Hello New SCARPies and Welcome to SCARPlandia!

We would like to acknowledge that SCARPlandia and UBC are situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) People.

As you begin your journey at UBC - SCARP, we would also like to invite you to take some time and learn about the history of this land. The land acknowledgment should not be seen as just a formality, but as an opportunity to honour the original inhabitants while reflecting upon our own self-identities and experiences as planning students studying on this traditional, ancestral and unceded land. If you would like to learn a little more about the Musqueam history, culture and people, we highly encourage you to check out their website: www.musqueam.bc.ca
Welcome to the 3rd edition of SCARPlandia! Your first couple of weeks at SCARP will be busy, so we (your second-year counterparts) created this handbook to help you hit the ground running.

This handbook is compiled of students’ input and is not the ‘official word’. For bureaucratic details and processes, there are many resources on the SCARP website, so make sure to check that out as well. We hope you will add your own thoughts and improve the guide next year! (make this a SCARP tradition !!)

If you can’t find an answer to your questions, don’t be afraid to ask and reach out. SCARP really is a large community and we want you to feel a part of this big family.

See you in September!
From all of 2017 SCARP Cohort

Can’t wait to meet you all in September!! :)

Disclaimer: this handbook is based on our own opinions
Welcome Message from the PSA President and VPs

Hello New SCARPies!

Greetings from the Planning Student Association (PSA)! We're excited to welcome you into a really special and supportive community. We know we're not alone in saying that getting to know the people of SCARP is one of the best parts of being a student here. Everyone brings their own unique perspectives and experiences to the program, making for rich conversations both inside and outside of the classroom. It's an amazing environment to be a part of, and we can't wait to see how you add to it and help shape it.

You're going to have a lot of fun packed into our home in WMAX. But it's going to be busy at times. If you're feeling unsure or overwhelmed, it's likely others are too. Talk to someone. We're here to help. We always found second year students to be great supporters and resources, and we invite you to do the same. SCARP's strength is that it's collaborative, not competitive. One of the worst kept secrets is that everyone does well here. So, get ready to spend a lot of time together, to re-examine your ideas and values, and to make new lifelong friends.

We can't wait to meet you in September!
Kendall, Lily and Jordan
Welcome SCARP MAP/MScP students! The Master of Arts and Science in planning program is a more research-intensive program compared to our professional-oriented friends in the MCRP program. We are a small and relatively new (but fun!) program, and as such, the curriculum does change. Therefore, it is important to develop strong communication with your supervisor and instructors; and even though your research and thesis are yours alone, you will still be collaborating with others throughout your courses—a great deal more than most other research-based masters programs. It is also advised that you tailor your courses to your intended research, so you can meet course requirements (34 credits) and move your thesis along simultaneously. This includes your 10 core credits, 12 concentration credits, and your 12 thesis credits.** Of course, you may take additional courses in and out of SCARP if they are related to your research, just talk it over with your supervisor.

One of the greatest, and most challenging aspects of the MAP/MScP program is its flexible and self-guided nature. Deadlines and deliverables are not concrete and at the discretion of yourself and your advisor. At times it may feel like things are up in the air, and a lot of times they are, so feel free to talk to the admin staff, the faculty, and your supervisor. Don’t be afraid to ask questions! Of course, you can always reach out to your fellow MAP/MScP cohort. Also, don’t forget that the MCRP students are also very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. It can really help talk things through with them, or just hang out and let their positivity seep in.

All in all, SCARP is a very social and supportive school. The students are great, as well as the faculty and administration. People want to see you succeed, and (when not too busy themselves) are eager to give a helping hand. We hope you feel welcome as part of the SCARP family, and we look forward to getting to know you and your research!

From Christine & Tyler (Current MAP Students)

**Subject to change
Three years ago, during the 2015/2016 academic year, SCARP decided to transition from a research-based degree (MAP and MScP) to a professional degree, the Masters of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP). The previous research-based program had specific streams and students were required to do a large project or thesis in order to complete their degree. The new MCRP program is a lot more flexible and skills based. You can tailor your concentration based on your own planning interests and work on a capstone and studio project in your second year. SCARP also brought back the research-based masters last year, so there will be a few incoming students working on their MAP or MScP. Although their program structure is quite different from yours, you’ll still see each other in some classes and get to know one another.

The renewed MCRP program represents a significant change in the organization and content of the degree. Faculty, administration, and students are still working to solidify what the proposed program looks like when its running. You can be proud to say that you will be the fourth graduating class of the MCRP. Despite all the changes with the fairly new program, the essence and core values of SCARP still remains. So, although we as second-years think we know what’s happening when it comes to the MCRP, keep in mind that what we say below might change. Keep in mind that you can also be the one initiating some valuable changes!

Since there are “core” courses that all MCRP students must take, you won’t find much room for electives in the first two semesters (especially if you are in ICP). The schedule next page is just a rough outline of what to expect. In any semester, you might do slightly more or fewer credits or switch your internship for an elective. Taking more than 12 credits is possible, although you should discuss this with your faculty supervisor to make sure it’s the right call for you. Often times it can be difficult to choose what to take because they all sound so interesting. This is a good problem to have and a reassurance that you’ve come to the right place.

