Graduate Degree Programs in Urban Planning

Regional Planning, PhD

Students, together with their faculty adviser and program committee, select theory, methods, and specialization courses to meet the Ph.D. requirements and prepare for a successful career of advanced research and teaching.

A successful dissertation in planning reports original research on a subject appropriate to the field, the results of which produce significant advances in knowledge. Each student takes a Preliminary Examination, which is an oral examination based on the dissertation proposal and is administered by the student's dissertation committee. Upon approval of the dissertation proposal, the candidate can proceed with the research, written analysis, and findings. When the candidate and the supervisor agree that the research and writing are complete, the candidate is ready for the final examination, which is a defense of the dissertation before the committee.

Please consult the department’s website (http://www.urban.illinois.edu/academic-programs/phd/phd_overview.html) for additional information about doctoral requirements.

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning offers graduate programs leading to the degrees of Master of Urban Planning and Doctor of Philosophy in Regional Planning. Students can also apply to obtain a joint degree with another graduate degree simultaneously. The most popular joint degrees are with Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Law and Agricultural and Applied Economics. Joint degrees with any related field are possible. In addition, a small number of the department’s Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies and Planning (B.A.U.S.P.) students participate in the highly selective 4+1 program (https://urban.illinois.edu/prospective-students/academic-programs/mph-urban-planning-mup) to complete the B.A.U.S.P. and M.U.P. in five years.

Admission

We welcome applications from men and women from a wide variety of backgrounds who have demonstrated potential for extraordinary professional achievement. Students seeking a graduate degree in planning come from a diverse range of academic backgrounds. The most frequent are sociology, economics, political science, geography, environmental sciences, architecture, engineering, public administration, urban planning, and public policy, but the natural sciences, humanities, and other fields also provide excellent foundations for graduate study in planning. Prospective students must have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 computed from the last 60 hours of undergraduate work and any subsequent graduate study, but the average GPA of admitted students is considerably higher. All applicants must submit Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores for the tests of verbal, quantitative, and analytical ability. International applicants must meet additional minimum requirements (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/admissions/countries) based on their country of origin, including the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

We place particular emphasis on each applicant’s statement of purpose. Applicants should use the statement to convey information about their backgrounds, professional and personal experience, and intellectual perspectives, in the context of articulating why a Master’s in Urban Planning or Ph.D. in Regional Planning from the University of Illinois will
help them achieve their professional goals. We seek an applicant pool that represents a mix of racial and ethnic populations, a range of social and economic backgrounds, different philosophies and perspectives, and a variety of life experiences. We are especially interested in applicants with professional experience, though that experience need not be in planning or closely related fields.

Applicants to the Ph.D. program are admitted when they meet the standards of the Department and a faculty member prepared to serve as their mentor and, if necessary, primary source of financial support. Students interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in Regional Planning should communicate with the Director of the Ph.D. Program and faculty most closely aligned with their interests, in addition to completing the formal application process.

Consult the M.U.P. admissions (https://urban.illinois.edu/prospective-student/admissions/master-of-urban-planning) and Ph.D. admissions (https://urban.illinois.edu/prospective-student/admissions/phd-in-regional-planning/admission-requirements-criteria) web pages for more information.

**Graduate Teaching Experience**

Although teaching is not a general Graduate College requirement, experience in teaching is considered an important part of the doctoral experience in this program and is strongly encouraged for those intending to pursue an academic career.

**Faculty Research Interests**

The mission of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning is to teach and conduct research to improve understanding of human settlements and of planning situations. The department's faculty studies the ecological, economic, social, and institutional aspects of urban and regional development, and the theory and practice of planning processes. Planning is viewed as the achievement of outcomes based on interrelated actions over time and space, and close communication and collaboration with a wide range of disciplines and professions is inherent in the department's approach. The basis of that collaboration is a faculty whose academic training and degrees are in architecture, economics, geography, history, law, political science, regional science, and zoology, in addition to planning. Planning faculty and doctoral students pursue interdisciplinary research and make scholarly contributions to planning and fields closely allied with planning.

**Facilities and Resources**

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning shares Temple Hoyne Buell Hall (TBH) with the Department of Landscape Architecture and the School of Architecture. The majority of urban planning classes are held in TBH. The department has a 24-hour instructional computing laboratory. Research project and doctoral student workspace is provided in Noble Hall.

The City Planning and Landscape Architecture Reference and Resource Center is located in Funk Library (http://www.library.uiuc.edu/agx). The planning collection is one of the finest in the world, with books and reports gathered since the collection started over eighty years ago.

**Financial Aid**

Students compete for departmental and Graduate College fellowships and departmental teaching and research assistantships. Selection is based on the academic achievement and qualifications of the student.
Dissertation Deposit Required: Yes
Minimum GPA: 3.0

1 For additional details and requirements refer to the department's Web site (http://www.urban.illinois.edu/academic-programs) and the Graduate College Handbook (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook).