URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING, PH.D.

The Ph.D. is open to a limited number of quality students who intend to teach, or do research in a university, in an independent research agency, or in large planning organizations.

Generally, students spend two years of full-time coursework before being advanced to candidacy, and an additional one to two years in preparation and defense of a dissertation. Details on administrative requirements for the degree are available in the department’s Policies and Procedures, available on the department website or by request.

Although the department stresses the development of general skills and mental attitudes that are common to all planning endeavors, students are required to specialize in an area of planning that is of interest to the student.

The department seeks students with high academic qualifications and the potential to become qualified professional planners. The department is especially interested in women and minority applicants. Since there are relatively few undergraduate planning programs in the country, students come into the field from a wide range of disciplines. In recent years, planning students have generally come from the social sciences, with geography, economics, political science, and sociology the most common undergraduate backgrounds. The range, however, runs from the arts to the sciences.

FUNDING

For information about financial aid, see Financial Aid (http://urpl.wisc.edu/admissions/financialaid) on the department website.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

DOCTORAL DEGREES

Ph.D.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

51 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

32 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

Half of degree coursework (26 out of 51 total credits) must be in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Requests for prior coursework to be applied to credit requirements should be submitted to the PhD Committee for evaluation. The committee may approve up to a maximum of 18 credits of prior coursework toward program requirements. No graduate work taken at other institutions counts toward the Graduate School minimum graduate credit requirement.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

No credits from any undergraduate degree may be applied toward the Ph.D. program.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

A maximum of 15 credits may be applied from the UW–Madison University Special career; requests for prior coursework to be applied to credit requirements should be submitted to the Ph.D. committee for evaluation.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED

All doctoral students are required to complete three courses (9 credits) on the structure and processes of cities and regions. These courses shall cover the nature of urban and regional development processes over time and the impact of urban and regional development on the social, economic, environmental, institutional, and physical structure of cities and regions. They should also cover the response of federal, state and local governments to the issues and problems generated by such development and the planner’s role in developing public policy and programs to deal with those problems and issues.

Courses satisfying the requirement for this component of doctoral studies must be approved by the student's Ph.D. advisor and then by the Ph.D. program committee, and shall be recorded on a form provided by the committee. Courses satisfying this requirement shall be drawn from a list provided by the Ph.D. program committee.

For more information please reference the program’s Policies and Procedures (http://urpl.wisc.edu/academics/URPL%20PHD%20POLICIES%20May%202013.pdf).

DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of planning, the department requires all Ph.D. candidates to fulfill the requirements of a minor field. The purpose of the Minor field requirement is to supplement and support the student’s program of study in the major field. There are two options that can be pursued for the minor. Option A requires a minimum of 10 credits in a single department/major field of study. Selection of this option requires the approval of the minor department under the guidelines of that department and on forms developed for that purpose by the selected department. Option B requires a minimum of 10 credits in one or more departments and can include coursework in URPL. Selection of this option requires the approval of the department’s Ph.D. program.
committee. Forms for the filing of Option B minors are available from the Ph.D. program committee.

Ph.D. students and their advisers are responsible for filing copies of executed minor agreements with the Ph.D. program committee. The minor field requirement must be satisfied prior to filing the warrant for the preliminary examination.

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT
3.00 GPA required

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS
The minimum average GPA in courses satisfying the Structure and Processes of Cities and Regions requirement shall be 3.5. If a student does not achieve this GPA in the three courses s/he identifies, they may continue to take courses (within the general departmental Ph.D. program policies of how long a student may be a pre-dissertation) from the list provided until they have three courses where their average GPA is 3.5.

PROBATION POLICY
A semester GPA below 3.0 will result in the student being placed on academic probation. If a semester GPA of 3.0 is not attained during the subsequent semester of full time enrollment (or 12 credits of enrollment if enrolled part-time) the student may be dismissed from the program or allowed to continue for 1 additional semester based on advisor appeal to the Graduate School.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE
All students are required to conduct a yearly progress report meeting with their thesis committee after passing the preliminary examination.

ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS
The department administers three preliminary field examinations. The purpose of the preliminary examinations is to satisfy the department that the student is knowledgeable about the central theoretical and methodological perspectives common to the field of planning, and has sufficient knowledge about the design and conduct of research to undertake the dissertation.

For more information concerning the preliminary exams, see the program’s Policies and Procedures (http://urpl.wisc.edu/academics/URPL%20PHD%20POLICIES%20May%201%202013.pdf).

TIME CONSTRAINTS
All courses for the Structure and Processes of Cities and Regions requirement must be taken and successfully completed within the doctoral student’s first five semesters (i.e., two and one-half academic years) in the Ph.D. program. This coursework requirement must be met before the student is advanced to candidacy (awarded dissertation, ABD status).