Don’t worry too much; SCARP has tons of great classes to offer. Don’t be afraid to speak to some of the second years about their experiences with certain courses. With that said, they’ll probably provide their unsolicited advice regardless. To say the least, you’ll be very busy over the next two years, but it’s going to be AWESOME!
### Example Course Schedule for MCRP 1st-Years

**YEAR 1 TERM 1**
- **September—December**
  - Quantitative Skills for Planners (3 CR)
  - Environment & Sustainability (2 CR)
  - Planning Practice Methods (2 CR)

**YEAR 1 TERM 2**
- **January—April**
  - Planning Theory & History (3 CR)
  - Legal Concepts in Planning (2 CR)
  - Urbanism & Global Life (2 CR)
  - Qualitative Analysis (2 CR)

**SUMMER**
- **May—August**
  - Internship / Co-op (3 CR)

**YEAR 2 TERM 1**
- **September—December**
  - Planning Studio (6 CR)
  - Profession of Planning (2 CR)
  - Elective Course Planning (1 CR)
  - Elective Course in Planning (3 CR)

**YEAR 2 TERM 2**
- **January—April**
  - Elective Interdisciplinary Course (3 CR)
  - Capstone Project (3 CR)

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*Up to 6 non-planning, **More for CP and Urban Design*

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**Lunchtime dialogue in the city!! (yasss outdoor planning)**

**Working hard as a team**
The Indigenous Community Planning Program

The ICP Concentration

Hello Indigenous Community Planning students, welcome to SCARP! During your Orientation week Leonie will likely gather you together for a meet and greet. The second year ICP students are looking forward to meeting you and will be organizing a cross-year get-together within the first few weeks of September (so stay tuned!). Getting to know one another across cohorts is a great way to have an idea of how your second year will shake out, and you’ll have a few formal opportunities to learn more about practicum in addition to chatting with second years! We look forward to meeting you, learning from each other, and continuing the incredible ICP specialization. The following section is for ALL students to read, as it outlines the core values of our ICP program at SCARP.

More about the ICP Program

The Indigenous Community Planning (ICP) specialization is a specialization within the MCRP program that has been running for seven years. Students in the ICP are in all of the MCRP’s core courses, but most of their electives are taken up by additional classes required for ICP. The specialization tries to have a 50/50 split of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, but this hasn’t always happened. ICP students have a variety of reasons for applying to and joining the program. Many have experience working in Indigenous communities, but not everyone does. All students within the ICP specialization know that your time at SCARP will involve a lot of self-reflection to help students find their purpose in the context of Indigenous community planning.

Logistically, the ICP specialization involves a lot of evening and weekend classes. You may be able to spot the students in ICP classes pretty easily on Monday mornings -- they will be the ones looking exhausted after doing some emotionally draining classes Saturday and Sunday PLUS all other coursework; so be kind and supportive :)

UBC community raising the Reconciliation Pole
In year one, ICP classes focus on practical skills like negotiation, facilitation, and community engagement. There is also an Indigenous Community Planning class that discusses the history of colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada, as well as the role that planning has played in the colonial project and how planning by Indigenous communities is starting to repair some of this damage. ICP students highly recommend their classes for ALL students as it’s important for any planner working in Canada to understand the complex impacts of colonialism, the shifting Nation-Nation relationships and understanding of Indigenous rights in Canada, and the implications of these factors for planning today.

In year two, ICP students are paired into teams to work with an Indigenous community for their practicum. The structure of the ICP specialization was actually used as a model for the MCRP when it was redesigned -- think of the second year ICP practicum as the MCRP studio, although practicum is worth 12 credits, versus the studio’s 6. This means ICP students can look forward to more weekends away. Before you ask any ICP student where their practicum will be -- no, they don’t know their placement yet. No, not soon. Not until August right before second year. Or sometimes maybe even later than that. No, they don’t even have a faint guess. They will let you know when they find out!

A big, important note for ALL SCARP students: (that if you do not yet understand the need for, you will soon): there are specific protocols associated with contacting Indigenous communities. If you would like to do work with or receive information about an Indigenous community, do not contact them without talking to Leonie Sandercock first. She acts as the liaison between SCARP, ICP, and Indigenous communities as she has spent the time to build these relationships.
Urban Design is one of the concentrations at SCARP that has its own set of required courses. That being said, even if you decide to concentrate in Urban Design, you can still combine it with your other planning interests. Design, as a practice in general, is multi-faceted and requires a variety of soft and hard skills—from addressing ambiguous questions and building on the lesson of the past to developing drawing/representation and verbal presentation skills. Naturally, this also requires creativity and willingness to adapt and respond to new information on the fly.

The Urban Design concentration seeks to develop those skills and provide a solid foundation for understanding and participating in the field. Given the complexity of the discipline, the concentration is by no means exhaustive but offers a strong start. Expect that it will be an intense and rewarding experience!

Here are a few more tips if you are aiming to add Urban Design to your basket:

- It would be useful to start practicing drawing and sketching, and also getting familiar with the basics of design softwares (like Adobe Creative Suite) as soon as possible. So go get some pencils and a sketch book and start playing around on your laptops!

- In order to get the most out of each course, be fully invested in it. This may mean a greater time and energy commitment, but it's the best way to develop your design mindset and skills.

- The ability to work with a team and collaborate with other students is likely your greatest asset - everyone has different strengths and skill sets so you should do your best to learn from others. Although many resources are now on-line, some of the greatest sources of design inspiration are classic books.

