URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING, M.S.

The department’s primary degree is the master of science (M.S.) in urban and regional planning (URPL). This program normally requires two academic years of full-time work plus an internship. In addition to the M.S. program, the department offers a Ph.D. program. Some double-degree master’s programs are offered, and provisions have been made, in all of the department’s basic programs, to serve the specific needs of students from developing countries. The master’s degree in urban and regional planning is intended primarily to prepare graduates for professional positions in government, nonprofit and community organizations and the private sector. We seek to train students with the knowledge, theories, skills and abilities to be leaders in shaping communities.

Master’s degree coursework consists of 45 credits distributed among core planning skills and knowledge, an area of specialization, and elective courses. Students also gain practical experience in planning and problem solving through required internships.

The objectives of the professional masters of science degree are to:

1. Prepare students to engage in planning processes that recognize a complex, pluralistic democratic society. Students develop the capacity to work with diverse publics, across government agencies, and in private and nonprofit sectors. Planning processes include the identification of objectives, design of possible courses of action, and evaluation of alternatives.
2. Convey a set of planning literacies to enable students to perform effectively as planners in public, private or nonprofit sectors. These literacies include knowledge in the following areas:
   • Structure and function of cities and regions
   • History and theory of planning processes and practices
   • Administrative, legal and political aspects of plan-making
   • Public involvement and dispute resolution techniques
   • Research design and data analysis techniques
   • Written, oral and graphic communication skills
   • Ethics of professional practice
   • Collaborative approaches to problem solving
3. Prepare students with the substantive knowledge foundation and tools, methods and techniques of planning associated with an area of specialization.

Details on administrative requirements for the degree are available in the department’s Policies and Procedures, available on the department website or by request.

The M.S. program equips students with sufficient understanding of and training in the principal tools, methods, and techniques of planning to enable them to perform effectively as junior members of planning staffs from the start of their careers; in addition, UW–Madison’s program in planning emphasizes concepts, perspectives, and practices that promise to be useful not only upon graduation, but even more so in later years for graduates who reach positions of major influence and responsibility.

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.

ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program’s admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program’s website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).

Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Deadline</td>
<td>February 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Deadline</td>
<td>October 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Deadline</td>
<td>This program does not admit in the summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)</td>
<td>Not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Proficiency Test</td>
<td>Every applicant whose native language is not English or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English must provide an English proficiency test score and meet the Graduate School minimum requirements (<a href="https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency">https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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.

**FUNDING**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES**

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and processes related to funding.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

**MAJOR REQUIREMENTS**

**MODE OF INSTRUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Instruction</th>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Evening/Weekend**: These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

**Online**: These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules. Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.

**Hybrid**: These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

**Accelerated**: These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.

**CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Credit Requirement</td>
<td>45 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Residence Credit Requirement</td>
<td>16 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement</td>
<td>Half of degree coursework (23 credits out of 45 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (<a href="https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/">https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Graduate GPA Requirement</td>
<td>3.00 GPA required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grade Requirements</td>
<td>In addition to Graduate School requirements, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning requires that all core courses and all courses in a student’s area of specialization (other than research credits) be taken on a graded (i.e., not satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all core courses and all courses in a student’s area of specialization, a minimum grade of BC is considered satisfactory. Grades of C or below in core and specialization courses may not be counted toward degree requirements, but are still counted in the cumulative GPA. If a student receives a grade of C or below in a department required core course, the student must retake the course and achieve a satisfactory grade.

In elective courses, a grade of C or above is considered satisfactory.

Any course in which a student receives a grade of D or F may not be used to satisfy any department graduation requirements. However, these courses will still be counted in the cumulative GPA.
Assessments and Examinations
To obtain a master of science degree in urban and regional planning, a student must be able to demonstrate a high level of competency in the theories, methods, applications, and ethics of planning. Students must demonstrate competency over the broad field of planning in general, as well as within an area of specialization as defined by the student, in consultation with a faculty advisor. For information on competency requirement options, including details regarding a master's thesis or a professional project, see the program's handbook.

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.

REQUIRED COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>URB R PL 741</td>
<td>Introduction to Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URB R PL 721</td>
<td>Methods of Planning Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URB R PL 781</td>
<td>Planning Thought and Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URB R PL 833</td>
<td>Planning and the Legal System</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URB R PL 590</td>
<td>Contemporary Topics in Urban and Regional Planning (Topic: Pre-Workshop Module)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URB R PL 912</td>
<td>Planning Workshop</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select one of the following:
- URB R PL 601 Site Planning
- URB R PL 611 Urban Design: Theory and Practice
- URB R PL 731 Introduction to Regional Planning
- URB R PL/ECON/ PUB AFFR 734 Regional Economic Problem Analysis
- URB R PL 751 Introduction to Financial Planning
- URB R PL 761 Central City Planning: Issues and Approaches
- URB R PL/CIV ENGR 839 Land Use and Communication Systems Planning
- URB R PL 841 Urban Functions, Spatial Organization and Environmental Form
- URB R PL 844 Housing and Public Policy

Planning Concentration 12
Electives 14
Professional Practice Internship

Total Credits 45

Urban and Regional Planning and Public Affairs or International Public Affairs (M.S. IN URPL/MPA or MIPA)
The Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture and the La Follette School of Public Affairs offer a double degree Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning and either a Master of Public Affairs or Master of International Public Affairs. Students completing the double degree must follow the double degree plan. The Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture requires 45 credits for the Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning. The La Follette School requires 36 credits for the Master of Public Affairs or Master of International Public Affairs. Per UW-Madison Graduate School policy, an overlap of 25% of credits is permitted (9 credits can count toward both degrees). Students can graduate with both degrees by completing 72 credits in three years.

