URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING, MASTER OF (M.U.R.P.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Program accreditation
Planning Accreditation Board

Program goals
The Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree program advances social justice and quality of life through planning, designing and evaluating options to create, enhance and sustain the social, economic and environmental conditions that improve communities. The program maintains a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion. The goals for the program are to:

1. Prepare students to be effective practitioners in a variety of planning-related organizations, especially in mature communities and regions, with competence in the preparation, presentation and implementation of professional plans and in doing planning-related work
2. Produce scholarship that increases knowledge and understanding of sustainability and planning support systems as well as the development of innovative methodological approaches and solutions to address issues related to sustainable community development
3. Provide useful planning services to mature communities and regions, in cooperation with private and public planners, as appropriate
4. Address issues of historic and current inequity, social justice and sustainability in built environments, neighborhoods and communities

Student learning outcomes
1. Students will acquire knowledge of planning and other related fields relevant to real-world and theoretical settings.
2. Students will be able to pose and solve urban planning problems using planning skills, including:
   a. Research methods
   b. Plan creation and implementation
   c. Public engagement
   d. Effective communication and leadership
3. Students will understand how to use the values and ethics of professional planning to inform and guide planning decisions.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/)

Degree candidacy requirements
A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student’s faculty regarding the student’s academic achievements and the student’s readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy/)

Graduation requirements
As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must formally apply to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/)

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://graduate.admissions.vcu.edu).

Admission requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree: M.U.R.P.</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry:</th>
<th>Deadline dates:</th>
<th>Test requirements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Apr 1 (Mar 1 for assistantship consideration or financial aid)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Oct 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special requirements

- These deadlines are designed to allow sufficient time for application review and admission processing. Applications may be submitted after the deadline; however, there is no guarantee of sufficient time for processing. Any application submitted too late for current semester processing will be considered for the following semester.
In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School, the following specifications apply:

1. Students must have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.7 (on a 4.0 scale).
2. Students not meeting these requirements may be admitted to the program on a provisional basis. The provisional period shall consist of the first nine to 12 hours of designated graduate work in which all grades must be no less than B.
3. Generally, at least two of the three letters of reference should come from former faculty.

All courses in the graduate certificates in Geographic Information Systems, Sustainability Planning or Urban Revitalization may be applied to meet the requirements of the Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree. However, successful completion of either certificate does not guarantee admission into the M.U.R.P. degree program.

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/), students in the M.U.R.P. degree program must:

1. Complete a minimum of 48 graduate credit hours plus an internship (not for credit). A core of required courses accounts for 24 of these credit hours. A capstone requirement accounts for three or six of the required 48 credit hours. The remaining 18 or 21 credit hours consist of concentration requirements and electives. A minimum overall GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) is required for receipt of the M.U.R.P. degree. In addition, students must receive a minimum grade of B for all core and capstone courses.
2. Complete either a six-credit thesis (URSP 764) or prepare a three-credit professional plan project through the professional plan course (URSP 762). Program administrators request permission to utilize the grade of PR, in addition to normal letter grades (A, B, C, D or F) in URSP 762. This will allow students the ability to work on their plans over a more extended period of time, if necessary.

In selecting their elective courses, students may (1) opt for exposure to a wide array of planning-related subject matter (the generalist or comprehensive approach), (2) select one of the areas of specialization defined by the department’s faculty (see the list that follows) or (3) develop an individualized program, focusing on one or more self-defined topics. Regardless of the approach selected, students are expected to meet regularly with their faculty advisers for discussion of their courses of study in relation to their career plans.

