

URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING, PHD

The PhD 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 PhD URPL Handbook (<https://dpla.wisc.edu/academics/handbooks/>).

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. 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

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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/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	February 1
Spring Deadline	October 15
Summer Deadline	The program does not admit in the summer
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Required
English Proficiency Test	Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a

Letters of Recommendation Required 3

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Applications submitted by the deadlines listed above will be considered for limited Department funding.

Application for admission to the program consists of the following materials: the online application, unofficial 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.

In addition to requirements for admission to the Graduate School, there are **four** unique requirements unique to the PhD in Urban and Regional Planning program.

1. **Master's Degree.** Applicants to the PhD program are expected to have a master's degree.
2. **Professional Practice.** 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 or in a related field. The PhD 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 an admitted applicant is in the program.
3. **GRE.** Applicants are expected to submit a GRE test score. The GRE may be waived for anyone who has a master's degree in Planning or a closely aligned field from an accredited US institution.
4. **Faculty Advisor.** In order to be admitted into the program, a member of the faculty must agree to serve as the student's advisor. Before final admission decisions are made, applications are circulated among faculty in the department of Planning & Landscape Architecture (and our affiliates). The advisor will become the chair of the admitted applicant's PhD 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 applicants have such experience, it should be highlighted in the application.

The success of international applicants 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

FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees associated with being a graduate student. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information is available from the Graduate School.

Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

The PhD URPL Program Committee will help students look for funding for their graduate study, though the program cannot guarantee funding. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information is available from the Graduate School and from the PhD URPL Program Committee. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirementstext>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiestext>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail

Minimum Credit Requirement	51 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	32 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	26 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/).
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 PhD program policies of how long a student may be a pre-dissertator) from the list provided until they have three courses where their average GPA is 3.5.
Assessments and Examinations	The department administers two 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.
Language Requirements	No language requirements.
Graduate School Breadth Requirement	All doctoral students are required to complete a doctoral minor or graduate/professional certificate. Refer to the Graduate School: Breadth Requirement in Doctoral Training policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200/).
	PhD students and their advisors are responsible for filing copies of executed breadth agreements with the PhD program committee. The breadth requirement must be satisfied prior to filing the warrant for the preliminary examination.

REQUIRED COURSES

Code	Title	Credits
Structure and Process of Cities & Regions		
	Students are required to complete three courses (9 credits) on the structure and processes of cities and regions. Refer to the list below.	9
Breadth		9
Research Methods		

Students are required to complete 9 credits of research design and methods coursework. Requirements include at least one course in research design and at least one course in quantitative research methods. A list of approved courses is provided by the department.

Elective Courses and Dissertator Courses

Students complete elective and/or dissertator courses. 18–20
Elective credits must be graduate level coursework

URB R PL 990	Research and Thesis
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Spring PhD Seminar

Students in the URPL PhD Program are expected to participate in the 1 credit PhD Research Seminar (URB R PL 932) each Spring semester 4–6

Total Credits 51

Coursework Satisfying Requirement for Structure and Processes of Cities and Regions

Code	Title	Credits
ECON/REAL EST/ URB R PL 420	Urban and Regional Economics	3
URB R PL/ECON/ REAL EST 420	Urban and Regional Economics	3
REAL EST/ECON/ URB R PL 420	Urban and Regional Economics	3
ECON 475	Economics of Growth	3–4
GEOG/ URB R PL 505	Urban Spatial Patterns and Theories	3
ISYE 516	Introduction to Decision Analysis	3
A A E/REAL EST/ URB R PL 520	Community Economic Analysis	3
C&E SOC/SOC 541	Environmental Stewardship and Social Justice	3
ECON 712	Economic Theory-Macroeconomics Sequence	3
REAL EST/ URB R PL 720	Urban Economics	3
A A E 731	Frontiers in Development Economics 2	3
URB R PL/ECON/ PUB AFFR 734	Regional Economic Problem Analysis	3
URB R PL 751	Introduction to Financial Planning	3
URB R PL 781	Planning Thought and Practice	3
PUB AFFR 873	Introduction to Policy Analysis	3
PUB AFFR/ POLI SCI/ URB R PL 874	Policy-Making Process	3
POLI SCI/ PUB AFFR/ URB R PL 874	Policy-Making Process	3
URB R PL/POLI SCI/ PUB AFFR 874	Policy-Making Process	3
REAL EST 978	Research Seminar in Real Estate and Urban Land Economics	1

