Congratulations on considering graduate studies in urban and regional planning to fulfill your educational and career goals!

The challenging, exciting, and diverse nature of the planning profession is well-reflected in the University of Iowa’s school and in the types of issues students encounter in our curriculum. Our faculty offers a wide range of expertise to prepare graduates for a variety of positions in federal, state and local government, nonprofit organizations, and private consulting firms. Our curriculum continuously incorporates important developments in the profession, and our staff takes great pride in their responsiveness to student needs in school and as they begin their careers.

Our website at www.urban.uiowa.edu is an excellent resource, and greatly expands on the information included in this brochure. For specific questions, call the main office for the School of Urban and Regional Planning at 319-335-0032, the admissions Coordinator at 319-335-0041 or e-mail our department at urban-planning@uiowa.edu. Welcome!
Planning is a professional field that is centrally concerned with enhancing the quality of life for residents of both urban and rural areas. Planners combine analysis with activism and policy evaluation with implementation in order to improve life in cities and regions.

Professional planners work in a variety of governmental levels, nonprofit organizations and private consulting firms. Diverse job opportunities include positions in land use, environment, transportation, public health, geographic information systems, economic development, and growth management.

Planners work with businesses and communities to:
- Develop ways to preserve and enhance quality of life
- Find methods to protect the natural and built environment
- Identify policies to promote equity and equality
- Structure programs to improve services to disadvantaged communities
- Determine methods to deal effectively with growth and development of all kinds

The University of Iowa offers areas of concentration that correlate with the traditional planning areas of land use and environmental planning, economic development, transportation planning, and housing and community development, but also prepare individuals to focus in developing areas such as climate change, sustainability, social justice, and food distribution systems.

People who pursue a planning degree are typically drawn to the type of career where they can impact the world around them. Planning is a dynamic and exciting field for people who want to make a difference!

www.urban.uiowa.edu
Founded in 1964, Iowa’s School of Urban and Regional Planning is fully accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board. The University of Iowa is recognized as a leader in developing a curriculum attuned to the changing world of planning. Students usually earn the M.S. degree in planning, although the curriculum allows the M.S. or M.A. degree to be awarded. Joint graduate degrees with a reduced time commitment have been established with law, health management and policy, occupational and environmental health, and social work. A joint M.S./B.S. is available to current University of Iowa students pursuing a degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Iowa City is a great place to live! With gentle hills and a river running through it, Iowa City blends a student-oriented downtown and vibrant campus with a highly educated, diverse, and pedestrian-friendly community. Most planning graduate students live where they can bike, bus, or walk to school. Iowa typically enrolls 50–65 full-time and 1–3 part-time students, with approximately equal numbers of women and men. Students bring a variety of backgrounds to their studies, including such undergraduate majors as art, geography, economics, English, political science, engineering, architecture, sociology, and history. Working together in core courses and the common study area allows students to get to know each other quickly.

"America’s Best Small Cities” CNN Money 2012
Iowa City named third-best major metropolitan area in the country for college students — American Institute for Economic Research, September 2010
#2 out of 75 mid-size cities for volunteer rate — “Volunteering in America,” Corporation for National & Community Service, June 2010
"Healthiest Town in the United States,” Men’s Journal, February 2010
"Top Towns for Jobs,” MSN CareerBuilder, January 2010
One of America’s Top 100 Adventure Cities — National Geographic Adventure, October 2009

SOURCE: iowacityarea.com
The faculty at Iowa are committed to providing an excellent teaching environment for students. Students interact closely with faculty in the classroom, the computer lab, through informal conversations, and while working on research or service projects. The faculty/student ratio is outstanding, with fewer than 15 students in most elective classes. Current students and alumni often mention that faculty-student interaction is more typical of a small liberal arts college — informal, relaxed and friendly — and yet Iowa’s school also offers the student and faculty resources of a large Research I University.

**FACILITIES**

The most important facility in the planning school is a large student area affectionately known as the “drafting room” with assigned student desks. Large worktables and a lounge area encourage students to work together on team projects, class assignments and field problems. This setting is a true asset to the school and greatly enhances the educational, professional, and social environment for graduate students in urban and regional planning.

A University-operated computer lab is also part of the planning school facilities, promoting computer-based instruction in planning and other academic units. Students are expected to become proficient at using a variety of word processing, graphics, spreadsheet, and modeling software packages. The planning school’s lab is equipped with high-end PCs dedicated to computer-intensive GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and transportation modeling applications.
At the heart of the two-year master’s degree program is an integrated core curriculum providing first-year students with a solid foundation in social, economic, and public policy analysis. Second-year students focus on one or two areas of concentration: economic development, land use and environmental planning, housing and community development, transportation, and the use of geographic information systems. Planners must also develop professional skills in report writing, oral presentation, computer use, and team management in order to function effectively in various organizational and political environments.

