



## DEPARTMENT OF URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING

# PhD PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## **A. Ph.D. Program Committee**

### 1. Membership

The Ph.D. Program Committee will consist of at least two faculty members appointed by the Department Chair.

### 2. Function

The Committee is fully responsible for administering the program, including: screening applicants, identifying academic sponsors and admitting new students; administering as appropriate the preliminary examinations; keeping track of all information on doctoral students as required in these Policies; hearing requests for any exception to the policies stated herein except where such exception is specifically excluded; monitoring the content and requirements of the Department's Ph.D. program and recommending modifications when deemed appropriate; hearing grievances and reporting to the full faculty on such cases; and administering the Department's Ph.D. minor.

## **B. Ph.D. Program**

### 1. **General**

The Ph.D. program is open to a few highly qualified students. According to the Graduate School catalog, the Ph.D. *“is a research degree and is never conferred solely as a result of any prescribed period of study, no matter how faithful. The degree is only granted on evidence of general proficiency, distinctive attainment in a special field, and particularly an ability for independent investigation as demonstrated in a thesis presenting original research or creative scholarship with a high degree of literary skill.”*

In urban and regional planning, the Ph.D. is most appropriate for those who intend to teach and/or to do research in a university, government or independent research agency. Although the Ph.D. degree itself is research oriented, planning is a practice-oriented field. Planning faculty primarily teach in academic institutions in professionally oriented non-doctoral degree programs. Dissertation research, in general, should be of relevance to planning practice.

Students who are considering this degree should also read carefully the statement of the University's policy and general requirements for it, found in the catalog of the Graduate School. Beyond the minor and thesis requirements set forth there, further specific requirements are those of the Department which, of course, conform closely to the letter and spirit of the general specifications for Ph.D. programs set by the Graduate School.

### 2. **Admission**

To be admitted to the Ph.D. program a student must have a Master's degree in planning or an acceptable substitute. Acceptable substitutes are graduate degrees in planning-related fields combined with evidence of substantial planning-related knowledge. Students with a Master's degree in a related field can be admitted with deficiencies. Such deficiencies and a timetable for their removal will be specified by the Department's Ph.D. Program Committee at the time of admission. In some cases where there are significant

deficiencies (especially when the Master's degree is in an unrelated field) a student will be asked to remove the deficiencies before being considered for admission. In such cases a student is typically admitted as a special student (for "special student" status, see section on admissions in the Graduate School Bulletin and contact the Office of Inter-College Programs).

Students are required to submit the scores of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) as part of their application materials for review by the Ph.D. Program Committee. Experience has shown that GRE scores are a great assistance to the Ph.D. Program Committee in making admissions decisions.

Prospective students whose native language is not English must also provide evidence of English language proficiency. A TOEFL score of 600 (paper-based) or above typically indicates an ability to successfully meet the written and spoken communication requirements of graduate level courses, the Department's preliminary examinations, and the dissertation.

Since planning is a professional field, the Department expects that each student would ordinarily have completed at least one year of full-time professional planning or planning-related practice prior to admission to the program. The purpose of this requirement is to enable the students to develop advanced programs which meaningfully link planning theory and practice. In exceptional cases, students may be admitted to the Ph.D. program without exposure to professional practice, with the provision that this deficiency will be removed as prescribed in Section 3, *Requirements for Advancement to Ph.D. Candidacy (ABD Status)*.

Before an applicant can be admitted to study, he/she must be sponsored by a member of the regular URPL faculty. A faculty member interested in this role informs the Ph.D. Program Committee of his/her willingness to work closely with the student in the conduct of his/her Ph.D. program during the review process of an application. (A student may actively solicit faculty sponsorship; in addition, the Ph.D. Program Committee independently identifies possible faculty sponsors as part of the review process.) The basis for this working relationship lies in a mutuality of research interests. If a faculty sponsor cannot be found for an otherwise qualified applicant, such applicant will be so informed and will not be admitted to the program.

It should be understood that in some circumstances – changes in interests, faculty retirements or departures, or other reasons – a tutorial relationship may be rendered unworkable. If this should occur, the student takes the initiative to find a replacement. In addition, every effort will be made by the Ph.D. Program Committee to help the student find a satisfactory replacement for the original adviser among the members of the Department. If, however, a new sponsor cannot be found for a student, the student will be required to leave the program.

