

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING

Graduate Study

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning offers graduate work leading to the Master in City Planning and the Doctor of Philosophy. In conjunction with the Center for Real Estate, the department also offers a Master of Science in Real Estate Development. These programs are open to students from a variety of backgrounds. Urban studies, city planning, architecture, urban design, environmental planning, political science, civil engineering, economics, sociology, geography, law, management, and public administration all offer suitable preparation. For further information concerning academic programs in the department, application for admission, and financial aid, contact Graduate Admissions, Room 9-413, 617-253-9403.

Master in City Planning

The principal professional degree in the planning field is the Master in City Planning (MCP). The Department of Urban Studies and Planning provides graduate education for men and women who will assume professional roles in public, private, and nonprofit agencies, firms, and international institutions, in the United States and abroad. The department seeks to provide MCP students with the skills and specialized knowledge needed to fill traditional as well as emerging planning roles. The MCP is accredited by the American Planning Association.

The two-year Master in City Planning degree program emphasizes mastery of tools for effective practice and is therefore distinct from undergraduate liberal arts programs in urban affairs or doctoral programs that emphasize advanced research skills. MCP graduates work in a broad array of roles, from "traditional" city planning to economic, social, and environmental planning, as well as urban design. In addition to its basic core requirements, the program offers four areas of specialization: City Design and Development; Environmental Policy and Planning; Housing, Community, and Economic Development; and International Development. MCP students, in their application to the department, select one of these areas of specialization and, when applicable, indicate interest in cross-cutting programs in transportation planning, urban information systems, and regional planning.

Each student's plan of study in the MCP Program is set forth in a program statement developed jointly by the student and faculty advisor during the student's first term. Linked to career development goals, the program statement describes the purposes and goals of study, the proposed schedule of subjects, the manner in which competence in a specialization is developed, and an indication of a possible thesis topic.

Degree Requirements

Students are expected to take a minimum of 36 credit units each term (at least three subjects, though more frequently four), yielding at least 126 total units, in addition to the thesis.

A collection of subjects and requirements to be taken during the student's two years in the MCP program constitute a "core experience" viewed as central to the professional program. The core subjects and requirements include the following:

11.200	Gateway: Urban Studies and Planning 1	12
11.201	Gateway: Urban Studies and Planning 2	12
11.202	Planning Economics	4
11.203	Microeconomics ¹	8
11.205	Introduction to Spatial Analysis and GIS ¹	6
11.220	Quantitative Reasoning and Statistical Methods for Planning I ¹	12
11.222	Introduction to Critical Qualitative Methods ¹	6
11.328[J]	Urban Design Skills: Observing, Interpreting, and Representing the City ¹	8

At least one core practicum subject, selected from an approved list, during the two-year program

A thesis preparation seminar in the area of specialization, taken during the second or third term of study

¹ *Students can test out of these subjects.*

Students identified as having weaker writing skills are also encouraged to take a writing course.

All students are required to submit a thesis on a topic of their choice. The department encourages MCP students to avoid the traditional perception of the thesis as a "mini-dissertation," and to think instead of a client-oriented, professional document that bridges academic and professional concerns. While most of the thesis work occurs during the last term of the second year, students are urged to begin the process of defining a thesis topic early in the second year through their participation in a required thesis preparation seminar.

Students in the MCP Program are encouraged to integrate fieldwork and internships with academic coursework. The Department of Urban Studies and Planning provides a variety of individual and group field placements involving varying degrees of faculty participation and supervision. Academic credit is awarded for field experience, although some students choose instead to participate in the work-study financial aid program. The department also sponsors a variety

of seminars in which students have an opportunity to reflect on their field experiences.

The **City Design and Development (CDD)** group engages, researches, and projects the physical planning of cities, regions, and their built and natural environments, at scales and locations that range from urban neighborhoods and city cores to outer suburbs. Graduates work in a variety of private, public, and nonprofit roles as urban designers, planning and design consultants, municipal and regional planners, managers of public agencies, advocates of historic and landscape preservation, housing, and land use regulations, real estate development, and as planners of transportation and mobility systems. CDD is closely associated with faculty and students in the Department of Architecture's Urbanism field, the Center for Advanced Urbanism, Center for Real Estate, SENSEable City Lab, and Media Lab. Many subjects are cross-listed with these groups. CDD's diverse educational offerings, ranging from studios to seminars, lectures, and workshops, ensure that every student can develop unique competence and intellectual depth in the field. CDD students may also elect to pursue the Urban Design Certificate, for those who wish to be involved in shaping the physical form and logistical function of cities, or pursue an additional year of study through DUSP's SM in Advanced Urbanism. Individual faculty within CDD also work in areas that include landscape urbanism; resilient cities and housing; land use planning and regulation; innovation districts; parametric urbanism; and much more.

