

Urban Planning

Urban planning is the study of the built environment of a city, town, or other urban area. This is closely related to environmental studies, conservation, and land-use planning and is often offered within the school of architecture. The undergraduate major focuses on transportation, economic development, housing, and environmental preservation. Urban planning can be studied at a master's or doctoral level, involving hands-on experience to combine theory and techniques with practical settings. At the graduate level, this subject is typically tied with socio-economic or environmental studies, depending on the chosen concentration. Research projects are common and to earn a graduate degree a thesis is usually necessary.

Undergraduate: Students pursuing an undergraduate program in urban planning may receive a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) in Urban Planning. Both the BA and BS degrees provide well-rounded academic programs, including general education course requirements in social science and humanities for the BA degree and hard or natural sciences for the BS degree. A sample of courses available at the undergraduate level includes Introduction to Planning Theories, Planning Practice, History of Cities, Community Development, Environmental Planning, Regional Studies, and Social Issues.

Graduate: Students pursuing a graduate program in urban planning may earn a Master of Art (MA), Master of Science (MS), Master of Urban Planning (MURP) or a Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Planning. Degree titles vary by institution and academic program. Graduate students in urban planning usually will choose among a variety of degree concentrations such as Urban Design, Regional or City Planning, Transport Systems, Environmental Planning, and Sustainable Development. A sample of courses available at the graduate level include Environment and Planning, Biodiversity and Conservation, Community Management, Environmental Engineering, Sustainable Communities, Social Welfare Policy, International Environmental Policy and Corporate Responsibility.

Occupations in Urban Planning:

With a degree in urban planning consider your professional opportunities as a land use planner, geographic information systems director, transportation planner, grant writer, housing coordinator, parks planner, architect, cartographer, or other jobs in local or national government agencies and private consultancies dealing with zoning, community, and economic development.

Choosing an Urban Planning Program:

If you are considering continuing your education in this field, you should become familiar with academic trends and current development. Utilize current literature and consider the existing research of professors in matching your academic and career goals with the right institutions for you. EducationUSA Centers provide advising services and a diverse collection of materials to assist students searching for schools and financial aid program. To find the nearest EducationUSA Advising Center, visit www.educationusa.info/centers.php.



In addition to researching regionally accredited colleges and universities which offer study in urban planning, prospective students, particularly for graduate-level study, can also identify academic programs with professional accreditation. The professional accrediting organization for the field of urban planning is the Planning Accreditation Board (www.planningaccreditationboard.org).



Associations and Organizations Affiliated with the Study of Urban Planning:

- American Planning Association, www.planning.org
- Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, www.acsp.org
- Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, www.chapa.org
- Regional Plan Association, www.rpa.org
- Planetizen: The Planning and Development Network, www.planetizen.com

Scholarly Journals Related to the Study of Urban Planning: Journal of the American Planning Association, Centre of Urban Planning & Environmental Management, Environment and Planning, Biodiversity and Conservation, and The Sustainable Urban Development Reader.

Undergraduate Program Search Print and Online Resources:

- College Board, www.collegeboard.com
- Search for schools with Collegeboard's online, "College Matchmaker."
- Read about specific majors and careers using the "Major and Career Profiles" search www.collegeboard.com/csearch/majors_careers/profiles/
- Peterson's Green Careers in Energy

Graduate Program Search Print and Online Resources:

- Peterson's www.petersons.com
- Peterson's Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences; Book 2
- Planetizen's Guide to Graduate Urban Planning Programs, yearly editions

Find Scholarships to Study Urban Planning:

- EducationUSA Financial Aid links, www.educationusa.info/pages/students/finance.php
- Funding U.S. Study, www.fundingusstudy.org
- Peterson's Scholarship Directory, www.petersons.com
- The Fulbright Program, <http://fulbright.state.gov>
- Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program, www.state.gov/youthandeducation/

If you are interested in pursuing higher education in the U.S. and would like further guidance please contact your local EducationUSA Advising Center