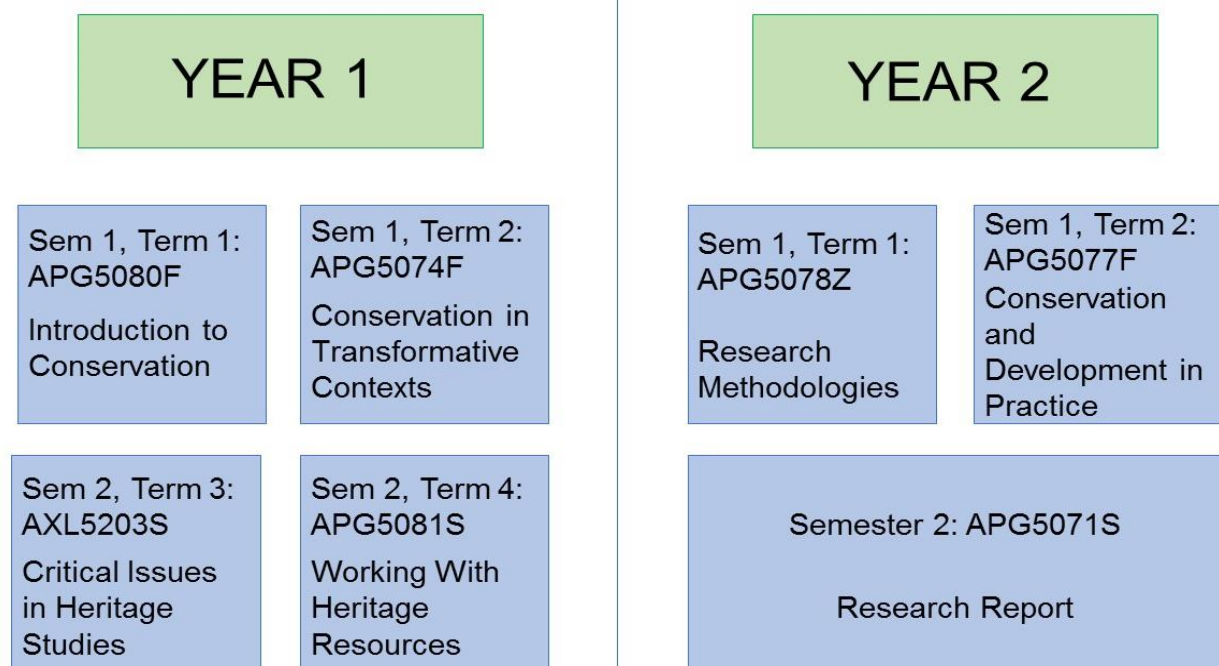
The first year of the programme is aimed at grounding conservation practice in multi-disciplinary theory and critical reflection. The second year focuses on students' individual research. The year is structured to provide a scaffolded approach to conducting research and writing up the dissertation. Dissertation case studies are also used as the basis for working with some of the technical and legal aspects of conservation practice, and for considering the pragmatic realities of the field.

Normally, all our teaching takes place in intensive block release weeks, which take place on UCT campus in Cape Town, usually once per term. In 2021, this structure will change somewhat in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (see below).

You should expect to spend about 15 hours a week on coursework, although this is a very rough average and will vary depending on the course and on your own pace of work.

**\*2021 COVID-19 update:** the Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on all operations and approaches to teaching, not just at UCT but all institutions. In 2020, we successfully migrated almost all our teaching and learning offerings to remote work and online platforms. We have been able to maintain a high standard of work and ongoing engagement with experts and practitioners, through a combination of synchronous ("live") interaction and uploaded material and exercises.

Given the ongoing uncertainty and unpredictability, the difficulty of travelling, and the risks of group meetings in these circumstances, **plans for teaching in 2021 remain flexible**. The accessibility of the course to our students, including those from outside Cape Town and outside South Africa, is a priority; as is the safety, health, and wellbeing of our students. It is likely that at least **first semester courses for this programme in 2021 will be completed primarily online**, while we wait to see what unfolds in the remainder of the year and whether some form of "blended" learning becomes possible.





# YEAR 1

## **APG5080F Introduction to Conservation**



This course provides an introduction to the intellectual, historical and legal frameworks that define the practice of conservation of the built environment. It provides a regional and global overview of the history of conservation; introduces students to some of the complexities of the politics of heritage and conservation in postcolonial and decolonial contexts; and discusses some of the major policies and legislative frameworks that shape current conservation practice.