The following faculty-defined areas of specialization are offered by the department:

1. Community revitalization
2. Environmental planning
3. Metropolitan planning

Curriculum requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 610</td>
<td>Introduction to Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 622</td>
<td>Community Socioeconomic Analysis Using GIS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 635</td>
<td>Legal and Legislative Foundations of Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 662</td>
<td>Foundations for Development Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 760</td>
<td>Capstone Proposal Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 761</td>
<td>Planning Studio</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Capstone course

Select one of these two capstone options. 3 or 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>URSP 762</td>
<td>Professional Plan (3 credits)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 764</td>
<td>Thesis or Projects (6 credits)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 48.

Environmental planning concentration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required concentration courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 650</td>
<td>Natural Resources and Environmental Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 655</td>
<td>Environmental Policy and Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration electives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select six credit hours from the following: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 520</td>
<td>Park Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 545</td>
<td>Sustainable Energy Policy and Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 591</td>
<td>Special Topics in Urban and Regional Studies and Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 628</td>
<td>Land Use Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 637</td>
<td>Sustainable Community Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 652</td>
<td>Environmental Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 654</td>
<td>Environmental Remote Sensing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 672</td>
<td>Food Systems, Rural Development and Landscape Conservation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 691</td>
<td>Topics in Urban and Regional Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 With the approval of the program chair, other appropriate graduate courses may be applied toward the concentration.

2 URSP 591 or URSP 691 may be selected when the topic is related to environmental planning.

Electives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select six or nine credit hours (depending on selected capstone option) from the following: 1</td>
<td>6 or 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE 627</td>
<td>Real Estate Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE 629</td>
<td>Cases in Real Estate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 502</td>
<td>Global Economic Change and Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1
URSP 517  Historic Preservation in Planning
URSP 520  Park Planning
URSP 521  Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
URSP 523  GIS for Land Use and Transportation Planning
URSP 525  Site Planning and Graphics
URSP 541  Urban Public Policy-making Processes
URSP 545  Sustainable Energy Policy and Planning
URSP 561  Real Estate Development Finance for Planners
URSP 567  The American Suburb
URSP 591  Special Topics in Urban and Regional Studies and Planning
URSP 605  Urban Planning History
URSP 611  Principles of Urban Design
URSP 621  Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
URSP 625  Spatial Database Management and GIS Modeling
URSP 626  Transportation Analytics and Modeling
URSP 627  GIS Applications in Urban Design
URSP 628  Land Use Planning
URSP/PADM 630  Strategic Planning and Management in the Public Sector
URSP 637  Sustainable Community Development
URSP 641  Citizen Participation and Negotiation
URSP 643  Housing Policy
URSP 647  Adaptive Reuse of Buildings
URSP 651  Transportation Policy and Planning
URSP 652  Environmental Analysis
URSP 653  Transportation Projects
URSP/ENVS/BIOL 654  Environmental Remote Sensing
URSP 658  Transportation Finance
URSP 659  Transportation Project Development and Evaluation
URSP 664  Urban Economic Development Policy
URSP 666  Urban Commercial Revitalization
URSP 672  Food Systems, Rural Development and Landscape Conservation
URSP 681  International Urban Policy and Planning
URSP 691  Topics in Urban and Regional Planning
URSP 794  Planning Practicum Seminar
URSP 797  Directed Research

With the approval of the program chair, other appropriate courses may be applied as electives.

**Internship**

The internship is designed to give students practical experience in planning-related activities in an institutional context. Normally, the internship is taken during the summer between the first and second year or during the second year. Many opportunities for internship positions, as well as part- and full-time jobs in planning at all levels of government, exist within the Richmond area. Upon request, the internship requirement may be waived for students with substantial planning-related professional experience.

**Contact**

Damian Pitt, Ph.D.
Associate professor, program chair and graduate program director
dpitt@vcu.edu
(804) 828-7397

**Additional contacts**

James Smither
Assistant professor and assistant program chair
jcsmith@vcu.edu
(804) 827-0570

Graduate Student Services and Advising
wsgadvise@vcu.edu
(804) 828-6837

**Program website:** wilder.vcu.edu/academic/urban/grad.html (http://wilder.vcu.edu/academic/urban/grad.html)