

# Urban Planning MPL Map

## Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

### Why GRADUATE STUDIES in URBAN PLANNING?

The School of Urban & Regional Planning (SURP) in the Queen's Department of Geography and Planning emphasizes excellence in teaching, with high faculty-student engagement and courses that capitalize on the considerable planning experience of our energetic faculty. This is a professional education program that also has a significant research component. It is officially recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners as a key stage toward earning the Registered Professional Planners designation.



### Why QUEEN'S?

Your instructors will be a team of exceptional professors. The core faculty combine years of professional experience with strong research skills and a passion for promoting learning. Their books are used as core texts in planning courses across Canada and several have been honoured with university teaching and professional service awards.

Over the past five years, more than 90% of our students have obtained paid professional internships during the summer term in the middle of the MPL program. And over 90% of our graduates have obtained planning-related employment within six months of graduation. About half of SURP graduates

GRAD MAP FOR MPL STUDENTS 



work in the public sector, with policy agencies at the federal and provincial levels, or as planners at local and regional governments.

### Program STRUCTURE

There are three methods of completion for the Master's of Urban and Regional Planning:

- Method I: course work and thesis.
- Method II: course work and research report.
- Method III: course work only. Most students also complete a paid summer internship.

### Areas of SPECIALIZATION

- Environmental Services
- Health & Social Planning
- Land Use & Real Estate

Supervisors are matched late in the first year, based upon the final topic of the student's report or thesis proposal and the availability and research skills of the particular faculty members. Most students preparing a thesis or Master's research report find a research supervisor from among the regular or adjunct faculty of the School.

*"My experiences at Queen's University opened many doors for me, and prepared me for entering the industry with a solid background of planning theory and practical applications."*  
– Michelle Taggart, MPL



**GRADUATE STUDIES AND POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS**

# Urban Planning MPL Map

MASTER OF PLANNING (MPL)



## TERMS 1 AND 2

## SUMMER

## TERMS 4 AND 5

### ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- Start with key priorities like developing your relationship with your Advisor, preparing your Plan of Study, and doing your required coursework.
- Identify a research topic and supervisor (Term 2), if student is undertaking report or thesis option.
- Apply for Exchange Programs and International Experience Awards (Term 2).

- Literature review and start research proposal.
- Complete a paid professional internship related to planning.
- Find your way through the academic process with help from departmental and [School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs professional development](#) workshops, the department Grad Chair, and the [SGSPA website](#).

- Update your Plan of Study.
- Complete your research proposal (Term 4).
- Possible international exchange (Term 5).
- Complete your coursework, Master's Report, or Thesis.

### MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for SSHRC and OGS funding for Year 2.
- Prepare a proposal for a conference presentation.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars in the Department of Geography and Planning.

- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as the [Canadian Institute of Planners](#).
- Consider participating in the [3 Minute Thesis \(3MT\)](#) competition.
- Expand your research audience through social media.

- Consider publication options for your research.
- Present your research at a major conference in your field.
- Start to think about the audiences for your research (Term 5).

### BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Serve on SURP departmental, faculty, or university committees. Talk to the [Queen's Graduate Association of Planning Students \(QGAPS\)](#) for tips on getting involved.
- Start keeping an ePortfolio of your skills, experiences, and competencies.
- Check out workshops from School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs professional development.
- Investigate internships from [MITACS](#), SURP and other sources (Term 1).

- Complete a professional internship with the SURP Internship Program.
- Use a Research Assistant position to develop your research or teaching skills.
- Consider positions in student services, the SGPS, or media outlets like the Queen's Journal, CFRC, and the SGSPA Blog. Look in the [AMS Clubs Directory](#) for more ideas.

- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Use a Teaching Assistant position to develop your teaching skills.
- Check out opportunities for extra training through CTL, School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs professional development, MITACS, or other sources to boost your skills.

### ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Tour Kingston, Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa with SURP field trips.
- Join professional associations like the [Canadian Institute of Planners](#) and the [Ontario Professional Planners Institute](#).
- Attend your first professional conference (Term 1).
- Participate in public visioning exercises for local projects.
- Explore how you can connect with your community through experiential opportunities on- and off-campus.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
- Consider volunteering with different community organizations in Kingston.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate hosted by QUIC and Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre.

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen's Connects on LinkedIn, the [Queen's Alumni Association](#), professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- If you are an international student interested in staying in Canada, consider speaking with an [International Student Advisor](#).

### LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Get help by taking a [Career Services workshop](#) or meeting with a career educator and coach.
- Update (or prepare) your LinkedIn page (Term 1).
- Start reading publications like [Plan Canada](#) and browse planning job web sites. Stay on the lookout for special events like Graduate Student Career Week to explore your career pathways.
- Research careers of interest. Craft your CV or Resume and job application materials (Term 2).

- Explore different careers of interest by using [Queens Connects](#) on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni. Check out Career Cruising for more information.
- If you are considering a PhD, explore programs of interest reach out to faculty, and apply to PhD programs and external scholarships. Check admission test deadlines if needed for further studies.

- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Start focusing on areas of interest. Research organizations of interest and start putting together your CV or resume for potential positions of interest. Get help from Career Services with job searching, resumes, and interviews.

## WHAT WILL I LEARN?

A professional degree in Urban Regional Planning can equip you with:

- Knowledge and technical skills:**
- Human Settlements
  - History and Principles of Planning
  - Government and Law
  - Issues in Planning and Policy-Making
  - Processes of Planning and Policy-Making
  - Plan and Policy Implementation

- Critical Thinking:**
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis
  - Identifying patterns and trends
  - Thinking at various geographic scales
  - Designing scenarios and plans

- Social Interaction and Leadership:**
- Mediation, facilitation, negotiation, and conflict resolution
  - Inclusion of diverse people and values
  - Team-work and team-building
  - Relations to bosses, officials and the public

- Communication:**
- Written, oral, graphic communication
  - Information technology (GIS; CAD)

- Professionalism:**
- Managing complexity, uncertainty, and change, learning from practice, and handling ethical dilemmas

## WHERE CAN I GO?

A Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning can take your career in many directions. Our students are equipped with a strong foundation for careers such as:

- City planner
- Community development officer
- Conflict resolution mediator or negotiator
- Doctoral studies
- Economics development officer
- Environmental planner
- Geographic Information System planner
- Health planner
- Heritage coordinator
- Industrial planner
- Land use planner
- Municipal, recreation, or park planner
- Planning director or consultant
- Policy or real estate analyst
- Regional planner
- Resource development officer
- Social planner
- Transportation planner
- Urban designer

Taking time to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.

### How to use this map

Use the 5 rows of the map to explore possibilities and plan for success in the five overlapping areas of career and academics. The map just offers suggestions – you don't have to do it all! To make your own custom map, use the [My Grad Map](#) tool.

# Graduate Studies FAQs

## How do I make the most of my time at Queen's?

Use the Grad Map to plan for success in five overlapping areas of your career and academic life. Everyone's journey is different - the ideas on the maps are just suggestions to help you explore possibilities. For more support with your professional development, take advantage of the SGSPA professional development framework and the new [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#) process to set customized goals to help you get career ready when you graduate.

## Where can I get help?

Queen's provides you with a broad range of support services from your first point of contact with the university through to graduation. Ranging from help with academics and careers, to physical, emotional, or spiritual resources – our welcoming environment offers the programs and services you need to be successful, both academically and personally. Check out the [SGSPA website](#) for available resources.

## What is the community like?

At Queen's, graduate students from all disciplines learn and discover in a close-knit intellectual community. You will find friends, peers and support among the graduate students enrolled in Queen's more than 130 graduate programs within 50+ departments & research centres. With the world's best scholars, prize-winning professional development opportunities, excellent funding packages and life in the affordable, historic waterfront city of Kingston, Queen's offers a wonderful environment for graduate studies. Queen's is an integral part of the Kingston community, with the campus nestled in the core of the city, only a 10-minute walk to downtown with its shopping, dining and waterfront. For more about Kingston's history and culture, see Queen's University's [Discover Kingston](#) page.

# Application FAQs

## What do I need to know to APPLY?

### ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- 4 year Bachelor or Honours degree.
- **Grade requirements:** minimum of B+ average, with preference for those with an A-average or better in the final two years of undergraduate study.

### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Statement of interest.
- Two letters of reference.
- Numeracy skills and the ability to solve basic math problems using algebra and geometry.
- If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the [English language proficiency requirements](#) in writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The following minimum scores are required: (1) TOEFL iBT: Writing (24/30); Speaking (22/30); Reading (22/30); Listening (20/30). Applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score, or (2) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score and a 7.0 for each test band), or (3) PTE Academics: 65, or (5) Canadian Academic English Language (Computer Edition) (CAEL CE): 70 (minimum overall score).

### DEADLINES

- Application Deadline for ALL applicants, including Canadian citizens, permanent residents, landed immigrants, and international applicants:
  - March 1 for admission consideration with grants and financial awards.
  - After March 1, applications MAY be considered on a rolling basis if there are spots still available.
- Notification of Acceptance:
  - For complete applications received by March 1: April 1
  - For applications received after March 1: 6 weeks or longer
- Formal Acceptance by Applicant on SGSPA portal:
  - May 1 OR four weeks from receiving a notice of acceptance from SURP Admissions Coordinator, whichever is earlier, unless otherwise mentioned in the notice.
- Payment of Acceptance Deposit
  - In order to secure an offer of admission to our program, a student must pay a \$500 acceptance deposit in the first week of June. The Graduate Assistant will inform accepted students of the exact due date for the acceptance deposit and how to make the payment.

## What about FUNDING?

There is no guaranteed funding for MPL students. That said, many students typically receive Queen's Graduate Awards, based on class standing. Additionally, students may apply for Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant positions in the Department of Geography and Planning. Most students also undertake a paid professional internship in the summer between first and second year.

For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' information on [awards and scholarships](#).



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