- Lastly, even if you don't plan to concentrate in Urban Design, you should still take the first urban design course (if possible) to get a good sense of graphic representation, learn site analysis techniques, and get to know your fellow SCARPies better! Have fun with it!
Capstones & Studios

Students in MCRP (but not including ICP students) have two additional courses that require special attention: the capstone project and studio course. The capstone currently exists as one of two options: a professional portfolio submission or a major research project (which can be an independent research, or a extension of your summer internship, or your studio project). You will need to discuss this with your supervisor closer to your second year. Until then, if you want to know more, the SCARP website has more information.

The studio course will group students into small teams to work with organizations and community partners on real world projects. Partners will determine how, and if, projects will be implemented. Students will be sorted into small teams working on projects that they expressed interest in. Past partners included BC municipalities, First Nation Bands, UBC Campus and Community Planning, and neighbourhood groups. Studio courses are intended to give students real-world planning experience and skills prior to graduation. These projects put all the skills you learn at SCARP to the test and help you build professional relationship with your community partners.

For All Students: Faculty Advisor Roles

At this point you probably already know who is your faculty advisor, and some may have reached out to you. Your faculty advisor plays an important part in your degree. They will sign off on your course schedules, help you construct your specialization, be there for professional (and perhaps moral) support. Previous SCARPies worked hard with admin to hammer out an agreement on what the student/faculty advisor relationship should look like. Make sure to check it out before coming. It will be super helpful to understand what your faculty advisor can assist you throughout your time at SCARP. They may be busy people but they are always willing to help, sometimes it’s just a few extra emails. Remember, it is your faculty advisor’s job and responsibility to be there for you, so don’t be hesitant to communicate with them!
Canada is a multicultural country and Vancouver especially is home to many nationalities and ethnic groups; therefore we hope you feel at home at UBC and Vancouver! It is not a big city, but sometimes it can feel lonely. Just don’t forget that we are here for you and mostly likely there will be local communities that you connect deeply with.

UBC provides a comprehensive guide for international students. In addition to this guide you can also book an appointment to talk to an International Student Advisor at isa@students.ubc.ca located at International House on campus. The administrators there are more knowledgeable about specific issues relating to being an international student than SCARP’s own administration, because they deal with these issues on a daily basis.

All you need to know about settling in at UBC in also provided here. You’ll find information on campus housing, getting a UBC card, health insurance, and even finding child care services for your family.

**Local Planning Knowledge**

Although you will be taking core courses that will help you build up your local planning knowledge, it is helpful to familiarize yourself with Canadian government structures prior to arrival. For instance, it is important to understand the distribution of power between the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. In addition, we strongly suggest that you learn a little about the history of colonialism, indigenous displacement, and forced assimilation in Canada. Most of us are uninvited guests and settlers on the traditional, ancestral and unceded land of the Indigenous people, so please respect and honour their culture and history. Familiarizing yourself with current treaties and relations between Canadian government and First Nations would be a good start.

**Visa and Work Permit**

One very important thing is to make sure your student visa/permit allows you to be employed in a way that will work with SCARP’s required internship. For instance some student permits allow you to only work part time or full time only if you are employed by the university. This could limit your eligibility for many internships. You may need to apply for another permit that allows you to work while being a student. So make sure to double check that!
**Getting a Cell Phone (Mobile phone) and Internet**

Using a cell phone has become a norm in Canada and it is very convenient when it comes to communications. You would want to get one when you arrive in Vancouver. Rogers, Fido, Telus, Virgin, Bell, Freedom, Koodo, and Chatr are some of the main cell carriers here. They often have packages for students so make sure to bring your student ID when visiting their store to sign up.

If you are living on campus you should have access to UBC’s high speed internet. However, if you live off campus you can contact companies such as Shaw and Telus to get high speed internet. They come to campus during the first 2 weeks of September to sign up new customers. The booths are usually set up close to the Student NEST or along Main Mall. You can get good deals from them during this time period; for example, Shaw offers students a special package at the beginning of each school year.

**BC Identification Cards & Health Care Plan**

Your International Driver’s License can act as your official ID once you also apply for a Canadian Driver’s License. If you do not have a driver license and don’t want to carry your passport around all the time, you can apply to get a BC Services Card from ICBC. In BC, you would need 2 pieces of ID to purchase or consume alcohol and tobacco. You will also need to apply for a Medical Service Plan upon your arrival. The MSP is the health care plan provided by the BC government and required by law for everyone to have.

Lastly, if you have any other questions before you arrive, feel free to contact one of our SCARP International Student reps:

Sean Bailey - seanreedbailey@gmail.com  
Tadayori Nakao - ntadayori@gmail.com  
Halina Rachelson - halinarachelson@gmail.com  
Lily Raphael - lilyannraphael@gmail.com  
Jose C. Wong - jcwongck@gmail.com

Safe travels and see you soon!
The Planning Student Association -- PSA for short -- is the student organization that represents planning graduate students at UBC, and we're a pretty busy group of people. We create space for important dialogues on equity, sustainability, and other challenging topics to occur; we work with the administration to sort out any issues and ensure the program is meeting student expectations; we organize a lot of social events and learning opportunities outside of the classroom, like professional development workshops and lunchtime dialogues; and we represent UBC planning students to the greater UBC and professional planning communities. Perhaps most importantly, we engage in current planning issues facing us today and make opportunities to learn the skills we need to be successful planners when we graduate that may not be taught in the classroom.