## **APG5074F Conservation in Transformative Contexts**



This course places the practice and theory of conservation in the context of transforming contemporary environments. It explores the relationships and tensions between conservation and future-oriented spatial and social change, through a variety of discourses and disciplines. These may include, among others: historical archaeology, architectural history, landscape studies, urban conservation, adaptive design and re-use, and public engagement practices.

## **AXL5203S Critical Issues in Heritage Studies (African Studies)**



In this course we examine a set of critical issues in heritage studies. We take a case study approach to look at current issues in heritage theory, policy and practice. In particular, we are interested in those points at which heritage forms a cutting edge in broader contestations around culture, identity and history. As a way of making sense of heritage management discourses, we examine intellectual histories and genealogies of formulations of heritage in South Africa.

## **APG5081S Working With Heritage Resources**



This course brings together the theoretical, historical and legal frameworks covered in the previous three modules to develop a hands-on understanding of how these shape conservation practice. It introduces the basic primary research and interpretive skills required to understand and critically assess heritage resources, and equips students to apply the ideas encountered in previous courses to practical examples.

## YEAR 2



### **APG5078F      Research Methodologies**

This course equips students to develop a research proposal for the minor dissertation to be written in the course of the second year. It includes input on academic research skills and methods, as well as an opportunity to develop and refine the research questions and methodological strategies for students' individual dissertations.



### **APG5077F      Conservation and Development in Practice**

This course builds on previous degree material, particularly the research strategies developed in APG5078F and the hands-on research and assessment skills developed in APG5081S. Students select a site related to their dissertation topic, and unpack the implications of an imagined development on this site. The course equips students with an understanding of development constraints, familiarity with legal frameworks, and the ability to recognise and critique underlying structures and discourses.



### **APG5071S      Research Project**

Students undertake a supervised research project on a conservation-related topic of their choice, resulting in a 25000-30000 word minor dissertation. (This is nominally a second semester course, but students can begin work as soon as the research proposal is approved and ethics clearance received.)

## **Fees and Funding**

**Fees** are set by the university's Fees Office and are charged per course. Fees usually increase by about 5-8% per year, and are updated by the fees office towards the end of each academic year. For more information and the latest fees handbook, please visit <http://www.students.uct.ac.za/students/fees-funding/fees/handbook>.

For **funding opportunities**, your first port of call is to contact the Postgraduate Funding Office: <http://www.students.uct.ac.za/students/fees-funding/postgraduate-degree-funding>

UCT offers some limited internal funding. You may also apply for funding through bodies such as the National Research Foundation, the Department of Arts and Culture, or private bursary opportunities. Many workplaces offer bursaries for employees, so it is also worth checking with your place of employment. Note that most bursaries have closing dates quite early in the year, so make sure you begin the funding search as early as possible. At present there is no internal programme-specific funding available, but opportunities do come up from time to time and these are circulated to students as they arise.

## Contact us

We are here to help! Please reach out if you have any questions, or if you would like to talk to us in person about anything related to the programme or your application.

Find us online at [www.apg.uct.ac.za/apg/conservation](http://www.apg.uct.ac.za/apg/conservation) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/mphilcbe](https://www.facebook.com/mphilcbe)

**Applications for the following year are due on November 30<sup>th</sup>**

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## Useful links

UCT main website: <http://www.uct.ac.za/>

UCT Architecture, Planning and Geomatics: <http://www.apg.uct.ac.za/>

Conservation of the Built Environment website: <http://www.apg.uct.ac.za/apg/conservation>

MPhil CBE Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/mphilcbe](https://www.facebook.com/mphilcbe)

Information handbooks: [www.students.uct.ac.za/students/study/handbooks/current](http://www.students.uct.ac.za/students/study/handbooks/current)

UCT Fees Office: [www.students.uct.ac.za/students/fees-funding/fees/handbook](http://www.students.uct.ac.za/students/fees-funding/fees/handbook)

UCT Postgraduate Funding: <http://www.students.uct.ac.za/students/fees-funding/postgraduate-degree-funding>

International Students Office: [www.iapo.uct.ac.za/](http://www.iapo.uct.ac.za/)

Online application link: <https://applyonline.uct.ac.za>