The Center for Advanced Urbanism—jointly administered by faculty from the CDD group and the Urbanism group in the Department of Architecture—is a research-based institution dedicated to implementing new collaborative models of design and urban research.

The **Environmental Policy and Planning (EPP)** group emphasizes the study of how society conserves and manages its natural resources and works to promote sustainable development. Areas of concern include the role of science in environmental policy-making, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable international development, adaptive ecosystem management, environmental justice, global environmental treaty making, environmental regulation, energy efficiency and renewable energy, the role of private corporations in environmental management, the public health impacts of environmental planning, infrastructure planning, and the mediation of environmental disputes. Students investigate the interactions between built and natural systems; the effectiveness of different approaches to environmental planning and policymaking; techniques for describing, modeling, forecasting, and evaluating changes in environmental quality; approaches to environmental policy analysis; strategies for stakeholder involvement in environmental planning; and mechanisms for assessing the choices posed by the environmental impacts of new technology in local, state, national, and international contexts.

The **Housing, Community, and Economic Development (HCED)** group focuses on the equitable development of communities

in the United States, at the neighborhood, city, and regional scales. Its mission is to prepare professionals with the skills and knowledge to be responsible leaders of public, private, and nonprofit sector organizations and networks engaged in equitable development. The group is driven by a deep faculty commitment to expanding opportunity and improving quality of life for historically disadvantaged groups. HCED emphasizes ongoing, empowering partnerships with those affected by change—often those who are organizing to lead local improvement efforts. Many faculty and students also have an interest in global markets and federal and state policy. For decades, the group's faculty and students have helped shape policy, practice and research in housing, economic, workforce, and comprehensive community development. Increasingly, HCED connects to efforts that promote public health, environmental sustainability, and more inclusive “digital cities” as well. HCED promotes an integrated and dynamic approach to learning, helping prepare students for careers as problem solvers who can perform in varied roles: policy analyst or policy maker, advocate and organizer, mediator, evaluator, program designer, investor and entrepreneur, project developer and manager. At the doctoral level, HCED prepares students not only to produce but also to shape the next generation of creative teaching and scholarship.

The **International Development Group (IDG)** draws on the experiences of developing and newly industrializing countries throughout the world as the basis for advice about planning at the local, regional, national, and global levels. IDG provides students with an integrated view of the institutional, legal, historical, economic, technological, and sociopolitical factors that have shaped successful planning experiences and how they translate into action. Class content and faculty expertise include economic development at various scales; human rights and rights-based approaches to development, ethical and moral issues raised by development planning, the challenge of planning amidst popular discontent; regional planning (including decentralization); finance and project evaluation; housing, human settlements, and infrastructure services (transportation, telecommunications, water, sanitation, sewerage); institutions of economic growth; law and economic development; industrialization and industrial policies (including privatization); poverty-reducing and employment-increasing interventions including informal sector, nongovernment organizations, and small enterprises; comparative urban and metropolitan politics and policy; property and land rights, comparative property and land use law, collective action, and common property issues (water, forestry, grazing, agriculture); human rights and development; conflict and social dynamics in cities; post-conflict development; and globalization and governance.

Urban Information Systems (UIS) is a cross-cutting group that connects faculty, staff, and students who are interested in the ways information and communication technologies impact urban planning. Research topics include building neighborhood information systems to facilitate public participation in planning;

exploring the complex relationships underlying urban spatial structure, land use, transportation, and the environment; modeling urban futures and metropolitan growth scenarios; and experimenting with mobile computing, location-based services, and the community building, planning, and urban design implications of ubiquitous computing. Associated faculty are engaged in many related research projects through the SENSEable City Lab, the Civic Data Design Lab, the Urban Mobility Lab, the Center for Advanced Urbanism, and MIT-wide interdisciplinary research initiatives such as the Future Urban Mobility project in Singapore. Through seminars and related activities, we share experiences and find ways to collaborate on the technical, planning, and social science aspects of making information technology-enabled urban futures more responsive to public and private interests in ways that are transparent and equitable.