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned at 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 19 credits of prior coursework toward program requirements. Students will be required to obtain 32 credits per the Graduate School's minimum residency requirement.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

No credits from any undergraduate degree may transfer toward the PhD program.

Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

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

PROBATION

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 one 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.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credit maximum. Refer to the Graduate School: Maximum Credit Loads and Overload Requests (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1228/>) policy.

TIME LIMITS

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 PhD program. This coursework requirement must be met before the student is advanced to candidacy (awarded dissertator, ABD status).

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

L&S POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

Graduate students have the right to appeal an academic decision related to an L&S graduate program if the student believes that the decision is inconsistent with published policy.

Academic decisions that may be appealed include:

- Dismissal from the graduate program
- Failure to pass a qualifying or preliminary examination
- Failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress
- Academic disciplinary action related to failure to meet professional conduct standards

Issues such as the following cannot be appealed using this process:

- A faculty member declining to serve as a graduate student's advisor.
- Decisions regarding the student's disciplinary knowledge, evaluation of the quality of work, or similar judgements. These are the domain of the department faculty.
- Course grades. These can be appealed instead using the L&S Policy for Grade Appeal (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/22258/>).

- Incidents of bias or hate, hostile and intimidating behavior (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>), or discrimination (Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>), Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/formal-investigations/>)). Direct these to the linked campus offices appropriate for the incident(s).

Appeal Process for Graduate Students

A graduate student wishing to appeal an academic decision must follow the process in the order listed below. Note time limits within each step.

1. The student should first seek informal resolution, if possible, by discussing the concern with their academic advisor, the department's Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the department chair.
2. If the program has an appeal policy listed in their graduate program handbook, the student should follow the policy as written, including adhering to any indicated deadlines. In the absence of a specific departmental process, the chair or designee will be the reviewer and decision maker, and the student should submit a written appeal to the chair within 15 business days of the academic decision. The chair or designee will notify the student in writing of their decision.
3. If the departmental process upholds the original decision, the graduate student may next initiate an appeal to L&S. To do so, the student must submit a written appeal to the L&S Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Academic Affairs within 15 business days of notification of the department's decision.
 - a. To the fullest extent possible, the written appeal should include, in a single document: a clear and concise statement of the academic decision being appealed, any relevant background on what led to the decision, the specific policies involved, the relief sought, any relevant documentation related to the departmental appeal, and the names and titles of any individuals contributing to or involved in the decision.
 - b. The Assistant Dean will work with the Academic Associate Dean of the appropriate division to consider the appeal. They may seek additional information and/or meetings related to the case.
 - c. The Assistant Dean and Academic Associate Dean will provide a written decision within 20 business days.
4. If L&S upholds the original decision, the graduate student may appeal to the Graduate School. More information can be found on their website: Grievances and Appeals (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>) (see: Graduate School Appeal Process).

OTHER

The PhD Urban and Regional Planning Program Committee will help students look for funding for their graduate study, though the program cannot guarantee funding. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information is available from the Graduate School and from the PhD Urban and Regional Planning Program Committee. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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1. Demonstrate doctoral level knowledge of planning theory.
2. Demonstrate doctoral level knowledge of social science research methods.
3. Demonstrate doctoral level knowledge of a substantive area of urban and regional planning research and practice, adequate to begin preparing their PhD dissertation.
4. Demonstrate skill in conducting academic research and scholarly inquiry that advances the field of urban and regional planning.