Getting involved in the PSA on one of our many committees is easy to do, and absolutely encouraged! In fact, most of the current cohort holds at least one, if not two PSA positions. It's a great way for you complement your academic schedule. All of our PSA positions run on a January to December cycle, which means that in September you'll get an intro to what you can do, and then spend your first semester of your Masters getting your feet wet. In November, you can run for an elected position or sign up for a non-elected position.

The UBC PSA has a beautiful new website here. Visit to learn a little more about UBC’s Planning Student’s Association and our different committees and their functions. We also have a SCARP Google Calendar which is a great way to view SCARP events and other things happening around the city. To add it to your own calendar, head to this page and click the “+Google Calendar” button at the bottom of the calendar.

**PSA Fees**

Be prepared, we will ask you to pay a fee at the start of the year to join the UBC PSA (30$) and we will also ask you to pay to attend the Whistler Weekend that finishes orientation week (exact cost TBD, but around $70~$80). Please contact treasurer Geneva Lloyd (genevalloyd@gmail.com ) if you are unable to attend this getaway due to financial constraints. There may be a bursary available!
**Symposium**

Every year first-year SCARP students put on an amazing symposium dealing with a variety of planning issues. Several of you will form the main committee and seek input and help whenever needed. It is a huge annual event and it is not possible without all hands on deck, so start thinking about how you like to help. Consider organizing a panel, finding funders or just taking on the whole thing! See what happened last year [here](#)!

**Socials**

There are tons of SCARP social events from chill BBQ hangouts on the beach to party nights in the city: many of them regular weekly occurrences. Support your social committee and these events! Sometimes, you just gotta take a break. Make lots of awesome memories!

**Facebook Groups**

SCARP has a general [facebook group](#), which is where we share information about classes, jobs, questions and conversations rather than flood the “current students” list. The group has hundreds of SCARP students from over the years. Please request to be added to this group and follow this group before you arrive (and for the first couple weeks) at least!!! We also have another group for ALL current students called the WMAX crew. This group includes all 1st & 2nd years, PhD candidates and any students that is currently attending SCARP. Important textbook information and updates will appear here. We’ve gone ahead and created a [facebook group for your own cohort](#) so that you can discuss issues and events specific to your year (don’t worry, 2nd years in the group will leave it once you’re all set). Request to join it now!

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**Our Symposium branding from last year:**

The 10th Annual SCARP Symposium Presents:

encompass

BROADENING THE SCOPE OF PLANNING
Welcome From Student Development

Student Development provides programs, events, and initiatives to enhance your learning experience at SCARP. Whether you are looking for ways to get more out of your degree or connect with the planning profession, we've got many opportunities to help you build professional skills and enhance your leadership potential! Since we are part of the Faculty of Applied Science, many of our professional development programs are designed and delivered by them too. Simon Erlich is our Student Development Coordinator, remember to say hi to him at the office! He helps us coordinate many of these events with SCARP admin and the Faculty of Applied Science.

Orientation
You'll start your time at SCARP with a two-day on campus orientation program, beginning September 3rd and finishing with a trip to Whistler. You will get the chance to learn about SCARP, the Faculty of Applied Science and UBC. More importantly, you will meet the SCARP faculty members, and get to know your fellow SCARPies.

Mentoring
Our mentoring program is an excellent opportunity for you to gain valuable insights into the planning profession and connect with community partners. More information about the program will be provided during your orientation.

Internships
The Internship Program is an essential and integral component of the MCRP program and is designed to connect you with experienced planning professionals in your field of interest, allowing you to gain valuable hands-on experience while also earning academic credit. Make sure to check out more details on internships on the website!

Professional Development
Professional development at SCARP provides various workshops, programming, and initiatives to enhance your learning experience and career development at UBC, offering you many opportunities to build your professional skills.
Campus Life

West Mall Annex: WMAX-Your home away from home.

First floor WMAX: it’s a mixture of quiet space, informal, meeting and classroom spaces, as well as PhD student offices. Pay attention to the signage for room guidelines. SCARP administration also have offices and work part-time from here. They are located here so they’re more accessible to students, so make sure to say hello!

Second floor WMAX: It’s only used for quiet study due to faculty offices and some classes in the 240 classroom. No group meetings are allowed upstairs. Please respect faculty space and keep the volume down. Extra washrooms are also upstairs if those downstairs are busy.

Lasserre: The location of some faculty offices and the main SCARP administration office. Also houses the UBC School of Architecture, our non-SCARP friends.

Grad Student Lounge: There’s a lounge in the AMS Nest up on the 5th floor exclusive to grad students. It’s tucked away in the back, but can be a great resource. It has non-bookable office spaces and group work rooms and is generally quite quiet. You’ll need your UBC student ID to access the space by scanning your card.

