Master of Urban and Environmental 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.

Overview and Philosophy

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

The requirements for the degree consist of 50 credits: 20 in the core generalist courses, 15 in a special concentration, 6 in planning application courses (one of these courses must be in the area of concentration), and 9 in open electives. Courses are selected from those offered in the department as well as those available through other departments in the School and University. Students earning dual degrees or who have transferred from other planning programs may warrant advanced standing and be able to complete the planning program in less than two years. Students may take more than the minimum 50 credits if their schedules allow it.

One of the distinctive features of our program is our commitment to community sustainability. Sustainability is addressed in specific courses with that title, but sustainability also provides the underlying framework for virtually all of the department's courses. The title of our department is Urban and Environmental Planning. We believe it is necessary to consider both the urban and environmental aspects of a setting to address its issues, problems, and opportunities. We are as much concerned with the economy and issues of equity as we are with the environment and find it more useful to emphasize linkages than distinctions, although both are sometimes necessary. We hope to inspire our students to share our enthusiasm for addressing the planning needs of sustainable communities.

The Core Courses Required of All Students

- PLAN 601 - Planning Process and Practice Credits: 4
- PLAN 604 - Legal Aspects of Planning Credits: 3
Student Services

- PLAN 605 - Methods of Planning Analysis Credits: 4
- PLAN 607 - Urban Theory and Public Policy Credits: 3
- PLAN 609 - Planning Theory and Practice Credits: 3
- SARC 600 - The Common Course Credits: 3

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.

Environmental Management and Conservation

Deals with impacts of land development on the biophysical environment and policies to conserve air, water, land, energy, and minerals. This concentration addresses issues of sensitive settings, such as coastal, mountain, wetland, heritage, and special habitat areas. Environmental planning embraces many settings, ranging from urban environments to wilderness areas to agricultural ecosystems.

The foundation course is PLAN 553.

Housing and Community Development

Deals with issues of established communities, land reuse and redevelopment, and community and economic development from spatial, economic and social perspectives. Relation topics include land development and public/private development partnerships, urban design and preservation planning.

The foundation course for this concentration is PLAN 540.

Land Use and Growth Management