



What can I do with a Major in... Urban & Public Affairs

What is Urban and Public Affairs?

It is part of a global effort to better understand urban places and the state of urbanity, and to prepare planners, researchers, activists, and citizens to be fully engaged in understanding, making, and remaking urban places in sustainable, socially just, politically responsible, and rewarding ways. Paying attention to urban phenomena, to cities and their metropolitan regions, means paying attention to the most basic aspects of human and societal evolution. Placed before us is a set of crucial questions: are we becoming more mature as a community? A region? A society? A species? What does the state of our urban environment say about who we are and what we're becoming?

What is Urban and Public Affairs at U of L?

The School of Urban and Public Affairs offers three graduate degree programs: Master of Public Administration (MPA), Master of Urban Planning (MUP), and Ph.D. in Urban and Public Affairs. Accelerated joint MUP/MPA and MUP/JD programs are available.

The School houses the Urban Studies Institute, a center for applied social research. The Institute comprises several centers, including the: Kentucky State Data Center, Survey Research Center, Kentucky Population Research, Center for Environmental Policy and Management, Center for Hazards Research and Policy Development, and Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods.

Degrees in Urban and Public Affairs at U of L:

Ph.D. in Urban and Public Affairs

The School of Urban and Public Affairs offers a Doctor of Philosophy in Urban and Public Affairs. The Ph.D. in Urban and Public Affairs is an interdisciplinary degree that prepares graduates for careers in teaching and research, policy analysis, public management, land use and environmental planning, and economic development. A number of fellowships and assistantships for outstanding students are available. Some students have the opportunity to conduct research with principal investigators through the School's Urban Studies Institute.

Master of Public Administration

The School of Urban and Public Affairs offers a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree in cooperation with the Department of Political Science. The Program, fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), focuses on general administration, public and non-profit management, planning, policy analysis, applied research, government and organizational theory. It is multidisciplinary and aimed at providing recent college graduates, public sector practitioners, and per-



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sons in related fields, with theoretical knowledge and practical skills that prepare them for non-profit sector and public service careers, or complement their past professional experiences. Classes are held in the late afternoons, evenings, and on weekends to meet the scheduling requirements of persons holding full-time jobs.

Master of Urban Planning

The School of Urban and Public Affairs offers a Master of Urban Planning (MUP) degree in cooperation with the Department of Geography and Geosciences. The MUP Program prepares students to work in a wide variety of fields, including land use and environmental planning, parks and recreation planning, urban design, historic preservation, transportation planning, open space planning, regional planning, and in the development of geographic information systems.

Joint Master of Public Administration and Urban Planning

The Master of Public Administration/Master of Urban Planning Program is a professional set of degrees that enables students to move into managerial positions while also being competitive for technical positions. Both the Master of Public Administration and the Master of Urban Planning play integral roles in the University's urban/metropolitan mission. Through its academic curriculum, the joint program provides students with a strong foundation in the techniques of management, the politics of administration, and the theory and practice of urban and regional planning. Practical real world application is achieved through the internship/practicum and hands on projects.

The joint MPA/MUP Program is designed to prepare students for career placement and advancement in a wide variety of settings. These include positions in the public sector, the non-profit sector, and various planning organizations.

Joint Master of Urban Planning and Juris Doctor

The dual MUP/JD program recognizes the values of interdisciplinary study and encourages students having an interest in both law and urban planning to pursue these degrees simultaneously.

Occupational Overview & Employment Requirements:

- An undergraduate degree in Public Administration or Urban Planning, with the appropriate experience, is sufficient for entry-level position in government and business. A graduate degree helps prepare students for management and upper-level administrative positions. Carefully research programs in order to choose specializations or concentrations of interest.
- Consider law school for careers in upper level politics, administration or management. Explore joint J.D. and M.P.A. programs to see if they meet your career goals.
- Obtain broad liberal arts background including written and verbal skills, communication and foreign language skills.
- Part-time, summer, internship, and volunteer experiences are extremely helpful in government affairs, organizations or public service areas.



