

F.A.Q. (Frequently Asked Questions) for incoming Urban Planning students:

Which Orientation should I attend?

We recommend both the urban planning and the campus-wide orientations:

- The Urban & Regional Planning orientation is on Thursday, August 28. It starts at 8:30 for food, and 9:00 for the program itself.
- The Rackham Graduate School orientation (for all new students across campus) is on Friday, Aug. 29, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Register on-line.
http://www.rackham.umich.edu/calendar/event/new_graduate_student_orientation_get_connected/
(Note: 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).

When should I take the required core courses?

MUP students typically complete most of their 6 – 8 required core courses in their first year, giving them the flexibility to take mostly electives in their second year.

- Year 1 (Fall): UP 503 (intro to stats.), 510 (public econ.), 513 (law)
- Year 1 (Fall or Winter): 540 (theory): offered BOTH semesters (Fall: Prof Campbell; Winter: Prof Thomas)
- Year 1 (Winter): UP 504 (quantitative methods), 505 (planning practice), 610 (fiscal planning)[†]
- Year 2 (Fall and/or Winter): six-credit capstone: either UP 631, 634, 733 or 734

[†]Note: Students may take 610 either in their first or second year. Taking 610 in your first year would just leave your 6 credit "capstone" studio-like course as the only remaining "core" course for year two.

What courses should I take my first semester?

In the fall, most students take four core courses (*), and sometimes an elective or two:

- 503 Intro to Statistics* (if you have no statistics background)
- 510 Public Economics* (if you have no economics background)
- 513 Legal Aspects*
- 540 Planning Theory* -- ALSO OFFERED in WINTER
- UP500 Professional Practice [1 credit] and/or UP 590 Expanded Horizons [1 credit]
- [elective]

Many students take the less formal, one-credit course: UP590 (Expanded Horizons: a 4-5 day field trip to a major North American city). In addition, if you waive out of either 503 and/or 510 [see below], you will have more room for electives this fall. Course schedule for Fall 2008: <http://www.umich.edu/~regoff/schedule/> Click on Fall 2008 Online Schedule, then Architecture and Urban Planning, then Urban Planning Schedule of Classes.

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. (15 credits/semester is not unusual, but 18+ credits would likely be an excessive load for most students.) You need 48 credits to graduate with your M.U.P. Most courses are three credits.

Note that if you are pursuing a joint degree (e.g., MUP/MPH) or a degree plus a certificate (e.g., MUP/Real Estate Certificate), the second credential increases both the required substantive courses and the required number of credits. (For example, the Real Estate Certificate requires 17 credits from courses on the [approved list](#); 8 of these credits can be double-counted for your MUP degree. The MUP/Real Estate Certificate combination therefore requires 48+9=57 total credits.)

What is the "cognate" requirement?

Each student must complete a minimum of 4 credit hours of courses outside the program (i.e., "cognate" courses). In general, students are encouraged to take courses across the university, as long as 30+ credit hours are taken in

graduate-level urban planning courses. Students typically take planning courses in the fall, and begin looking around at non-planning courses in later semesters.

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 (but not all) may have official waiting lists on wolverine access (the online registration system). 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.]

Most classes are offered ONCE per year: if you don't take it this fall, it will likely be offered next fall. (Core courses are always offered every year.) Some courses might be offered as just a one-off (e.g., a course taught by visiting faculty.) So, if you see an interesting course and think, "I may try to take that next year," ask first whether it in fact will be offered next year. A few courses are offered only in alternate years (e.g., UP523, 650, 660).

Do courses have prerequisites?

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

<u>Course</u> (*indicates core 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*

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 (Drop/Add Deadline: Sept. 22), you do need to register by **August 29** and have at least one course on your schedule. *Registration deadlines:*
<http://www.umich.edu/~regoff/calendar/fa08deadlines.html>

How do I waive out of a required course (i.e., get an exemption)?

To waive out of the course, talk to the course instructor. You will need to show a record of recently taking a comparable previous course. Be sure to ask the instructor what materials they require to grant a waiver, such as a transcript, a syllabus, and/or a short memo describing the relevant coursework, semester/year and your grade. (Once the waiver is granted, be sure to have the course instructor sign the relevant box on your "Degree Requirements Checklist," which should be kept on file with the program administrator, Stacey Shimones.) [Note regarding UP503 (Intro. To Stats.): Even if you have previously taken an undergraduate statistics course, many students still wisely take UP503: statistics knowledge has a short half-life, and the winter semester statistics course (UP504) assumes that your graduate-level statistical knowledge is up-to-speed.]

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. You will also find that students tend to use many of the faculty as informal advisors. Second-year students are also great resources of knowledge about courses, etc.

How soon do I need to pick my "concentration"?

To provide focus for your graduate planning studies, students are required to select one of five concentrations: (1) land use & environmental planning; (2) housing, community & economic development; (3) planning in developing countries; (4) physical planning & urban design; (5) transportation planning. (Students may also develop an alternative concentration in consultation with a faculty member.) A concentration normally consists of at least three courses selected from a list of recommended courses. Students complete a concentration declaration form during their second full semester in the program.

Students may select (or change) their concentration at any time during their course of studies. In practice, students should finalize their concentration selection by the start of their third semester to insure that they can complete the requisite courses. New students should therefore not worry about rushing to pick a concentration; use your first year of studies to explore your options. (Exception: students interested in the urban design concentration should ideally take UP518 and UP519 during their first year – see section on “prerequisites” above.)

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)

Bulletin = the official document outlining the URP program requirements. Available on-line.

Capstone = a six-credit requirement, taken in 2nd year. You have four options (listed from most to least frequent): UP634 (group project); UP631 (design-based group project); professional project (individual); masters thesis (individual). If you are considering the thesis or project options, discuss with your advisor at the end of year 1 (thesis & project options require a formal proposal, approved by the URP Curriculum Committee).

Cognate = outside your home program (e.g., a "cognate" course is a course outside URP)

[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".

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

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

[Hatcher](#) = graduate library on Central Campus (contains most of the social science texts in planning/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) – run by TCAUP. (Note: some computer labs in the building are run by TCAUP, while others are run by SITES – see ITCS above).

[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.

TCAUP = Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

[Username](#) = 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).

URRC = Urban & Regional Research Collaborative – an informal network within URP. Runs the monthly “URRC Seminar” series (all invited).

[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.