Fifty semester hours are required to graduate with a master’s in Urban and Regional Planning: 23 semester hours of core courses, 6 hours of capstone courses (fulfilled with Field Problems in Planning I and II), at least 9 semester hours in an area of concentration, and 12 semester hours of electives.

REQUIRED COURSES
The core curriculum assists students in understanding the institutions — social, economic, political, administrative, and legal systems — as context for planning and policy analysis and constraining public choices. Students develop the ability to identify social goals and normative criteria for evaluating public policies. Both quantitative (statistics, forecasting, surveys, regional analysis) and non-quantitative skills are required to perform evaluations and produce plans. The capstone courses enable students to apply core class principles to actual planning problems. First-semester courses draw from traditional disciplines, particularly economics and statistics, and are combined with introductions to law, land use and theories and practice of planning. As students proceed, increasing emphasis is placed on the development of critical judgment and insight through the application of theories to realistic planning problems and case studies.

FIRST SEMESTER
102:200 Analytic Methods in Planning I  
3 s.h.
102:202 Land Use Planning: Law and Practice  
4 s.h.
102:203 History and Theories of Planning  
3 s.h.
102:205 Economics for Urban Planners  
3 s.h.
102:208 Program Seminar in Planning Practice  
1 s.h.

SECOND SEMESTER
102:201 Analytic Methods in Planning II  
3 s.h.
Electives and area of concentration courses  
9 s.h.

THIRD SEMESTER
102:209 Field Problems in Planning I  
3 s.h.
Electives and area of concentration courses  
9 s.h.
Internship (summer)  
2 s.h.

FOURTH SEMESTER
102:210 Field Problems in Planning II  
3 s.h.
Electives and area of concentration courses  
9 s.h.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS
102:223 Financing Local Government  
3 s.h.
OR
102:290 Economic Impact Assessment  
3 s.h.
RECENT INTERNSHIPS

BOSTON, MA
Discover Roxbury

CHICAGO, IL
Center for Neighborhood Technology

CHICAGO, IL
Chicago Bloomingdale Trail Project, Trust for Public Land

CHICAGO, IL
Duncan Associates

CITY OF ALBERT LEA, MN
Planning Department

CITY OF CHICAGO, IL
Committee on Finance

CITY OF CORALVILLE, IA
Brownfields Project Coordinator

CITY OF IOWA CITY, IA
Planning & Community Development
Economic Development Department
Neighborhood Services

CITY OF NEW YORK, NY
Department of City Planning

CITY OF TULSA, OK
Economic Development Department

CORALVILLE, IA
Iowa Bicycle Coalition

DES MOINES, IA
Pollution Prevention, Land Quality Bureau, IDNR

IOWA CITY, IA
Johnson County Planning & Zoning

OMAHA, NE
Transportation Planning, URS Corporation

ST. LOUIS, MO
Community Development Department of Maryland Heights

WASHINGTON, DC
Partners for Livable Communities

INTERNSHIPS

Iowa strongly encourages students to obtain an internship in a planning agency, firm, or related organization during the summer between the first and second years. Internships are usually paid staff positions, and students are eligible to receive two hours of credit for the summer internship.

Career assistance is a priority; staff provide career assistance for summer internship searches, in addition to job searches. A number of students obtain employment opportunities during the academic year, as a result of the school’s established ongoing relationships with local planning agencies. These include Johnson County, the Iowa Policy Project, and the UI campus planning office.

ADJUNCT FACULTY AND PRACTICE COURSES

The curriculum regularly includes courses on various aspects of planning practice taught by adjunct faculty who are professional planners with many years of experience. Topics include courses on GIS, planning for natural disasters, green building, grant writing, and land development.
AREAS OF CONCENTRATION
After completing the first semester core courses, students begin to develop one or more areas of concentration by applying the concepts and skills developed in the core to specific fields of planning. These areas of concentration ensure each student develops depth in substantive fields of planning through mastering a set of courses that together constitute a coherent program of study.

There are five areas of concentration in Iowa’s Planning School: economic development, land use and environmental planning, housing and community development, transportation planning, and geographic information systems (GIS). Specific courses for each area are described at www.urban.uiowa.edu/curriculum. A sample course title is listed under each area of concentration.