For information on competency requirement options, including details regarding a master's thesis or a professional project, see the program's handbook.

Policies

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES
The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK
The Graduate Program Handbook (https://dpla.wisc.edu/academics/handbooks) is the repository for all of the program's policies and requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Work from Other Institutions
A maximum of 21 credits are allowed from Planning Accreditation Board–accredited coursework taken at other institutions. In all other fields, 25% of credits completed up to a maximum of 11 transfer credits are allowed. Special conditions for applying prior coursework may be found in the program's Policies and Procedures (https://urpl.wisc.edu/academics/policies).

UW-Madison Undergraduate
Any course taken as part of an undergraduate degree (whether required or optional) may not be applied.

UW-Madison University Special
The Master’s Program Committee (MPC) will not accept a more than 12 credits of prior coursework taken as a UW-Madison University Special student. The MPC does not necessarily guarantee that all credits (up to 12) taken as a Special student may be applied. All courses accepted for must have a B or better. The decision as to what prior coursework may be applied will be made by the MPC on the recommendation of the student’s advisor, and must be based on information indicating that the courses for which credit is given fit logically into the student's overall program.

PROBATION
The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.
1. Good standing (progressing according to standards; any funding guarantee remains in place).
2. Probation (not progressing according to standards but permitted to enroll; loss of funding guarantee; specific plan with dates and deadlines in place in regard to removal of probationary status). To the extent possible, students admitted on probation are encouraged to take core courses as a part of their first semester schedule. In all other matters, students admitted on probation are subject to the same standards and requirements as students admitted in full standing (e.g. residency requirements, satisfactory student performance, minimum grades in core courses [BC], and so forth.
3. Unsatisfactory progress (not progressing according to standards; not permitted to enroll, dismissal, leave of absence or change of advisor or program).

**ADVISOR / COMMITTEE**

Student should meet regularly with the advisor to plan academic career. The advisor is required to approve and sign the plan of study form, which is then submitted to the graduate coordinator prior to the student being allowed to graduate.

**CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED**

15 credits

**TIME CONSTRAINTS**

The master’s program takes two full years of study.

**OTHER**

Financial support is not guaranteed for the M.S. or Ph.D. program, but Urban and Regional Planning works with students to identify funding options.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES**

Take advantage of the Graduate School’s professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. (General Planning Knowledge) Comprehension, representation, and use of ideas and information in the planning field, including appropriate perspectives from history, social science, and the design professions.
2. (Purpose and Meaning of Planning) Appreciation of why planning is undertaken by communities, cities, regions, and nations, and the impact planning is expected to have.
3. (Planning Theory) Appreciation of the behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes.
4. (Planning Law) Appreciation of the legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs.
5. (Human Settlements and History of Planning) Understanding of the growth and development of places over time and across space.

6. (The Future) Understanding of the relationships between past, present, and future in planning domains, as well as the potential for methods of design, analysis, and intervention to influence the future.
7. (Global Dimensions of Planning) Appreciation of interactions, flows of people and materials, cultures, and differing approaches to planning across world regions.
8. (Planning Skills) Use and application of knowledge to perform specific tasks required in the practice of planning.
9. (Research) Tools for assembling and analyzing ideas and information from prior practice and scholarship, and from primary and secondary sources.
10. (Written, Oral, and Graphic Communication) Ability to prepare clear, accurate and compelling text, graphics and maps for use in documents and presentations.
11. (Quantitative and Qualitative Methods) Data collection, analysis and modeling tools for forecasting, policy analysis, and design of projects and plans.
12. (Plan Creation and Implementation) Integrative tools useful for sound plan formulation, adoption, and implementation and enforcement.
15. (Values and Ethics) Values inform ethical and normative principles used to guide planning in a democratic society. The program shall appropriately incorporate issues of diversity and social justice into all required courses of the curriculum, including:
16. (Professional Ethics and Responsibility) Appreciation of key issues of planning ethics and related questions of the ethics of public decision-making, research, and client representation (including principles of the AICP Code of Ethics and other related principles, as appropriate).
17. (Governance and Participation) Appreciation of the roles of officials, stakeholders, and community members in planned change.
18. (Sustainability and Environmental Quality) Appreciation of natural resource and pollution control factors in planning, and understanding of how to create sustainable futures.
19. (Growth and Development) Appreciation of economic, social, and cultural factors in urban and regional growth and change.
20. (Values and Ethics) Values inform ethical and normative principles used to guide planning in a democratic society. The program shall appropriately incorporate issues of diversity and social justice into all required courses of the curriculum, including:
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**PEOPLE**

https://dpla.wisc.edu/facstaff/faculty
ACCREDITATION

Planning Accreditation Board (http://www.planningaccreditationboard.org)


CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE

American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) (https://www.planning.org/certification)