Computer Labs: Found across campus and at all 7 main libraries, but here are the two you’ll need to know.
- Informal Learning Space: A small computer lab in WMAX with Adobe Design Software. This is a Mac lab and is open at all times to all SCARP students! Email Shirley from admin or ask us second years to get the door code.
- Koerner Library: The main library close to SCARP has 2 computer labs in the basement that have ArcMap and a plotter. The GIS librarians are very nice and can help you with any GIS questions.
Where to grab a bite on campus (especially when you’re having a long day at WMAX)

- **Seedlings ($)**: Cheap but SO good. Located very close to WMAX at Thea Koerner House (home to GSS). Usually vegan and often raw. They also have the cheapest coffee and great space to work!
- **Timmies (Tim Hortons) ($)**: Canadian Staple. Cheap coffee & doughnuts with 2 locations on campus!
- **International Food Court ($)**: A food court in the basement at the UBC village place. Little far from WMAX, but a has lots of international selections at a cheap price. Lunch time is always busy and crowded.
- **Koerner’s Pub ($$)**: The food is a little expensive but Taco Tuesday is life. It’s the grad pub so it’s very relaxed.
- **The AMS NEST ($$)**: The food court at the student’s center has sushi, pizza (PieR²!), all kinds of deli such as wraps, soups, cheap sandwiches, a small grocery store, etc. Pit Pub is also there on the basement floor!
- **Triple Os ($$)**: Opens late. Authentic ‘Vancouver food’. Never miss out their Triple O Tuesdays Burger!
- **Mercante ($$)**: Kind of expensive but not so bad thin crust oven baked pizza. It’s so close that you’ll eat at least one pizza from there this year. They also serve salad and pasta if you want other options!
- **The Loop Cafe at CIRS ($$)**: Super sustainable. They always have one hot vegetarian and one meat entree with rice, plus a salad bar, sandwiches, pastries, organic fair-trade coffee, etc.
- **Food trucks ($$)**: Actually just UBC food services, but good selection with trucks such as School of Fish, Hungry Nomads, the Hot Dog House etc. They move around, so remember to check their locations weekly!
- **Harvest ($$)**: A little bit expensive, but it’s a small convenience store with a deli on the ground floor. It’s the closest place from WMAX to get something quick.
- **Great Dane Coffee ($$$)**: Behind the Walter Gage Towers. Said to be the best coffee on campus. Serves really good sandwiches and soups. Great study space but could get busy since it’s close to UBC’s law school.
- **Jam-jar ($$$)**: Lebanese Canteen that just opened last year. Pretty good value for the amount of food you get. Have other locations in Vancouver too and serves healthy authentic Lebanese food.
- **Loafe ($$$)**: In the Alumni Centre and very expensive. Little bougie but rumour has it the food is very good. They also serve Cartems donuts, a must eat in Vancouver. Good place for professional meetings/networking.

There are obviously more places to eat on campus if you don’t pack food from home, [check here](#) for more!
**SCARP, the GSS & AMS**

As members of the Graduate Student Society (GSS), you have a health and dental plan through the Pacific Blue Cross. You also have access to many of the same resources as undergrad students through GSS agreements with the Alma Mater Society (AMS). The Thea Koerner House is the Graduate Students Centre where Koerner’s Pub & Seedlings are located. Whereas AMS NEST is the student hub for all students on campus.

**Sports**

Some SCARPies like sports (it can be confusing for the rest of us but to each their own). Many of us participate in UBC Rec events as “Scrappy SCARPies” last year. We also had people playing ultimate frisbee, basketball, soccer, curling, and even long boating. Feel free to start your own sports group! Go local sports!

**Printing**

UBC Libraries - you need to create an online account in order to print or copy at UBC libraries. Here are the instructions. Copies Mart at the University Village is also a good and cheap option for all things printing (5728 University Blvd #103). Ask us if you’re confused!

**Buses/Transit/Compass card**

You need to have a Compass card in order to use the public transportation system. Here are the instructions to get a Compass card. As UBC student, you should be able to get a compass from the UBC bookstore. Or you can get grab one at a skytrain station, London Drugs, or other locations. A monthly student bus pass “U-Pass” (activated online through Compass card website) is included in your student fees already for the school term.

Lastly, there are a lot to do on campus and many events happening everyday. Stay connected and involved!
Some of you might have applied for campus housing already and got an offer. That’s great! Living on campus is definitely extremely convenient, but sometimes you may feel trapped on the UBC peninsula. Living off campus is very common among UBC students since campus housing is always scarce and pricey. So why not look for somewhere in the city? There are lots of wonderful neighbourhoods here to choose!

That being said, a nice Vancouver rental may be expensive and hard to find. Although some neighbourhoods are pricier than others, there are still affordable rental places in most neighbourhoods. Be prepared to make a decision quickly when you find somewhere you like. Sometimes luck plays a huge factor, but we’re sure you’ll find a home!

Basically, apartment costs tend to go down the farther you travel from campus as UBC is located at the edge of a wealthy neighbourhood. The “I-just-moved-here” classic is a basement suite, so be prepared to consider how much more you are willing to pay to live above ground. All the neighbourhoods listed in this map below are within the City of Vancouver boundary (approx. 15~45min commute). There are nice places to live in other nearby municipalities such as Burnaby, Richmond, North Vancouver...but they just take longer time to commute to campus.

The most direct transit route to UBC is the 99 B-line, but that doesn't mean it isn't crowded and slow. UBC students usually try to live near it, but there are many other East-West routes that will take you to UBC with slightly less convenient service. Getting a bike may be useful, but be prepared to bike in the rain!
Neighbourhoods in Vancouver

1. UBC - University Endowment Lands
Living on campus means you can avoid driving or busing, but rent is very expensive (despite what UBC says). It’s basically a small college town with grocery stores, restaurants, museums, banks, etc. so you’ll never need to leave campus. But try to leave anyway to explore the rest of the city because the action is definitely off-campus. If you want to travel back to campus after the buses stop running, you’re in for an expensive cab ride. Bike back instead - if you don’t mind the rain.

2. West Point Grey
The closest you can get to campus without living on campus. You’re about a 6-10 minute bus ride to campus, totaling 15 minutes to the SCARP trailer park. Perfect if you like to roll out of bed 20 minutes before you have to be in class. There isn’t much going on in the neighbourhood, so you have to bus to downtown (30min) or walk over to your neighbour Kitsilano to find some fun and entertainment. Houses are huge so you can find a decent sized basement apartment, or a spot in a few of the above ground apartments. Very family oriented neighbourhood with only a 15 minute walk to Spanish and Jericho beach!

3. Dunbar-Southlands
If you hate early mornings but don’t want to live on campus, Dunbar might be the choice for you! It’s a fairly quiet area, with mostly single family homes with an active and vocal neighbourhood association. Dunbar village is along Dunbar street and you can find some nice little restaurants and shops here for daily needs. If you’re lucky you can find a gem of a basement suite or rent a whole home with a few other people. The trade-offs? The neighbourhood itself is a bit sleepy, but there are other lively neighbourhoods close to you.

4. Arbutus - Ridge & Shaughnessy
Welcome to one of the oldest yet most expensive neighbourhoods in Vancouver! Some of best houses and wealthiest families are in this area due to the prime geographical location. However, there are still plenty of people renting out their nice basement suites at a reasonable price, so don’t let the neighbourhood names scare you away. If you love biking and jogging, this could be one of the best neighbourhoods because they are adjacent to the Arbutus Greenway Corridor.
5.1 Kitsilano (South of West 4th Ave)
Aka Kits. If you hate living above ground, and don't mind a lil’ dank mold smell here or there, Kitsilano might be the choice for you! Lots of older single family homes that's not too close, but not too far from campus. There’s lots going on Broadway including some of UBC students' favourite restaurants and bars. Basically it’s close to campus with lots of grocery and dining options.

5.2 Kitsilano (West 4th Ave and North Edition)
If you love lounging on tree-lined beaches (who wouldn't), feeling inferior to yuppies with rock hard abs, and visiting obnoxiously expensive stores, this humble community boasting 360 degree views of Arcteryx, the North Face, and Patagonia might just be right for you. Bonus: its home to the original Lululemon (and their current global headquarters), hence you’ll see lots of yoga pants around. Range of pricing from expensive nice places, to cheap basement suites. Some apartment are fairly old, but the beach is only few steps away so who could complain!

6. Fairview
Kitsilano's cheaper, less-yuppie-ish cousin, you're probably pretty close to at least one 99 B-Line stop. This is the area east of Burrard, west of Cambie, and north of 16th. This area has almost certainly the highest number of 2-3 storey apartment buildings in the city. Bonus 3am ambulance noise if you live near VGH at Oak and 12th! Slightly cheaper than Kits, but still close to UBC. A happy middle. Bars are a little scarce but it’s easy to hop on over to our ironically mustachioed friends to the east. South Granville is home to lots of shops, but is a well-known food desert. Probably a half hour transit ride to campus unless rush hour is especially bad.

7. South Cambie
A lot of variation depending on where along Cambie you live. Cambie village is undergoing major development so the streetscape is constantly changing (but a lot more food options now!). Closer to False Creek, you’ll be close to many grocery stores, the Canada Line, and the 99 B-Line. City Hall is at Cambie and Broadway, so maybe you’ll spot planners walking around your neighbourhood.
8. Strathcona
A bit of a cocoon, and a few transfers to get to UBC, but an eclectic mix of housing and residents. Super charming heritage homes, boulevard gardens, and friendly community vibes. Around the corner from Chinatown and a hop, skip, and a jump to DT. You can get really cheap groceries from Chinatown but don’t expect supermarket chains (support the locals!). Rent on par with Commercial & Mt. Pleasant.

9. Mount Pleasant
Close to a 99 stop. Easy to get around and located proximity to other “cool” areas (Commercial Drive and Main Street). Diverse neighbourhood with a KFC nearby. Lots of cool bars, restaurants, and breweries around, and a mix of 2-3 story apartments and single family homes. The area has historically been home to industrial lands in Vancouver, and as such, is now quite a contentious neighbourhood from a planning perspective.

10. Riley Park
If making fun of hipsters that are just a little too behind the times to have moved to Fraser (so hot right now), Main Street is your place. Do you like coffee? There’s lots of that. Antique stores clinging for dear life against ever-increasing rent pressures? Yup. Poodle on a Pole? You bet! Moderately priced, relatively, but is increasing due its popularity.

11. Kensington-Cedar Cottage
Aka the No-frills neighbourhood. You’ll find absolutely nothing trendy or hip in this neighbourhood, but that’s what makes it great. Cheap basement suites are readily available, as are low-cost Asian grocery stores and very affordable restaurants (lots of Vietnamese). Several options for getting to UBC, but it’s about a 45 to 50 minute commute by bus (no transfer!). You’re also well situated between the two skytrain lines which really opens up the whole region, and biking places is a breeze.