#### Fall Semester Admission Deadlines

Applicants who wish to be included in the University's fellowship competition must have their completed application to the Department by December 1. The application deadline for all applicants is March 1. Those who wish to be considered for an Advanced Opportunity Fellowship (AOF), is February 1. Late applicants will be reviewed on a

space available basis. Applicants who meet the February 1 deadline will be notified no later than March 15.

### Spring Semester Admission Deadlines

Applications for commencement of full-time graduate study in the Spring semester shall be made by October 15. Applicants will be notified no later than November 15.

### 3. **Requirements for Advancement to Ph.D. Candidacy (ABD Status)**

There are two sets of requirements that must be met for advancement to Ph.D. candidacy – those of the Graduate School and those of the Department.

The Graduate School requirements are outlined in the Graduate School Catalog, and on the website at <http://www.wisc.edu/grad/catalog/degreqG.html>.

The Departmental requirements to be met for advancement to Ph.D. candidacy are:

- (1.) Professional Practice Requirement
- (2.) Minor Field Requirement
- (3.) Required Coursework
- (4.) Preliminary Examinations
- (5.) Warrant

This set of requirements is administered by the Department's Ph.D. Program Committee. The order in which the requirements are met are likely to vary for each student in the program.

#### a. Professional Practice Requirement

The Department expects that students will meet this requirement by completing a minimum of one year of full-time professional planning or planning-related work experience prior to admission to the program. Satisfaction of this requirement will be determined by Ph.D. Program Committee and recorded upon admission. In exceptional circumstances the Ph.D. Program Committee may admit an applicant who has not fulfilled the practice requirement. In such cases the student's adviser must within one year of initiation of the student's program submit a proposal the Ph.D. Program Committee stating how and when the professional practice requirement will be met. In general this requirement should be satisfied before a student starts working on the dissertation. This proposal is subject to the approval the Ph.D. Program Committee.

#### b. Minor Field Requirement

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of planning, the Department requires all Ph.D. candidates to fulfill the requirements of a minor field. The purpose of the Minor Field requirement is to supplement and support the student's program of study in the major field. There are two options that can be pursued for the minor. Option A requires a minimum of 10 credits in a single department/major field of study. Selection of this option requires the approval of the minor department under the guidelines of that department and on forms developed for that purpose

by the selected department. Option B requires a minimum of 10 credits in one or more departments and can include course work in URPL. Selection of this option requires the approval of the Department's Ph.D. Program Committee. Forms for the filing of Option B minors are available from the Ph.D. Program Committee.

Ph.D. students and their advisers are responsible for filing copies of executed minor agreements with the Ph.D. Program Committee. The minor field requirement must be satisfied prior to filing the warrant for the Preliminary Examination.

c. Required Coursework

The PhD Program follows Graduate School policy on minimum credit requirements, residency requirements, and graduate-level degree requirements. Please refer to [grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy](http://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy) for details.

All doctoral students are required to complete three courses (9 credits) on the structure and processes of cities and regions. These courses shall cover the nature of urban and regional development processes over time and the impact of urban and regional development on the social, economic, environmental, institutional, and physical structure of cities and regions. They should also cover the response of federal, state and local governments to the issues and problems generated by such development and the planner's role in developing public policy and programs to deal with those problems and issues.

Courses satisfying the requirement for this component of doctoral studies must be approved by the student's Ph.D. advisor and then by the Ph.D. Program Committee, and shall be recorded on a form provided by the Committee. Courses satisfying this requirement shall be drawn from a list provided by the Ph.D. Program Committee. Courses not on this list may be submitted for approval to the Ph.D. Program Committee by the student and the advisor. *The list as approved is appended to this Policies statement as Appendix I.* The minimum average GPA in courses satisfying this requirement shall be 3.5. If a student does not achieve this GPA in the three courses s/he identifies, they may continue to take courses (within the general departmental Ph.D. program policies of how long a student may be a pre-dissertator) from the list provided until they have three (3) courses where their average GPA is 3.5.