Economic Development
The economic development specialty prepares students for positions with city planning departments, regional planning agencies, state development agencies, neighborhood economic development groups, and other nonprofit or public/private economic development organizations. Students study regional economic growth processes, the changing structure of employment, and relationships between local industrial sectors and national and international economic trends. Courses also focus on forecasting the economic impact of business location decisions, alternatives for financing development, state and local development policies, innovative institutional arrangements such as public/private partnerships, and other issues such as plant closings, job training, tax incentives, and federal small business programs.

102:295 Economic Development Policy
The land use and environmental planning concentration combines course work in environmental processes and regulation as well as several aspects of land use planning, including GIS applications. Students explore issues and focus on economic, educational, and regulatory policies for land use and environmental control; environmental impact forecasting and assessment; legal implications of environmental and land use policies; mediation and conflict resolution; risk assessment; brownfields redevelopment; historic preservation; and growth management strategies. Students in this area generally pursue careers in federal, regional, state, or local government agencies; private consulting firms; nonprofit organizations, or special interest groups.

Urban decay, a lack of affordable housing, the loss of population and jobs, and the mounting costs of public services threaten our cities. The concentration in housing and community development examines housing and real estate finance; federal, state, and local housing and community development policies; and innovative institutional arrangements involving public/private/neighborhood partnerships such as community land trusts and cooperatives. Graduates with this background are prepared for positions in housing and community development divisions of city, regional, and state planning agencies and departments; community-based organizations focusing on low-income housing development; and public/private/neighborhood partnerships.

Transportation facilities often have been used to encourage economic development, to shape urban growth patterns, to improve opportunities for disadvantaged persons, or to elevate the general quality of life in and around urban areas. Students in this area of concentration become competent in formulating investment strategies, pricing transportation services, and evaluating alternative methods for providing needed services. They also investigate new transportation regulations, financing systems, and the impact of transportation facilities or modes on environmental quality. These students often find employment in consulting firms, state transportation agencies, regional transportation planning organizations, and local transit districts. A certificate in transportation can be earned in addition to the master’s degree.

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialty prepares students for positions with city planning departments, regional planning agencies, state development agencies, neighborhood economic development groups, and other nonprofit or public/private economic development organizations. Students learn how to use GIS software, and learn about the management of land information and about model building within a GIS framework. Courses cover GIS-based, three-dimensional visualization, programming in a GIS environment and web-based GIS. Policy courses use GIS extensively for analysis and forecasting purposes. Supplemental classes in remote sensing, offered by the Geography department, are recommended.

*GIS may be a second, but not the primary, area of concentration.
FIELD PROBLEMS

Required during the second year, this yearlong capstone course requires teams of students to work on real-world projects for city and regional planning agencies and nonprofit community organizations in eastern Iowa. Each team must work with the client agency throughout the year to develop a plan or report presented to that agency at the end of the spring semester.

Since 2009 Field Problems has operated under the umbrella of the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities which seeks to apply planning methods and theories to problems of sustainability.

Field Problems is a unique opportunity to apply knowledge gained in classes to a real-world issue while drawing on faculty support, advice, and critiques to improve the quality of the work. Students find field problems reports are important evidence of their ability to produce professional-quality work when applying for jobs. Iowa’s Planning School facilitates and encourages student involvement with the practice of planning and with planning practitioners in a variety of ways during the two-year program. This involvement is an essential component of a student’s preparation for a planning career.

The Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities field problems class offers the opportunity for familiarity in current planning issues. Projects include: housing studies, renewable energy asset mapping, local foods, and resolving community and school needs. This course provides opportunities for students to partner with community leaders in real-world, beneficial projects.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING CONFERENCES

The school and the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) support student participation in state, regional, and national conferences sponsored by the APA or by other planning-related professional groups. These conferences are a valuable way to learn about the diversity of issues currently engaging the planning profession and can provide significant networking opportunities.
JOINT DEGREES
Joint-degree options allow students to earn a graduate degree in planning plus a second degree in less time than would be required to obtain the two degrees independently. Formalized options have been established in law (J.D.), social work (M.S.W.), health management and policy (M.H.A.) and occupational and environmental health (M.S.). University of Iowa undergraduate candidates in civil and environmental engineering (B.S.) can also begin work toward a joint graduate degree in Urban and Regional Planning their senior year.

While requirements of each joint-degree vary, all have several key features in common. A student must complete an approved area of concentration in Planning, satisfy Planning’s final examination requirement, and take at least a minimum of 35 hours of planning (102-prefix) courses. Separate departmental applications for admission are required.

Contact the admissions coordinator for more information about pursuing a joint degree.

