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.

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

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

Communications:
• 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, recreational, 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.

SUMMER
• Literature review and start research proposal.
• Complete a paid professional internship related to planning.
• Find your way through the academic process with help from the departmental and Expanding Horizons professional development workshops, the department Grad Chair and the SGS website.

TERMS 1 AND 2
• 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).

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.

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 professional development workshops from Expanding Horizons.
• Investigate internships from MITACS, SURP and other sources (Term 1).

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.

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 counsellor.
• 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).

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

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).

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.
• Consider volunteering with different community organizations in casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
• Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
• Expand your research audience through social media.

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2021-2022
Urban Planning
MASTER OF PLANNING (MPL)

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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 SGS 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’ information on awards and scholarships.