All courses for this requirement must be taken and successfully completed within the doctoral student's first five semesters (i.e., two and one-half academic years) in the Ph.D. program. This coursework requirement must be met before the student is advanced to candidacy (awarded dissertator, ABD, status).

Requests for transfer credit should be submitted to the PhD Committee for evaluation.

d. Preliminary Examinations

The Department administers three preliminary field examinations. The purpose of the preliminary examinations is to satisfy the Department that the student is knowledgeable about the central theoretical and methodological perspectives common to the field of planning, and that she/he has sufficient knowledge about

the design and conduct of research to undertake the dissertation.

All three preliminary examinations will be administered by examiners appropriate to that examination, as specified below. All preliminary examinations will be written and must be typed. The examining committee may also, at its discretion, ask for an oral follow-up to a written examination. The examinations will be graded as “high pass,” “pass,” or “fail.” The grading decision of a Preliminary Examination Committee is final, and is not appealable by the examinee nor reviewable by other faculty.

The three examinations can be taken by the student independently and in any sequence. Examinations I and III will be regularly offered twice a year in the break between semesters, the exact timing to be determined by the Ph.D. Program Committee; as noted below Examination II is offered on a schedule negotiated by the student with his/her advisor and pre-dissertation/advisory committee. One week (seven days) each will be allotted for Preliminary Examinations I and II, and one day (eight hours) for Preliminary Examination III. Examiner copies of all examination documents will not be returned to individual students. Examiners will provide a general explanation to the Ph.D. Program Committee of the rationale for any failing grade. Results of Preliminary Examinations I and III will be communicated to students only through the Ph.D. Program Committee; results of Preliminary Examination II will be communicated to students through their advisor.

A student whose native language is not English may choose to retain an editor to edit her or his written preliminary exam for grammar only (not for substantive content, or writing style purposes). If the student chooses this course, s/he would submit two versions of the written exam paper to the Department Administrator (or their designee) on the date the exam is due: (1) an edited copy clearly showing the proofreader’s marks on the student’s own written exam, and (2) a final version that incorporates the proofreader’s edits into the text of the written exam paper.

Two general requirements govern the taking of preliminary examinations: (1) each student must take and successfully complete all three preliminary examinations within five regular semesters, i.e., two and one-half academic years, of program entry (not counting summer sessions), and (2) each examination may only be taken twice in this five semester period, i.e., a failed examination may only be retaken once.

The preliminary examination is conducted by requiring students to prepare three papers.

I. The focus of **Paper I concerns Planning Theory and its relationship to planning practice.** The paper focuses on theoretical rationales for doing planning, as well as on the development of planning in particular times and places. It also covers theories concerning the nature of the planning process and the political and organizational context in which planning is done.

The basic material dealt with in Paper I is covered in: URPL 781–Planning Thought and Practice. Other relevant courses include URPL 741–Introduction to Planning, URPL 812–Strategies for Planning

Effectiveness, and URPL 943 – Ethics in Planning and the Public Policy Professions.

II. The **focus and title of Paper II is Research Specialization**. Its intent is to assist students in focusing on their proposed research, and to test them in their knowledge of the substantive literature that makes up their proposed research area.

Prior to taking this examination, a student is required to prepare and have approved an annotated bibliography on the subject of the examination. The intent of this bibliography is to identify the key literature in the student's proposed field of research (additional specifications on the bibliography may be provided by the student's pre-dissertation/advisory committee; see Section 5.b., *Pre-Dissertator/Advisory Committee*. The Journal of Planning Literature and the Council of Planning Librarians provide one set of models for the construction of such a bibliography. The approval of this bibliography must be by the student's pre-dissertator/advisory committee. Notice of this approval must be provided by the student's advisor to the Ph.D. Program Committee.

The student's pre-dissertator or advisory committee will select the exam questions(s) for the student. The pre-dissertator/advisory committee will evaluate the student's exam. The time allowed for the Examination shall be one week (7 days). The period of the academic year a student takes this examination shall be negotiated between the student and their pre-dissertator/advisory committee. The student's advisor shall notify the Ph.D. Program Committee of (a) when an examination is scheduled for a student, and (b) the outcome of an examination.