Much of UIS's work involves the development and use of planning-related software and the urban analytics, spatial analysis tools, and systems (such as GIS and distributed geoprocessing) that are increasingly important parts of urban planning methods and metropolitan information infrastructures. However, UIS interests go beyond the development and use of specific technologies and extend to an examination of the ripple effects of computing, communications, and digital spatial information on current planning practices and on the meaning and value of the impacted communities and planning institutions.

Simultaneous Master's Degrees in City Planning and Architecture

Students who have been admitted to either the Department of Urban Studies and Planning or the Department of Architecture can propose a program of joint work in the two fields that will lead to the simultaneous awarding of two degrees. Degree combinations may be MCP/MArch or MCP/SMArchS. A student must apply by the January deadline prior to beginning the last full year of graduate study for the first degree: MCP and SMArchS. SMArchS students must apply during their first year at MIT (by the end of the first term); MArch students must apply during or before their second year. Students are first approved by the Dual Degree Committee and then considered during the spring admissions process. All candidates for simultaneous degrees must meet the requirements of both degrees, but may submit a joint thesis.

Simultaneous Master's Degrees in City Planning and Transportation

Students who have been admitted to study for the Master in City Planning or the Master of Science in Transportation may apply to the other program during their first year of study and propose a program of joint work in the two fields that will lead to the simultaneous awarding of two degrees. Details of this program are provided under Interdepartmental Programs in the Civil and Environmental Engineering section.

Simultaneous Master's Degrees in City Planning and Real Estate Development

Students who have been admitted to the Master in City Planning Program or the Master of Science in Real Estate Development Program may apply to the other program during their first year of study and propose a program of joint work in the two fields that will lead to the simultaneous awarding of two degrees. Students may submit a joint thesis.

Master of Science in Urban Studies and Planning

Under special circumstances, admission may be granted to candidates seeking a one-year Master of Science (SM) degree. The SM is intended for professionals with a number of years of distinguished practice in city planning or related fields who have a clear idea of the courses they want to take at MIT, the thesis they want to write, and the DUSP faculty member with whom they wish to work. That faculty member must be prepared to advise the candidate when at MIT and to submit a letter of recommendation so indicating as part of the candidate's application. This process means that prior to submitting an application the candidate must contact the appropriate DUSP faculty member to establish such a relationship. The SM does not require the candidate to take the core courses, which are mandatory for MCP candidates. As indicated above, a thesis is required. For further information concerning the SM option, contact Graduate Admissions, Room 7-346, 617-253-9403.

Doctor of Philosophy

The PhD is the advanced research degree in urban planning or urban studies. Admission requirements are substantially the same as for the master's degree, but additional emphasis is placed on academic preparation, professional experience, and the fit between the student's research interests and the department's research activities. Nearly all successful applicants have previously completed a master's degree.

The doctoral program emphasizes the development of research competence and the application of research methods to exploring critical planning questions. Students work under the mentorship of a faculty advisor. They may focus their studies on any subfield of planning in which the faculty in the department have expertise.

After successful completion of coursework, students are required to take oral and written qualifying general exams in two fields: an intellectual discipline (city design and development, international development, public policy, urban information systems, regional and urban economics, or urban sociology) and a field to which this discipline is applied and that coincides with the student's research interest and possible dissertation topic. Doctoral candidates are expected to complete the qualifying general examinations before beginning their third year of residence. Upon completing the qualifying general examination and a colloquium about the dissertation proposal, a PhD candidate must write and successfully

defend a doctoral dissertation that gives evidence of the capacity to do independent and innovative research.

A minimum of 72 units plus 36 units for the dissertation (a minimum of 108 units) is required for the PhD degree.

Interested and qualified students can undertake joint doctoral programs with the Department of Political Science or the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Advanced Urbanism Concentration

The Norman B. Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism (LCAU), together with the Department of Architecture and MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, have established a collaborative doctoral-level concentration in advanced urbanism. At MIT, advanced urbanism is the field that integrates research on urban design, urbanization, and urban culture. The doctoral concentration in advanced urbanism is intended for those who have at least one professional design degree (in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, etc.). A successful applicant will have research interests in urbanism that align with faculty research in both DUSP and Architecture. In this spirit, the student's dissertation committee is expected to include faculty from both departments. More broadly, an advanced urbanism doctoral student is expected to engage with the research community at the LCAU and within their home department throughout their time at MIT.

