

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) offers four degree programs: a Bachelor of Science in Planning; a two-year professional Master in City Planning (MCP); a one-year Master of Science in Urban Studies and Planning (reserved for mid-career students); and a PhD in Urban Studies and Planning. In addition, DUSP has other, nondegree programs and affiliations: the Special Program in Urban and Regional Studies (<https://dusp.mit.edu/visiting-fellows/#special-program-for-urban-and-regional-studies>) (for mid-career professionals from developing countries); the Community Innovators Lab (<https://www.colab.mit.edu>); the Center for Advanced Urbanism (<http://cau.mit.edu>); and the SENSEable City Lab (<http://senseable.mit.edu>). Once students are admitted and enrolled at MIT, it is possible to apply for certificate programs in urban design (offered jointly with the Department of Architecture) or environmental planning.

City and regional planners in the United States and other parts of the world are involved not only in physical and economic development, but also in management of the environmental, social, and design consequences of development. They engage in a variety of activities aimed at shaping the forms and patterns of human settlements, and at providing people with housing, public services, employment opportunities, and other crucial support systems that comprise a decent living environment. Planning encompasses not just a concern for the structure and experience of the built environment, but also a desire to harness the social, economic, political, and technological forces that give meaning to the everyday lives of men and women in residential, work, and recreational settings. Planners operate at the neighborhood, metropolitan, state, national, or international level, in both the public and the private sectors. Their tasks are the same: to help frame the issues and problems that receive attention; to formulate and implement projects, programs, and policies responsive to individual and group needs; and to work with and for various communities in allocating economic and physical resources most efficiently and most equitably.

Planners are often described as "generalists with a specialty." The specialties offered at MIT include city design and development; housing, community, and economic development; international development; and environmental policy and planning, as well as cross-cutting opportunities to study urban information systems, multi-regional systems, and mobility systems. These planning specialties can be distinguished by the geographic levels at which decision making takes place—neighborhood, city, regional, state, national, and global. Subspecialties have also been described in terms of the roles that planners are called upon to play, such as manager, designer, regulator, advocate, educator, evaluator, or futurist.

A focus on the development of practice-related skills is central to the department's mission, particularly for students in the

MCP professional degree program. Acquiring these skills and integrating them with classroom knowledge are advanced through the department's field-based practicum subjects and research, and through internship programs. In fieldwork, students acquire competence by engaging in practice and then bringing field experiences back into the academic setting for reflection and discussion. Students may work with community organizations, government agencies, or private firms under the direction of faculty members involved in field-based projects with outside clients. In some cases, stipends may be available for fieldwork or internship programs. The Department of Urban Studies and Planning is committed to educating planners who can advocate on behalf of underrepresented constituencies.

During the month of January, the department offers a series of "mini-subjects" in specialized fields not covered by the regular curriculum, including both noncredit and for-credit offerings.

Specific opportunities for concentration and specialization available to students are detailed in the descriptions of the degree programs that follow.