III. **Paper III pertains to Research Design and the application of basic statistical methods**. Material covered under research design includes problem identification, hypothesis generation, logic development, typologies of sampling design, and major issues and concepts encountered in conducting inferential research. Paper III also covers applications of basic statistical methods, including multivariate techniques through multiple regression analysis. Advanced multivariate techniques such as factor analysis, discriminant analysis and generalized least squares are not included in Paper III. Material included in Paper III is covered in URPL 721–Methods of Planning Analysis and URPL 955–Practical Research Design and Empirical Methods of Inquiry. Other relevant courses include but are not limited to URPL 734–Regional Economic Problem Analysis and Agricultural and Applied Economics 636–Applied Econometric Analysis.

In addition to preparation for Paper III, students are expected to undertake course work on specific methods of analysis in support of their dissertation research. Such methods could include quantitative methods in economic analysis, systems methods and modeling, decision analysis, risk analysis, survey research, and qualitative methods, as well as analytical techniques particular to specific substantive areas.



A bibliography will be made available to students, specifying the material to be covered for each examination. Taking the courses cited for each examination is strongly recommended, but they are not required; each student should work out with his/her adviser which specific courses would be most useful for preparing for the preliminary examinations. A file of past questions for each examination is available for student review in the departmental office. However, students' answers to previous examinations are not public information.

The Ph.D. Committee shall select two examiners for Preliminary Examinations I and III from a self-identified and regularly updated selection of faculty who are qualified and willing to serve. Both standardized examinations (I and III) will be administered as double-blind.

e. Warrant

When the student is within a semester of finishing items a-c in Section 3 (Professional Practice Requirement, Minor Field Requirement, Required Coursework), they must request a warrant from the URPL Student Services Coordinator using the URPL Warrant Request form. Warrants cannot be requested if the student has outstanding incompletes on record. This warrant remains in the student's file until the student completes items a-c in Section 3 as well as item d in Section 3 (Preliminary Examinations). The warrant will be signed by the student's adviser (major professor) and by the appropriate members of Ph.D. Program Committee. When all the requirements have been met, the warrant is submitted to the Graduate School and the student is advanced to candidacy (achieves dissertator, ABD, status).

A signed and completed warrant submitted to the Graduate School is valid for five years; see [www.grad.wisc.edu/education/acadpolicy/guidelines.html#181](http://www.grad.wisc.edu/education/acadpolicy/guidelines.html#181) ; time limits. If a student fails to complete their dissertation within five years after the warrant is signed and submitted, the rules of the Graduate School allow for the possibility that this time period can be extended, upon appeal to the Graduate School.

URPL requires that should such a circumstance arise the student must prepare a memo to the Ph.D. Program Committee a) clearly stating what the student requests in terms of time extension, b) providing a statement as to why and how the student's preliminary examinations should still be considered current, and c) providing any other relevant information (e.g. a CV or resume) demonstrating how the student has remained current in their field of study. This memo from the student should be supported by a memo from the student's Ph.D. committee chair. If the request by the student is approved by the Ph.D. Program Committee, the Committee will formally request the extension from the Graduate School on behalf of the student.

4. **The Dissertation**

Ph.D. Candidates are required to maintain continuous registration (i.e., a minimum of three graduate level credits per semester directly related to their research and thesis topic, usually URPL 990, according to the Graduate School) from the time of their admission to candidacy until all degree requirements have been completed. A candidate who does not

successfully complete a final dissertation defense five years after being advanced to candidacy (as explained in Section 3.f. *Warrant* above) is required to take the preliminary examinations again and be admitted to candidacy for a second time (n.b. this is a requirement of the Graduate School). Details about the formal requirements for preparation and filing of the dissertation are available from the Graduate School office.

a. Designation of the Student's Ph.D. Committee

Each student, with the assistance of his or her sponsor, shall establish a dissertation committee, of which the sponsor is the chairperson. The student is urged to do this while she or he is completing the minor and taking the preliminary examinations. Relatively early in the student's program, the dissertation committee should be consulted by the student – especially when planning future course work and developing the research proposal.