Admissions applications for the DUSP side of this program are submitted directly through the department's regular PhD admissions process. Those interested in being considered for an Advanced Urbanism doctoral fellowship should indicate this in their applications. In the process of application review, the DUSP PhD admissions committee will identify strong applicants who fit the advanced urbanism program profile and nominate them for further consideration by a joint advanced urbanism admissions committee. The applicant selected by this joint committee would, in turn, be admitted as part of the regular DUSP PhD admissions process. Upon arrival at MIT, students holding the advanced urbanism doctoral fellowship through DUSP will be expected to complete all DUSP doctoral degree requirements plus additional requirements for the advanced urbanism concentration. Tuition support and research assistantships are provided by LCAU. Additional details can be found on the LCAU website (<http://lcau.mit.edu/center/education>).

Interdisciplinary Programs

Graduate Programs in Transportation

MIT provides a broad range of opportunities for transportation-related education. Courses and classes span the School of Engineering, the Sloan School of Management, and the School of Architecture and Planning, with many activities covering interdisciplinary topics that prepare students for future industry, government, or academic careers.

A variety of graduate degrees are available to students interested in transportation studies and research, including a Master of Science in Transportation and PhD in Transportation (<https://catalog.mit.edu/interdisciplinary/graduate-programs/transportation>), described under Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs.

Environmental Planning Certificate

Students in the MCP and PhD program who complete a prescribed set of subjects are awarded a Certificate in Environmental Planning.

Urban Design Certificate

Students in the MCP, MArch, or SMArchS programs who complete a specific curriculum of subjects in history and theory, public policy, development, studios and workshops, and a thesis in the field of urban design are awarded a Certificate in Urban Design by the School of Architecture and Planning.

Nondegree Programs

A limited number of nondegree students are admitted to the department each term. This special student status is especially designed for professionals interested in developing specialized skills, but is also available to others.

The **MIT Community Innovators Lab (CoLab)** supports faculty and students to work with low-income and excluded people in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean, tapping their energy, creativity, and in-depth knowledge of the issues they face to tackle poverty, climate change, and mass urbanization. Launched in 2007, CoLab supports faculty and student collaboration on field-based projects working with departments, laboratories, and centers across the Institute on action research while providing important resources to community leaders.

CoLab offers instruction and tools—practice-based classes, study groups, tutoring, coaching, mentoring, as well as IAP courses in reflective practice, civic engagement, action research, use of social media, storytelling, and visual mapping—to help students embed and apply technical learning in real societal contexts, equipping them with the resources they will need to take leadership roles in an increasingly complex world. Its dense network of innovative practitioners in the US, Latin America, and the Caribbean augment faculty instruction with field-based coaching, helping to train the next generation of practitioners and scholars committed to addressing social exclusion and sustainability—two of the greatest global challenges of our time.

In addition to work in communities, CoLab hosts regular programs that bring nationally recognized leaders to share their work and help inform the Institute's research agenda. The Mel King Community Fellows Program convenes an annual cohort of advanced practitioners from a range of relevant fields who are grappling with challenges of equitable and sustainable development. CoLab also provides community and industry leaders with private deliberative space in which they can explore emerging issues while allowing students up-close opportunities to participate in collaborative

brainstorming sessions. Along with CoLab workshops, CoLab Radio (the center's blog) and online programming, roundtables, speaker series, and lunchtime talks, these activities enliven and enrich the Institute's intellectual community by infusing it with a powerful diversity of voices and insights.

CoLab is located in Room 9-419. Further information can be found on the CoLab website (<http://colab.mit.edu>) and CoLab blog (<http://colabradio.mit.edu>).

The Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS)

is a one-year program designed for mid-career professionals from developing and newly industrializing countries. SPURS was founded in 1967 as part of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP), which has a long-standing commitment to bringing outstanding individuals to MIT to reflect on their professional practice in the field of international development. The program is designed to nurture individuals, often at a turning point in their professional careers, to retool and reflect on their policy-making and planning skills. SPURS Fellows return to their countries with a better understanding of the complex set of relationships among local, regional, and international issues. SPURS has hosted over 676 women and men from more than 117 countries in Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern and Central Europe. SPURS alumni/ae hold senior level positions in both the public and private sectors in their countries.

For further information contact Nimfa de Leon, Room 9-435, 617-253-5915 or visit the SPURS website (<http://web.mit.edu/spurs/www>).

Inquiries

For further information concerning academic programs in the department, application for admission, and financial aid, contact Graduate Admissions, Room 9-413, 617-253-9403.