

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) for incoming Urban Planning doctoral students (and info about the MUP program as well). Note: if you find mistakes on this sheet, please let me know so I can update. *S Campbell*

Which Orientation should I attend?

We recommend both the college/urban planning and the Rackham Graduate School orientations (tentative schedules below):

- The combined Taubman College and Urban & Regional Planning orientation will be held on Wednesday August 31 and Thursday September 1. Schedule to be made available later in the summer. [Link](#) to college events page.
- The Rackham Graduate School “New Graduate Student Fall Welcome and Information Fair” (for all new students across campus) is on Friday, September 2 from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm. Information and registration [link](#). (Rackham is a wonderful resource for graduate students, and it is well worth the effort to get to know Rackham (the building, the staff, the web pages, the programs and funding opportunities).

What is an average course load (i.e., how many credits per semester)?

Generally students take 12 credits/semester, but you can take more/less depending on your needs and workload. (9-15 credits/semester is not unusual, but 18+ credits would likely be an excessive load for most students.) The university has no single credit level to be considered a "full-time" student: this varies based on program, employment status (e.g., GSI), etc. Generally, 8 credits/semester is considered full-time. See <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/gsh/section1/>

Will I have difficulty getting into some courses?

Most classes in planning DON'T have an absolute upper limit of students, so you shouldn't have a problem enrolling in most URP classes. However, some courses have restricted class sizes and excess demand, including the GIS course (UP406), and some of the real estate courses. If you can't get into a class, some may have official waiting lists on wolverineaccess (the online registration system), but some don't. If you are not able to take UP406 (GIS) in your first year, you should be able to take it in your second year. Some URP students also take GIS in the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE). [You will find that some programs outside URP may make it harder for students not in their program to get into their courses, but persistence is often effective, and your status as a doctoral student should give you some advantage here.]

Most classes are offered ONCE per year. So, if you don't take it this fall, it will likely be offered next fall. (Exceptions include UP650 and UP660). Sometimes a course might be offered as just a one-off (e.g., a customized course taught by a visiting faculty member.) So, if you see an interesting course and think "Oh, I may try to take that next year," ask first whether it in fact will be offered next year.

Do courses have prerequisites?

Though most URP courses do NOT have prerequisites, some do. Some examples, mostly from the MUP program (not a complete list):

<u>Course</u> (*indicates core MUP course; #indicates required PhD course)	<u>Prerequisite</u>
UP504 Quant. Planning Methods*	UP503 Intro to Stats.* (or equivalent)
UP610 Fiscal Planning*	UP510 Public Economics* (or equivalent)
UP507 Advanced GIS	UP406 (Intro GIS)
UP565 Real Estate Development	UP 517 Real Estate Essentials or FIN 318
UP631 Land Use and Physical Planning Studio (2 nd year capstone)*	UP 518 (Physical Planning Workshop) <u>and</u> UP519 (Theories of Urban Design)
UP634 Integrative Field Experience (2 nd year capstone)*	UP505*
UP650 Advanced Urban Theory#	UP540 Planning Theory (or equivalent)*

How soon do I need to finalize my fall course schedule?

You can easily ADD/DROP courses within the first three weeks. Students "shop around" for courses during the first week or two of class, and faculty generally expect to see students coming and going during the first few sessions (even arriving late and/or leaving early to go to another class that overlaps). Remember: though you don't need to finalize your schedule until the third week of the semester (Sept 26), you do need to register by **Sept. 5** and have at least one course on your schedule. *Registration deadlines:*

<http://ro.umich.edu/calendar/fall11deadlines.php>

Academic calendar: <http://ro.umich.edu/calendar/>

What courses do students usually take to satisfy the two course requirement in statistics?

In the past, students have typically selected one of the following sequences (not a complete list):

- Statistics 402 (Introduction to Statistics & Data Analysis); Statistics 403 (Statistics & Data Analysis II)
- Sociology 510 (Statistics); Sociology 610 (Statistical Methods)
- Natural Resources 438 (Natural Resources Biometrics); Natural Resources 538 (Natural Resources Data Analysis)
- Biostatistics 503 (Introductory Biostatistics); Biostatistics 523 (Biostatistical Analysis for Health-Related Fields)
- The sequence in political science
- NOTE: for a list of non-planning courses taken by recent planning PhD students, see the [survey](#) posted on the URP PhD [ctools](#) site (authentication required).

NOTE: Students wishing to study statistics during the Spring or Summer Terms may want to check out the Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research sponsored by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) and/or the Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques conducted by the research staff of the Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research. Choice of courses to meet requirements should be discussed with your advisor.

When are GSI (graduate student instructor) assignments made?

