

Master of Urban Planning

Urban planning is a professional field that addresses the health, welfare, and sustainability of our cities, towns, regions, and natural and rural areas. Planners are problem-solvers. They deal with both short- and long-range planning projects at scales from small to large. Planners seek to enhance overall quality of life by addressing aspects of communities such as housing, land use, transportation, and responsible development that preserves the natural environment. The Master of Urban Planning is an accredited, professional degree that prepares students to excel in planning practice. It is the normal academic qualification for planning and planning-related positions. Graduates are prepared for careers in the public sector (local, state, national, international governments and agencies), private sector (consulting firms, development companies), and not-for profits (housing authorities, nonprofits) helping make communities better places.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

Admission to Urban Planning

Complete information about applying to the Master of Urban Planning can be found on the program website. (<https://spaa.ku.edu/master-urban-planning/>) The following materials are required of all applicants to the Master of Urban Planning. Incomplete applications will not be forwarded to the admissions committee for review.

- A completed graduate application (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>) submitted online;
- An application fee;
- A statement of the applicant's career goals and substantive interests in urban planning and rationale for undertaking graduate study in urban planning at KU;
- Official transcripts from applicant's undergraduate institution and any post-graduate institutions attended;
- 3 letters of recommendation from persons qualified to comment on the applicant's academic abilities and probable success in graduate study;
- A current resume;
- Non-native speakers of English must meet English proficiency requirements (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>).

Applications are considered on a rolling basis. The final application deadlines are July 1 for fall and December 1 for spring admission. International applicants must apply by June 1 for fall and November 1 for spring.

Students who are interested in enrolling in master's level coursework in urban planning without formal admission to the graduate program are encouraged to apply for graduate non-degree seeking student status.

M.U.P. Degree Requirements

The Master of Urban Planning (M.U.P.) requires a total of 42 hours and allows for the following 2 degree completion options:

1. Portfolio Exam
2. Master's Thesis and Final Defense

While completing the following degree requirements, graduate students are expected to understand and follow Office Graduate Studies policies (<https://policy.ku.edu/office/Graduate-Studies/>) relevant to their student status and academic standing.

Code	Title	Hours
MUP Core Courses		
UBPL 705	Urban Economic Theory and Analysis	3
UBPL 736	Planning Law and Institutions	3
UBPL 741	Foundations of Compassionate Critical Thinking	3
UBPL 742	Applied Data and Spatial Analysis	3
UBPL 763	Politics and Planning	3
UBPL 777	Equity, Justice, and American Cities	3
UBPL 780	Climate Change and Hazards Planning	3
UBPL 785	History and Theory of Planning	3
MUP Topic Areas - To complete degree requirements, students must select a substantive topic area and complete the courses listed below for a total of 9 credit hours.		9
Housing & Development:		
UBPL 710	Housing Policy and Planning	
UBPL 715	Community and Neighborhood Revitalization	
UBPL 764	Real Estate Development	
Other courses may be approved by the Urban Planning Director.		
Sustainable Land Use:		
UBPL 720	Sustainable Land Use Policy and Planning	
UBPL 725	Environmental Planning Techniques	
UBPL 735	Site Planning and Design	
Other courses may be approved by the Urban Planning Director.		
Transportation:		
UBPL 750	Transportation Policy and Planning	
UBPL 756	Data Driving Transportation	
UBPL 758	Transportation for Livable Cities	
Other courses may be approved by the Urban Planning Director.		
Multidisciplinary Planning:		
UBPL 730	City and County Planning	
UBPL 750	Transportation Policy and Planning	
UBPL 764	Real Estate Development	
Other courses may be approved by the Urban Planning Director.		
Electives		3

Any UBPL course outside of student's chosen topic area, a graduate-level course outside SPAA approved by the Urban Planning Director, or:

UBPL 707	Sustainability and the Future of Transportation
UBPL 746	GIS Applications for Design and Planning
UBPL 767	Creative Placemaking
UBPL 802	Special Topics in Urban Planning: _____
PUAD 703	Foundations of the Nonprofit Sector
PUAD 708	Collaboration in Public Administration
PUAD 824	Creating Good Public Policy
PUAD 825	Urban Policy and Administration
PUAD 828	Nonprofit Management and Policy
PUAD 834	Human Resource Management
PUAD 835	Managing Public Money
PUAD 836	Data Informed Decision-Making
PUAD 837	Advanced Public Budgeting and Finance
PUAD 839	Topics in Public Administration: _____
PUAD 841	Context, Ethics and Legal Environment of Public Administration
PUAD 845	Managing Public Organizations
PUAD 851	Infrastructure Management
PUAD 853	Policy Analysis
PUAD 854	Innovation and Organizational Change
PUAD 857	Performance Management and Governance
PUAD 858	Performance Audit
PUAD 861	Data Analytics
PUAD 862	Emergency Management in the United States: Theory and Practice
PUAD 863	Program Evaluation
PUAD 892	Reflections on Practice
PUAD 893	Directed Readings
PUAD 898	Leading to Create a Culture for High Performance
PUAD 930	Research Seminar in Public Administration and Democracy
PUAD 931	Research Seminar in Public Management
PUAD 932	Seminar in the Intellectual History of Public Administration
PUAD 934	Research Methods in Public Administration
PUAD 935	Advanced Quantitative Methods for Public Administration
PUAD 936	Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation
PUAD 937	Qualitative Methods in Public Administration
PUAD 939	Topics in Public Administration: _____
PUAD 943	Constitutional Foundations of Public Administration
PUAD 949	Law, Courts, and Public Policy
PUAD 998	Directed Reading on Public Administration

Completion Options

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Students select one of the following degree completion options for a total of 6 credit hours:

UBPL 806 Thesis - Graduate Research (6 credit hours)

OR

Portfolio Exam: Students select 2 additional courses from the list of electives above.

