Master of Urban & Environmental Planning

The Master of Urban and Environmental Planning program is designed to prepare students to become significant contributors as professional planners in a variety of public, private, and non-profit settings.

CURRICULAR FOCUS

The Master of Planning Program emphasizes theories of planning, methods of analysis, effective means of communication, planning processes, and creative strategies for implementation. Some key areas of concentration include:

- Housing and Community Development
- Environmental Management and Conservation
- Land Use and Growth Management
- Historic Preservation Planning
- Public Policy and Planning

CURRICULUM

A typical two-year program leading to the Master of Urban and Environmental Planning degree would follow this general pattern:

- Course Curriculum

As many as six hours of credit may be gained by independent study for approved projects or work experience. These hours are granted only when the work or subject has been approved in advance by the faculty. Normally, the independent study credit hours include periodic faculty review, appropriate readings, and a final report in the form of an analytical paper or case study.
Students are encouraged to take courses throughout the School and University. The School of Law, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences all offer a variety of courses appropriate for degree requirements.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

**Core Courses Required of All Students**

- **SARC 600** The Common Course
- **PLAN 601** Planning Process and Practice
- **PLAN 604** Legal Aspects of Planning
- **PLAN 605** Methods of Planning Analysis
- **PLAN 607** Urban Theory and Public Policy
- **PLAN 609** Planning Theory and Practice

**Planning Application Courses**

In addition to the above courses, all students must take at least two planning application courses (PLAC). A planning application course combines theory and application, emphasizing application through a project approach. These are listed each semester in the Course Offering Directory, with their subject matter rotating among land use planning, housing, community development, environmental impact analysis, social planning, transportation planning, neighborhood analysis, and other subjects.

**Planning Concentrations**

While the core classes provide the basic curriculum, students meet with their advisors to plan a course of specialized study called Planning Concentrations (PCs). Their purpose is to guide the student in designing a coherent program with an individual focus. The Planning Concentrations listed below should not be viewed as mutually exclusive program compartments. Rather, they are umbrella categories that assist students in focusing their interests. Within these categories, individual students may develop subspecialties. The PCs overlap, combine, and reinforce each other, remaining flexible while suggesting the types of programs we emphasize at the University of Virginia.

- Planning Concentrations

**Student-Designed Planning Concentrations**

Although the PCs described above permit a substantial degree of flexibility, students are also free to develop planning specialties outside these categories. Students might wish to develop specializations in urban design, transportation planning, or social program planning. Required course work depends on the individual’s previous study.
**Internship**

The internship is an approved ten-week assignment in an agency, firm, or organization engaged in planning activities. It takes place during the summer between the first and second years of study, for which no course credit is given and no tuition is charged. Prior work experience may satisfy this requirement.

**ACCREDITATION**

The Graduate Program in Urban and Environmental Planning is accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board, sponsored jointly by the American Institute of Certified Planners and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning.

**ADMISSION**

Students from a wide range of academic backgrounds are admitted to the Master of Urban and Environmental Planning degree program. Applicants with an accredited bachelor’s degree in the social sciences, engineering, design, or liberal arts contribute to the vitality of the program and to the field of planning. For more information please see the Graduate Admissions page.

**ADVANCED STANDING**

Graduates of accredited undergraduate planning programs will be considered for advanced standing in special cases. A minimum of 30 graduate credits must be completed at the University of Virginia. In combination with the undergraduate program, each of the requirements for the Master of Urban and Environmental Planning degree must be met, including the core courses, planning application courses, planning concentration, and internship. The advanced standing opportunity is intended for students with strong undergraduate records and at least a 3.5 GPA in planning courses.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS**

Certificate Programs in Historic Preservation and American Urbanism are open to graduate students enrolled in the School of Architecture. Admission is subject to the approval of the chair of the department chair and the director of the program. Students must also meet all requirements for admission to, and completion of, the Master of Urban and Environmental Planning Program. Students are expected to meet the program requirements within the normal curricula.
Please see Historic Preservation and American Urbanism for more information.

DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

Please see Dual Degree Programs for more information.

STUDY ABROAD

Planning students may, with approval, spend a semester in one of the programs abroad when offered. Please see the Study Abroad page for further details.