12. Downtown West End
Aka Best End. If you want small community living in the big city, the West End is the place for you. Perfect for foodies and anyone who wants the beach steps from their door. You can also get an express (the 44) bus to UBC, but it only runs weekdays with no late night service or weekends. Rents are pretty affordable *for a downtown location*. Davie Street Village is also home to many of our local LGBTQ2S+ communities.
13. Fraserhood (Kingsway and Fraser)
Not designated on the map, but essentially the intersection of Mt. Pleasant and Riley Park. With the highest “Gluten Free Bakery” to person ratio, Fraserhood is the place to be - if that’s your thing. You can stop by Matchstick Coffee, where half months rent gets you a latte. Although the coffee is expensive, rent is relatively cheap. Depending on the buses that day, you are located between 40 and 90 minutes from UBC. The local business bureau will probably call Fraserhood “An up and coming Neighborhood,” but in reality, it has been a culturally rich area for a long time. Changing faster than UBC’s campus this info may be out of date by the time of publication, but there are a number of SCARP kids kicking around the neighborhood so it’ll feel like home in no time.

14. Commercial Drive
One of the last remaining eclectic areas in the city, but sadly going through some sever gentrification. The neighbourhoods surrounding “the Drive” are diverse in culture and socio-economic status, with an occasionally edgy feel where folks “let their freak flag fly”. Here, you are spoiled for choice with affordable restaurants, grocery stores and coffee shops, and rents in apartments and shared houses are reasonable. However, expect a 40-60 minute commute to SCARP, by bike or express bus. Commercial-Broadway Station is great to be near if you’re traveling anywhere east of Vancouver to other municipalities.

15. South Van
SCARPies don’t believe it exists, but it does! Covering most of Oakridge, Marpole and Sunset neighbourhood, this area is family oriented and ethnically diverse. The Punjabi Market is also in this area, with lots of other Asian grocery stores and restaurants too. Rent could range from fairly expensive to surprisingly cheap depending on which block you’re at. Marine Drive gateway is also developing with new cinemas and stores right beside the Canada Line skytrain station. Commuting to campus would range from 40 ~ 60 min depending on buses.
Neighbourhoods in Metro Vancouver

If you're new to Metro-Vancouver, then Burnaby, Surrey, Richmond, North Van, West Van and New West are quite far from the action and UBC. We generally wouldn't recommend moving there unless you have some connection to these areas and/or a private vehicle...and even then...it's still quite a journey if you forget something on campus.

16. Lonsdale, North Vancouver
Aka North Van aka Lolo. Nestled in the mountains, there are many options for outdoor recreation including mountain biking, skiing and hiking (both leisurely and not so leisurely) while you are skipping school because it is very far from UBC. Although some have biked to UBC regularly and efficiently from North Van, I would suggest public or private motor transit because I did not have three days to get to class which is how long biking would take me (and sometimes how long it feels on the bus..). However, North Van's trendiest hood Lower Lonsdale, or Lolo if you will, is seeing new development and has more than one bar now, creating a bumping patio scene and allows for very easy accesses to downtown via the seabus (it sounds cooler then it is) in 15 minutes.

17. Metrotown, Burnaby
A sprawling, consumerist have filled with anything one may desire. Starting look a lot like Hong Kong with all the tall new skyscraper apartments being built. Also a great place to park your car if you've been meaning to smash in your own windows but just haven't found the time. Hungry? You could go to the food court, but why bother when you have all these restaurant options all around! Getting to UBC will be difficult from here, but you won’t mind because you’ll never feel like leaving. Rent is currently relatively cheap but may soon change as the older buildings are being demolished to give way to new high rises, so get in now while you still can!

18. Sapperton, New Westminster
Right by two skytrain stations and Highway 1, which makes it convenient for life, but way too far if you're at UBC. An excellent post-Scarp-I’m-determined-to-live-in-Metro-Van choice for cheaper rents and affordable-ish houses. An area with a history in the labour movement, a progressive Council, and an overwhelming one or two excellent restaurants. Fun fact, did you know hat New Westminster was once the capital of BC?

19. No.3 Road, Richmond
A little disconnected from Vancouver and mainstream cultural, and being called the “New” Chinatown. Sometimes it's a struggle to meet people, but there's lots of delicious food options and convenient shopping along the Skytrain line. Transit to UBC is bad, unless you live close to the Canada Line. Most SCARPies living here end up driving to school. You get to cross a bridge with awesome riverview every time you go to school!
Additional Tips on Finding a Place

If you are having trouble finding a place to live, please post in the SCARP group and you may find others looking for roommates, or people who have places for rent. Craigslist, PadMapper, UBC Buy/Sell Facebook page, and Kijiji are popular websites where you find accommodations, used/new furniture and even second hand textbooks.

Since you may be buying items directly from the seller, always be careful if you are going to the seller’s home. Go with someone or inform people about where you are going just to be safe. For smaller items, suggest you meet at in a public space like a mall or at the student’s center (NEST).

Students living off campus tend to live in Kitsilano, the West End (which is in downtown peninsula, and not to be confused with the separate City of West Vancouver), and East Vancouver (which is a part of City of Vancouver proper). Strike a balance between living close enough to the university and close enough to major social (and other) amenities near the center of the city.