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- Develop strong leadership skills; run for office in clubs and organizations in school or community. Volunteer to organize or lead an event or project.
- Get involved in Student Government.
- Demonstrate interest/involvement in community affairs/events.
- Join related social and/or professional organizations.
- Employment opportunities in local government tend to follow population trends in terms of growth and decline in availability of positions. Be prepared to relocate to find the most opportunities.
- Develop a strong personal network through informal contacts.
- Political connections are helpful for appointed positions. Most agencies respond to professional connections.
- Expect keen competition for federal positions. Prepare yourself with a strong academic background and good experience. Many government jobs have strict guidelines and want to carefully match candidates' KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities) to the job description. Research this first and seek the classes and experiences that will best prepare you.
- Develop patience, persistence and drive in obtaining government positions.
- Explore application to Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) and the Outstanding - Scholar Program for federal positions.
- Learn applicable application process for area of interest.
- Research websites and books that address various government job opportunities, pay structure and hiring processes.
- Consider military experience and training as an entryway into government jobs and public service.
- Plan on following a flexible career path to higher positions. Many people begin on the clerical or entry level in order to gain experience and network.
- Many transferable skills such as analytical, organizational, research, interpersonal, computer, leadership, teamwork, and oral/written communication are associated with the urban planning degree.
- To enhance graduate or professional school opportunities, maintain a high grade point average, secure strong faculty recommendations, join student or professional organizations, and gain relevant experience outside of the classroom through work, internship, volunteer, and research opportunities.
- A Ph.D. is required for teaching at the four-year university level.
- For human or social service positions, gain experience with a population of interest (i.e., children, college students, elderly adults) and develop multicultural sensitivity and understanding. Plan to earn a graduate degree in counseling, social work or related field.
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals working in areas of interest.

Career Opportunities in Urban and Public Affairs:

The MUP Program prepares students to work in a wide variety of fields, including land use and environmental planning, parks and recreation planning, urban design, historic



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preservation, transportation planning, open space planning, regional planning, and in the development of geographic information systems.

Possible Public Administration Job Fields:

Government Departments (Local, State, and Federal):

Demography
Social Statistics
Public Administration
Policy Analysis
Research
Program Development
Human Services
City Planning
Law Enforcement
Politics

Human Resource Management:

Counseling
Case Management
Advocacy
Rehabilitation Counseling
Mental Health Services

Non-profit organizations & Community Service:

Administrative
Data Analysis
Demography
Market Research
Information Sourcing
Development
Program Management
Policy Analysis
Research
Grant Writing

Employers/Industries and Success Strategies:

GOVERNMENT: Federal departments and agencies such as: Departments of Agriculture, Education, Interior, Commerce, Defense, Health and Human Services, Drug Enforcement Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Housing and Urban Development, Veteran's Administration, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Aging - Peace Corps - State and local government - Planning and development commissions - National, state, or local parks or recreation departments - Housing authorities - Social service agencies - Transportation departments



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SUGGESTED STRATEGIES: Supplement curriculum with coursework in statistics and social research. Develop exceptional computer, communication, and research skills. Gain work experience via government internships, part-time jobs, or summer work. Develop a specialty such as aging, family, criminal justice, or healthcare. Learn the federal job application process. Obtain a graduate degree for advanced positions. Consider obtaining a minor in political science, public administration, or other relevant fields.

HUMAN SERVICES: Community service agencies - Advocacy groups - Federal, state, and local government - United Way agencies - Local branches of national non-profit organizations - Religiously-affiliated service organizations - Private foundations - Adoption and child care agencies - Nursing homes and retirement communities - Hospitals and wellness centers - Halfway houses - Vocational services - Educational information services

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES: Gain experience and develop helping skills through volunteer positions. Spend summers working at camps, YMCA's, or other social service agencies. Gain experience working with diverse populations. Develop excellent communication skills. Concentrate course work in an area of interest such as youth, gerontology, or poverty. Learn a second language in order to interact with non-English speakers and increase marketability. Serve as a peer mentor, resident assistant, or other student leader. Earn a master's degree in social work, counseling, or other related field to increase employment opportunities. Most states require licensure or certification for positions involving the direct provision of therapeutic services to clients.

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH: Universities - Government agencies - Research institutes - Non-profit organizations - Private industries - Advertising and marketing firms - Consulting organizations - Information brokers - Newspapers, magazines, news agencies - Public opinion research polls

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES: Develop exceptional quantitative, statistical, and writing skills. Learn to use statistics software packages as well as database, spreadsheet, and desktop publishing programs. Volunteer to help a professor with a research project. Obtain an advanced degree for research administration positions. Network with professionals working in areas of interest. Gain experience working on teams.

NONPROFIT: Local and national nonprofit agencies and foundations - Charitable organizations - Trade or professional organizations - Research organizations and think tanks - Educational institutions

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES: Participate in internships and/or volunteer activities for related experience. Develop strong communication and leadership skills. Become a member of relevant organizations and seek leadership roles. Develop strong research skills and learn how to write grants. Research the organizations' values to find a good fit with yours. It is critical that you are knowledgeable about and care about the work you're going to do.

Related Links in the Urban Planning and Public Affairs Discipline:

[Professional Association Links](#)

National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration <http://www.naspaa.org/>



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American Planning Association <http://www.planning.org/>

Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning <http://www.acsp.org/>

Urban Affairs Association <http://www.udel.edu/uaa/>

Career Planning Links



<http://online.onetcenter.org>



<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>