This committee will consist of a minimum of five members. At least two members (including the chairperson) must be regular faculty in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. A third member must be either a regular faculty member or an affiliate faculty member of the Department. At least one member must represent a field outside the Department, preferably the minor field. The composition of the student's PhD Committee must also conform to requirements specified by the Graduate School.

At the time the committee is established, the student's advisor shall notify the Ph.D. Program Committee of the committee's structure (names and departments of committee members). At any time after this committee has been established, the student may, if he or she wishes, restructure the committee. To do so the student must file with the Ph.D. Program Committee the appropriate form, giving the names and signatures of all members of the original and proposed committees.

The student will work closely with this committee to define his or her specific area of specialization and dissertation topic. The committee should also be consulted about coursework related both to the substantive area and methods appropriate to the dissertation. The dissertation committee will conduct an oral review and defense of both the dissertation proposal and the finished dissertation.

b. Preparation and Defense of the Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal defines the nature of the student's dissertation research, and must satisfy the members of the student's dissertation committee that the candidate is capable of undertaking original research appropriate to the field of urban and regional planning. At the discretion of the committee, the proposal defense can also be used to examine the student on a broader substantive area of planning from which the dissertation is being developed.

The dissertation proposal must describe:

- (1.) The rationale for, and the specific aims of, the proposed research;

- (2.) The basic assumptions on which the proposal is based and the hypotheses which are to be developed and/or tested (as this is appropriate, given the methodological structure of the dissertation);
- (3.) The anticipated contribution of the study to the field; and
- (4.) The general design of the research, including the procedures and methods to be used and the techniques to be applied to the analysis of research materials.

In general, the proposal should be prepared in a manner that would meet the submission requirements of extra-mural major research support sources, e.g., NSF, NIH, Ford Foundation, etc.

When the candidate passes the dissertation proposal defense, this fact is recorded on a Departmental form provided by the Ph.D. Program Committee, with the committee members' signatures on it, and kept on file.

c. Optional Language Requirement

The Department does not require that students develop competency in a foreign language for advancement to candidacy. However, the Department believes that educated persons should have at least reading knowledge of a language other than their own. Students whose dissertation research involves field work in a foreign country will in most instances be required to acquire reading and speaking fluency in the native or official languages of that country or countries.

d. Dissertation Defense

The oral examination covers the dissertation and may also cover the major and minor fields of study. It is administered by the student's full Ph.D. Committee of five or more members. The time and place are negotiated by student with the members of his/her committee, though ultimately the responsibility for the time and place is with the major professor. The final oral defense of the dissertation is an open examination – students, non-dissertation committee faculty, friends and family of the dissertator, and others *may* attend. However, attendance does not allow for participation in the dissertation examination process by anyone other than members of the student's Ph.D. Committee. When the candidate passes the examination, which requires a majority vote of the Committee, this fact is recorded on a warrant provided by the Graduate School.

5. **Ph.D. Program Administration – General Matters**

a. Annual Performance Review

By May 1 of each academic year, each student is required to submit to the Ph.D. Program Committee a two-page statement on their accomplishments for the previous year and their work plans for the upcoming year. If deemed necessary the Committee will conduct a meeting with the student and/or his/her advisor.

b. Pre-Dissertator/Advisory Committee

Each doctoral student will be required to appoint an advisory committee before the end of the student's second semester in the program. At least two of these members must be regular or affiliate URPL faculty. The committee membership must be conveyed to the Ph.D. Program Committee, and this information will be placed in the student's file; a form is available for this purpose. The dissertation committee will meet at least once each year to help the student select courses, identify important research topics and questions, and explore potential sources of funding. This Committee ceases to exist when the Student's Ph.D. Committee (see Section 4.a.) is designated.