IOWA INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
The School of Urban and Regional Planning’s Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) is an ongoing effort to enhance the capacity of cities, towns and counties across Iowa to become more sustainable communities. The IISC works with communities to identify, design and implement sustainability-focused planning projects, currently pairing graduate students in the School of Urban and Regional Planning Field Problems class with partners throughout those communities. IISC has a two-year partnership with the City of Dubuque in which graduate students are completing ten projects focused on enhancing Dubuque’s sustainability. Due to its success within the School of Urban and Regional Planning, the IISC is expanding to become a campus-wide initiative in the 2012 – 2013 academic year. IISC is currently partnering our departments on campus with the city of Dubuque. In addition, IISC is excited to expand this partnership to include other Iowa communities in 2013 and beyond.
CAREER SERVICES

PROPRIETARY JOB LINKS & DATABASE

Iowa is committed to providing outstanding career assistance efforts. **60-plus new job and internship notices are posted weekly** on our website exclusively accessible to our students. This service brings outstanding job and internship opportunities to all students, and assists them in securing challenging, interesting positions nationwide.

In addition, individual résumé and cover letter assistance is provided, and the School e-mails a compiled résumé document out to alumni each year. A pass-coded website with more than 2,000 links to employment pages for planning organizations and consulting firms nationwide is also available to assist students and alumni who are targeting a specific city or state in their job/internship search, enhancing individual searches to complement the weekly nationwide postings.

We maintain close contact with our alums and receive employment notifications from both alums and other planning professionals who would like to advertise internship and entry-level positions directly to our students. An Alumni Database lists more than 700 alumni, many of whom actively contribute to the school’s efforts by networking with current students. The School is additionally often able to provide travel assistance for students to begin networking at local, regional and national APA conferences.

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**Business Development**

**Planning Specialist:** Economic Development Department, City of Green Bay, WI

**Economic Development Analyst:** Department of Economic Development, City of Dallas, TX

**Economic Development Planner:** East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG), Cedar Rapids, IA

**Community and Economic Development Planner:** Planning and Development Services, Upper Coastal Plain COG, Rocky Mount, NC
Iowa planning graduates in each area of concentration find jobs with a variety of employers in all geographic regions of the United States, as well as in other countries.
ADMISSION

Admission to Iowa’s Graduate School of Urban and Regional Planning requires an undergraduate degree in any major. In addition to the Application for Admission to the Graduate College, students must submit Graduate Record Examination (GRE-General Test) scores, two copies of official transcripts from all academic institutions attended, three letters of recommendation from individuals who can describe the candidate’s academic abilities and potential, and a statement of purpose. The individualized letters of recommendation (no form is used) should be addressed to the Admissions Committee and mailed to the School of Urban and Regional Planning or submitted by the writer via e-mail to urban-planning@uiowa.edu. All elements of the student’s record are considered in the admission decision. Applications should be submitted as early as possible. Prospective students should have completed materials to the school admissions director early in the year (by January 15 if funding is requested) for fall admission, although applications for admission and funding are accepted until July 15 (April 15 for international students). Funding for those who submit materials after January 15 will be considered only as funding permits.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

International students whose first language is not English must submit official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores (in addition to GRE scores) before admission and funding decisions can be made. The TOEFL should be taken no later than December 1 for students requesting admission for the following fall semester.

SPRING ADMISSION

Fall admission is strongly preferred, although a few students may be admitted in the spring semester under special circumstances. Application materials for spring admission should be submitted early in the fall (preferably by October 1), but no later than December 1 (October 1 for international students). If a student enrolls in the spring semester, the program cannot be completed in two years as an additional semester will be required. Contact the school admissions coordinator for more information about spring admissions.
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Numerous sources of financial assistance are available to graduate students entering the Planning School. Many students receive departmental funding through graduate assistantships. Sources of support include University or grant-supported fellowships or traineeships, departmental research or teaching assistantships, research assistantships on externally funded grants, loans, and part-time positions at local planning agencies. Typically, we have been able to offer a quarter-time assistantship (with a 10-hour weekly work requirement) accompanied by a tuition scholarship. Quarter-time assistantships qualify students to pay the in-state tuition and fee rate, with in-state tuition covered by the tuition scholarship. Spouses of students with assistantships also qualify for the in-state tuition rate.

For the current assistantship and tuition scholarship funding levels visit www.urban.uiowa.edu/prospective-students/financial-assistance. In addition to the stipend and tuition scholarship, funded graduate students are awarded a health insurance allowance to be applied toward student health insurance programs or toward the comprehensive health insurance program available to University faculty and staff. All funding decisions are made by an admissions committee. Students receiving aid will be informed as early as possible of their award and will be advised of their assistantship duties at the beginning of classes.
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