Where to Play

Traditionally, SCARP students head to Portland during the February “spring” break for 3 or 4 days. This trip is usually planned by two (or more) people in the year one for the year one cohort. A group of planning students from Portland will also help you with your planning and local itinerary. Last year, those who went to Portland visited Alta Planning, got an awesome lecture from a Portland State planning prof and DANCED! An excel document with details can be shared with anyone interested in organizing.

There are many places around Vancouver and the surrounding cities and regions are worth visiting. SCARPies often go on hikes, food adventures or just find a random place to chill and chat together. If you visit anything interesting, help expand this section next year!!

Our annual trip to Portland is always a blast!

SCARPies freezing in Portland, Oregon
Hints & Tips

Textbooks
Before you spend a lot of money on textbooks, go to orientation and class. SCARP students have previously used copies of books and digital editions (more on the Facebook group). Last year, the 2nd-year students held a textbook sale for 1st-years, so look out for that. You may also find many of the textbooks can easily be shared between groups of students.

Laptops & Software
The program isn't picky about the type of computer you have, so any type of PC or Mac is fine. The most basic computer will do. If you want to use your personal laptop for design or GIS, then you might want something a bit more advanced, but all students have access to computers with Adobe Creative Suite as well as ArcGIS on campus. You can totally make it work by just using the programs on campus, which many current students do. If you're buying a new computer, just consider whether you'd like to have the options to add other programs down the road.

Part-time Job Expectations
SCARPies may work on-campus or off-campus. Unlike a typical research graduate programs, the SCARP faculty will not find you a RA or TA position. However, there are TA & RA positions that come up in Planning, Geography, or Architecture that you will likely hear about. Most students work no more than 10-15 hours a week, if at all. If you're looking for RA work, approach faculty members for opportunities. They're all doing some form of research and might be looking for capable helping hands.

SCARP staff
SCARP has a small and dedicated staff. You’ll get to know Sherli, Laura, Dolores and Penny quite well throughout your time at SCARP, especially if you’re part of the PSA or have a major role in planning the symposium. Visit this page to see who you should contact with your question. Pro tip: check the SCARP website and dig around before emailing admin with your questions; they’re very busy and the information is often on the website. This will make their lives much easier and everyone will be happier overall. It’ll be great.

You might fall in love with skiing
Coffee is your best friend
SCARP is truly what you make of it. Make sure to pursue opportunities that tie to your passions (and learn to turn down the ones that don’t) in and out of classroom. You’ll get out what you put in!

It’s never too early to start thinking about your internship. If there’s an organization you’d like to work with, reach out to them. You’ll be surprised what showing initiative can do.

If you don’t have much planning background coming in, don’t stress about it. People come with varying levels of experience and nobody is at any serious disadvantage. Remember, you’re all here for a reason.

Chat with your advisor, or any professor at SCARP. They’re here to help and can often clear up any concerns you may have rather easily. Make sure they know what you want from SCARP so they can help facilitate that.

Come with an open mind and be ready to learn, unlearn and relearn everything you don’t know or already know. What you’re interested in now likely won’t be all that you’re interested in when you leave, and that’s great! It means you’re growing.

Go to the Whistler trip during Orientation Week. It’s a great way to get to know all your new classmates. The sooner you’re close with your cohort, the better. Your cohort will be your family. You’ll be working together closely over the next two years!

When thinking about student loans, financing, etc., remember that SCARP tuition is paid in the winter, spring, and summer semesters. Regardless of how many credits you take, tuition is the same each term. Talk to a student financial advisor at UBC if you need!

The second-years are here to help! We’re always game to chat about our experiences. It’s likely you’ll see some of us in your electives too, so be sure to branch out. We might seem busy with our studio projects, but don’t be afraid to stop us for a chat!

Make sure to spend time outside of the classroom with your fellow SCARPies. You’ll find life-long friendships here that go way beyond academic or professional pursuits. You’re all in this together!

Everyone comes to SCARP with such different backgrounds; we all have our strengths and weaknesses. Share your strengths with your classmates and lean on your friends to improve your weaknesses. No one is perfect but we’re stronger together.

SCARP has a huge network of alumni that are working throughout the region and beyond. Reach out on LinkedIn, buy them a coffee to pick their brain. SCARPies are generally willing to help new SCARPies.

You will feel lost, it will be overwhelming, and you might start questioning... that’s okay. Just don’t stop believing in yourself. There will be people around to support you through this journey. You will create lots of unforgettable memories here at SCARP!
Just some SCARP Myths

- From time to time you’ll hear scurrying above the ceiling panels in WMAX. Rumour has it that the sound comes from rats. This is totally not true. We were able to confirm that they’re squirrels.

- A project is in the works to run a power extension cord to Wreck Beach, so we can work outdoors with wifi.

- SCARP will have a nice building someday (apparently this is on the dean’s radar, but it could take a lifetime).

- You will never order a dozen boxes of domino pizza to WMAX when working on late night group projects.

- All SCARPies know what they are doing in life and can explain to others what planning is in one sentence.

We all look forward to seeing you soon (Photo from last year’s Orientation Whistler Trip - woohoo!!)

If you have more questions, feel free to ask the SCARP Facebook group!