Total Hours

42

Electives

Any School of Public Affairs & Administration (SPAA) class can be taken as an elective. UBPL 767 and UBPL 730 are strongly suggested as electives because they are applied skills classes covering all of the topic areas. Graduate level classes taken outside of SPAA require Urban Planning Director approval. Thesis option students complete one elective course plus 6 credit hours of UBPL 806.

Master's Final Exam Options

In addition to coursework, students must synthesize and demonstrate what they have learned in their degree program. This can be done through either a Master's final exam (portfolio exam) or a thesis. The portfolio exam is most common in the Urban Planning program as most graduates go on to become planning practitioners. Occasionally, students who decide they would like to pursue an academic career or wish to delve into one area of study complete a thesis.

Portfolio Exam

The Portfolio Examination is the main culminating experience before students graduate. It offers the student a learning opportunity to integrate the knowledge acquired through coursework and demonstrate their competence as a planner. The portfolio entails compiling course work and any relevant planning-related work completed during their studies. The portfolio should demonstrate the practices, knowledge, skills, and behaviors that support the student's success in the planning profession. Additionally, it requires students to reflect on their learning. For the work samples selected, students will reflect upon and write about why they chose the work sample, giving a brief overview of the work and describing what they learned from it. This should include a discussion of the specific skills they gained referencing the Urban Planning Program Learning Objectives table. Ultimately, the portfolio and reflection should illustrate that they have the necessary foundation to pursue a career in planning.

The examination consists of the student completing the portfolio and written reflective narratives summarizing how the work samples demonstrate competency in planning practices, knowledge, skills, and behaviors. The Urban Planning faculty committee appoints a 2-member Portfolio Exam committee for each student's portfolio. The grading committee is selected from the full-time faculty in the Urban Planning Program. One grader teaches at least one of the core courses and is outside the student's chosen topic area, and the other grader teaches within the student's topic area. The Portfolio Exam committee assesses and grades the exam with Honors, Pass, or Unsatisfactory with options to retake. Up to two retake attempts are permitted. The department will determine an appropriate minimum interval between exam attempts.

Thesis

The thesis provides an opportunity for the student to apply individual research skills in the context of their interest. The thesis is a continuation of the student's course of study rather than a separate academic effort. The format, medium, and focus of the thesis varies with the problem addressed. Students must enroll in a minimum of 6 credit hours of UBPL 806. A student desiring to prepare a thesis must develop, with the assistance of a faculty advisor, a thesis proposal to be submitted to the faculty thesis committee no later than the first day of classes of the semester before the semester in which the student plans to graduate.

A committee's approval is required before the student may pursue the thesis option. The 3-member thesis committee must meet the requisite configuration defined in the Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/masters-oral-exam-committee-composition/>).

The final general examination is an oral thesis defense in front of the committee. Three faculty members assess and grade the exam with Honors, Pass, or Unsatisfactory. If the committee assesses the thesis defense as unsatisfactory, it may be repeated on the recommendation of the committee up to two times. In any case, the department will determine the appropriate minimum intervals between attempts.

M.U.P. Curriculum

A total of 42 semester hours is required. Students typically complete the degree within 2 years.

Year 1

Fall	Hours Spring	Hours
UBPL 741	3 UBPL 705	3
UBPL 785	3 UBPL 736	3
Topic area courses or electives	6 UBPL 742	3
	Topic area courses or electives	3
	12	12

Year 2

Fall	Hours Spring	Hours
UBPL 777	3 UBPL 763	3
Topic area courses or electives	6 UBPL 780	3
	Topic area courses or electives	3
	9	9

Total Hours 42

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Understand the evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations; how planning has advanced and hindered the attainment of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion; past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future. (Planning History)
- Understand the expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts; conceptual models about what planning is and how it works; the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis. (Planning Theory)
- Understand the behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes; mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision-making; legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally. (Planning Law & Institutions)
- Understand the political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development; relationships between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being; planning responses to mitigate climate change, reduce risks, and recover from climate-exacerbated impacts;

interactions – flows of people, materials, ideas, and cultures – across world regions. (Urban & Regional Development)

- Understand the planning process and community and stakeholder engagement; plan creation and implementation; methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future. (Planning Process & Engagement)
- Develop research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research; quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting; methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization; data analytics and urban technology. (Analytical Skills & Tools)
- Work in teams and with professionals in allied fields; professional leadership in the planning context; written, oral, and graphic communication. (Professional, Communication, & Leadership Skills)