The program decides on GSI assignments twice a year: in November for Winter Semester (Jan – April), and in March for the subsequent Fall Semester (Sept. – Dec.). Students are assigned to GSI positions in two ways: as part of a financial aid award, and through competitive application for open positions. (Calls for applications happen at the two aforementioned times of the year: November and March.) Be sure to apply for a GSI position even if you have already been promised one as part of your financial aid award. (Your application helps us in making the best matches between GSIs and courses.)

What is the role of my advisor(s)?

The program initially assigns two advisors, so that if one happens to be away, you can reach the other. (Whenever you need an advisor's signature, you can have either one sign -- you don't need both.) We try to match students and faculty based on areas of interest, but you are certainly welcome to change your advisor anytime throughout your time at Michigan. As you progress through the doctoral program, the key faculty for you will not be your "advisor" per se, but rather the chair and members of your comprehensive exam committee, and subsequently, of your dissertation committee. (You will also find that students tend to use many of the faculty as informal advisors. Continuing students are also great resources of knowledge about courses, etc.)

Doctoral student offices:

The college is currently arranging for new work spaces for doctoral students. Details available later this summer.

Annual Reviews of Student Progress:

Doctoral students are required to complete an annual review process each spring. The process involves completing a short document (that outlines past accomplishments and future plans) and discussing your plans with your advisor. You are to forward these materials to the doctoral administrator (Lisa Hauser). We will provide information on this process during the winter semester (ca. March 2011).

Michigan-Speak Glossary

A&AB = Art and Architecture Building (one building, two units: TCAUP; the School of Art & Design)

[AAEL](#) = Art, Architecture and Engineering Library (inside the Duderstadt Center across the street from the A&AB), which contains most (but not all) of our field's relevant texts (see also Hatcher below).

[AATA](#) = Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (ride free with your M-Card)

Authentication = to authenticate is to login to university online services using your Uniqname and password.

[Candidacy](#) = the status of having completed your coursework and exams, with "only" your dissertation ahead of you. (Once you achieve candidacy, your tuition drops dramatically.) The standard sequence in URP is for students to spend two years completing coursework and exams (pre-candidacy) and two years researching and writing the dissertation (candidacy).

Capstone = a six-credit requirement for the MUP program, taken in 2nd year. Students have four options (listed from most to least frequent): UP634 (group project); UP631 (design-based group project); professional project (individual); masters thesis (individual).

Cognate = outside your home program (e.g., a "cognate" course is a course outside URP; or a "cognate" faculty committee member outside URP)

Compliance Form = a 5-page form for you to keep track of courses taken, requirements met, exams, etc. (You can download a copy in MS Word format on the ctools site: "[URP PhD Student Work](#).")

[CTools](#) = a web-based system for coursework (Note: this is an optional system that some, but not most, faculty use to post course readings, assignments, syllabi, etc.) Originally known as "Course Tools".

Doctoral Computing Lab = 2225 A&AB

GSI = Graduate Student Instructor (i.e., teaching assistant)

GSRA = Graduate Student Research Assistant (i.e., research assistant)

[Hatcher](#) = the graduate library on Central Campus (which contains most of the social science-oriented texts related to planning and urbanization)

[ITCS](#) = Information Technology Central Services (formerly ITD). Runs the SITES computer lab (2109 A&AB) and other labs around campus.

[M-Card](#) = your student ID, which also is your library card, building access key, etc.

[Media Center](#) = Room 2115 (A&AB). For printing, copying, plotting, equipment checkout, supplies, food.

[MIRLYN](#) = the university's online library catalog

MUP Cage = 1st floor computer lab for MUP students (1248 A&AB)

[Rackham](#) = the graduate division that oversees most (but not all) graduate programs on campus. Stately [building](#) (completed in 1938) at E. Washington between Fletcher and State, with great study hall spaces.

[SAND-North](#): the "[Spatial and Numeric Data Services](#)" north campus location in 2207 A&AB. (The main location is on Central Campus in the Hatcher Grad Library).

TCAUP = Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

[Uniqname](#) = your computer login ID and part of your email address (e.g., the xxxx in xxxx@umich.edu).

URP = Urban and Regional Planning Program (note: a "program", not a department).

[Winter Semester](#) = the semester from Jan – April (other universities might call this the "Spring Semester," but this is the snowy upper Midwest, so this term squarely sits in the "winter".) UM has two 7-week terms during the summer: Spring Semester (May – June) and Summer Semester (July – August). (NOTE: URP offers a few courses during the Spring Semester, but most MUP students do not take courses then.)

[Wolverine Access](#) = web-based system for course registration, bill payment, etc.