TIMETABLE FOR A PH.D. STUDENT IN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING\*

<u>Requirements</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Duration</u>
1) Satisfy professional practice requirement	Admission to the Program	
2) Form Pre-Dissertator/Advisory Committee 3) Satisfy minor field requirements (Option A or B) 4) Complete required coursework 5) Complete the Graduate School minimum requirements 6) Pass preliminary exams I, II, and III File 1 <sup>st</sup> warrant (signed by major professor & Ph.D. Program Committee Chair)	Admission to Candidacy	Varies (max. 2.5 yrs)
7) Form Dissertation Committee 8) Defend dissertation proposal File departmental form (signed by dissertation committee) 9) Defend and submit dissertation File 2 <sup>nd</sup> warrant (signed by dissertation committee)	Dissertator	Varies (max. 5 yrs after prelims)
10)	Ph.D. awarded	

\*Note: The maximum time to complete the Ph.D. is 7.5 years. Most URPL Ph.D. students complete the Ph.D. in 3 to 6 years. The Timetable and steps outlined are the "normal" or regular procedures for progress through the Ph.D. program; variation is possible and does occur reflective of the educational and professional background of a student, and as a function of a student's educational goals and opportunities.

6. **Requirements for Ph.D. Minor in Urban and Regional Planning** [November 11, 2002.]

The minor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning shall consist of twelve (12) credits of course work taken in the Department.

Courses shall be taken with those faculty who have some percent of budgeted appointment in the Department (so-called core faculty).

Courses taken shall be at the 600 level and above, excluding 699, and no more than three (3) credits of 999.

The student, in consultation with the Department's minor advisor (the Ph.D. Program Committee Chair unless otherwise designated), shall select the twelve (12) credits. To the

extent possible, the student shall select a set of courses which give him/her a breadth of understanding of the theory and methods of the field of urban and regional planning, and which provide some depth in an area of urban and regional planning concentration. Students should consider consulting with a member of the faculty on the selection of these courses, and if possible should secure a note of endorsement from said faculty member for their course selection.

The student shall execute a minor agreement (on a form to be provided by the Ph.D. Program Committee) specifying the courses which the student will take. On completion of all the agreed-upon courses, the student's warrant will be signed by the Chair of the Ph.D. Program Committee.

A 3.5 grade point average shall be required for minor certification. If a student does not achieve this GPA in the four courses she/he identifies, the student may, in consultation with the minor advisor, select additional courses, so that they complete four courses where their average GPA is 3.5.

The Ph.D. Program Committee shall review the merits of individual requests for the application of credits from other institutions toward a minor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. The total number of credits which may be accepted in this manner will not exceed six (6).

**Appendix I:** Coursework Satisfying 3.c. of the Policies on the Ph.D. Program in Urban and Regional Planning

GEOG/URPL 505	Urban spatial patterns and geography
SOC/RSOC 651	Economic sociology I
SOC 677	Urbanism and urbanization
RSOC/SOC 748	Environmental sociology
RSOC/SOC 636	Comparative urban institutions
RSOC/SOC 666	Population trends and problems
or RSOC/SOC 726	Population and development
RSOC/SOC 676	Applied demography: American demographics
ECON 475	Economics of growth
ECON 641	Housing economics and policy
ECON 712	Economic Theory – Macroeconomics sequence I
REULE/ECON 420	Urban and regional economics
REULE 720	Urban economics
REULE 978	Seminar in urban land economics
AAE 731	Macroeconomics of agricultural development
AAE 520	Community Economics
AAE/URPL 744	Regional Economics
URPL/ECON/LAFOLL 734	Regional economic problem analysis
AAE 745	Local and intergovernmental economics
or URPL 751	Introduction to financial planning
URPL 731	Regional planning
LAFOLL 873	Introduction to policy analysis
LAFOLL 874	Policy making process
IE 516	Introduction to decision analysis
ZOO 565	Principles of Landscape Ecology

**Appendix II:** Forms/Filings Required Under these Policies

1. Notice of fulfillment of professional practice requirement. (§ 3.a.)
2. Designation of Pre-Dissertator/Advisory Committee (§ 5.b.)
3. Completion of minor field. (§ 3.b.)
  - a. Proposal for, for Option B.
4. Required coursework. (§ 3.c.)
  - a. Proposal for
  - b. Completion of
5. Completion of Preliminary Examination II. (§ 3.d.)
  - a. Annotated bibliography
  - b. Examination
6. Structure of Student's Ph.D. Committee. (§ 4.a.)
7. Passage of Ph.D. Proposal Defense. (§ 4.b.)