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
Prospective students whose native language is not English must also provide evidence of English language proficiency. A TOEFL score of 600 (paper-based) or above typically indicates an ability to successfully meet the written and spoken communication requirements of graduate level courses, the department’s preliminary examinations, and the dissertation.

ADMISSIONS
Application for admission to the department consists of the following materials: the online application, official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work, statement of purpose (applicants should submit a thoughtful, reflective one- or two-page statement discussing reasons for going into planning; applicants with an interest in a particular concentration should discuss this; applicants with planning or planning-related experience should include this), and three references from people familiar with the applicant’s academic and/or professional work. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is required for M.S. admission and Ph.D. admission.

Besides the general requirements for admission to the M.S. program, there are two additional requirements unique to the Ph.D. program. First, applicants to the Ph.D. program are expected to have a master’s degree in planning or a related field. Second, because planning is a practice-oriented field, applicants are expected to have completed at least one year of full-time experience as a professional planner. The Ph.D. program is flexible and is intended to appeal to individuals from diverse academic backgrounds. Therefore, it is possible to be admitted without having met the professional practice requirements. Deficiencies may be made up once a student is in the program.

A student must have an URPL academic sponsor in order to be admitted into the Ph.D. program. Before final admission decisions are made, student applications are circulated among the faculty. Only when a faculty member agrees to serve as an academic sponsor for an admissible candidate is a final admission decision made. The sponsor is the student’s academic advisor, and it is expected that the sponsor will become the chair of the student’s Ph.D. committee.

In reviewing applications, the department gives extra weight to planning-related work, such as Peace Corps or professional planning experience. The department also considers graduate coursework, even if it is in another field. If students have such experience, it should be stressed in the application.

The success of international students enrolled in the program depends heavily on a good working knowledge of English. Prospective applicants who do not feel comfortable using the English language are strongly urged to consider further language study before applying for admission.

All applicants are required to have an introductory-level course in statistics. This requirement may be met by taking an introductory course, for no graduate credit, during the student’s first semester of study.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE LEARNING GOALS FOR THE PH.D. IN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

- Students will acquire and demonstrate knowledge about the professional field of planning, as exemplified in the accreditation guidelines for the master’s program in urban and regional planning and the Planning Accreditation Board. These include knowledge about: the purpose and meaning of planning, planning history, planning theory, planning law, the structure and function of cities and regions, and global dimensions of planning. Students demonstrate this knowledge through entrance requirements (a master’s degree
in planning or acceptable cognate field), through completion of coursework, and through completion of preliminary examinations in planning theory, planning methods, and planning specialization.

- Students will acquire and demonstrate knowledge about the role and use of planning theories in both practice and research, including the historical development of planning theory, major theoretical approaches within planning, and the application of theories from other disciplines as applied to planning. Students demonstrate this knowledge through coursework and completion of a planning theory preliminary examination.

- Students will acquire and demonstrate knowledge of social science research methods, including research design, data collection, and quantitative and qualitative methods used in planning research. Students demonstrate knowledge through completion of graduate coursework in research methods and through completion of a research design and methods preliminary examination.

- Students will acquire and demonstrate knowledge of a substantive research and practice field within planning. Students demonstrate specialized knowledge in one of the major fields within planning through completion of coursework and through a research-specialization preliminary examination.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC SKILLS LEARNING GOALS FOR THE PH.D. IN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

- Students will acquire and demonstrate skills in conducting academic research and scholarly inquiry in the field of urban and regional planning, including ability to summarize and critique extant research, ability to develop a research proposal, skills in seeking funding, skills in completion of research projects, and skills in written and oral presentation of research findings.

- Students will acquire and demonstrate specialized skills in research for their chosen major field within planning. This will include skills in particular research methods and data analysis specific to their chosen field within planning.

- Students will acquire and demonstrate general knowledge about planning suitable to teaching master's-level planning students in accredited programs. Students will acquire and demonstrate specific knowledge about their chosen field of specialization within planning.

- Students will acquire and/or demonstrate competence and experience in the professional practice of planning. Students demonstrate this skill through the requirement of previous professional work experience within the field of planning.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT LEARNING GOALS FOR THE PH.D. IN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

- Students will be given opportunities for training and experience in classroom teaching, presentation of research at academic conferences, and development of research proposals for funding agencies.

- Students will demonstrate ethics and values consistent with the "Wisconsin brand" of urban and regional planning, which includes participation, transparency in governance, environmental protection and social justice.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Jacobs, LaGro, Marcouiller, Ohm; Associate Professors Genskow (chair), Morales, Paulsen; Assistant Professor Gocmen