

[Degrees](#)[Colleges](#)[Rankings](#)

## The 10 Best Graduate Programs In Urban And Regional Planning

### Top College Rankings

[The 25 Best Online Colleges](#)[Top 10 Film Schools](#)[10 Best Online Colleges For Public Administration](#)[Top 10 Online Colleges for Teaching](#)[10 Best E-Commerce / E-Business Colleges](#)

### Navigation

[College Rankings](#)[List of Colleges](#)[List of Online Colleges](#)[List of Degrees](#)[List of Careers](#)

[\(Image Source\)](#)

Cities and towns must respond to the changing needs of their populations. New schools, better parks and recreation centers, water infrastructures and improved highway and travel thruways are all integral aspects of a functioning society. With the development and implementation of each of these projects, there are concerns which must be considered in advance. City and state officials are responsible for ensuring the safety of their citizens while the needs of the growing populations are addressed. Environmental matters must also be considered. The health and safety of the people is contingent on the preservation and careful consideration of the environmental factors which may be impacted by the project. An urban and regional planner is trained with the knowledge and skills to advise those charged with the responsibility of approving the project as well as those who are designing and constructing it.

In order to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to adeptly perform the tasks associated with the urban and regional planning profession, an individual must begin with education. There are a very limited number of colleges which offer undergraduate degree programs in the planning field, approximately fifteen. However, the urban and regional planning field requires individuals with knowledge in a vast number of subject areas. Mathematics, earth sciences, life sciences, physics, geology, geography and policy are just a few. Majoring in any of these areas will provide some of the knowledge and skills that will be needed for the profession. Regardless of the discipline in





which the individual earns their undergraduate degree, a graduate degree is preferred by the majority of those who will require the services of a planner. The advanced education provides the time necessary to acquire more of the knowledge and skills which are essential to success in the field of urban and regional planning.

Below are the colleges with the top ranked graduate programs in urban and regional planning:

## 10. University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

The Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, founded in 1946, endeavors to advance and disseminate knowledge in planning through research, education and service. The department is one of the oldest, largest and most renowned in the nation. The pioneering approach to planning taken by the University of North Carolina adopts a social science emphasis. The challenges and problems of planning are evaluated utilizing the principles and methodologies of the social sciences and incorporate the concepts of architecture and landscape design. The multidisciplinary approach develops a broad perspective in the program graduates enabling them to become respected leaders in the field of planning. Throughout its years, the department has broadened its approach and perspectives to include the emerging needs and advancing technologies of current societies.

The Department of City and Regional Planning offers degree programs with varying curriculum and specializations including planning in developing countries, real estate development, public policy analysis and history, design and preservation of the built environment. The two year Master of City and Regional Planning degree program provides students with the skills and knowledge necessary to become effective and successful planning professionals. Students select an area of specialization in community development, economic development, environmental planning, transportation planning or land use planning and design. The dual degree programs combine corresponding areas of study with relevance to the planning field such as business, public administration, public health and law providing graduates with the skills to address the complexities of the complicated field. The curriculum includes study of theory, techniques and methodology, problem solving workshops and a Master's project.

## 9. University of California – Berkeley

The Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, established in 1948, has earned international recognition for the quality of the degree programs and its pioneering research. The department is committed to discovering and advancing knowledge which will revolutionize the planning field; solving the most pressing and imminent environmental and social issues around the world. The University of California Berkeley has become a global leader, an active participant in international collaborations regarding critical issues. Students are taught through academic inquiry and practical experiential learning as they are included as participants in the international forums. Part time employment as planners is often used to supplement both the income and to gain practical experience in the field. The instructional faculty members are award winning, internationally regarded academics and researchers dedicated to training the future leaders and problem solvers in the field.

The Department of Regional Planning at UC Berkeley offers comprehensive graduate degree

programs. Students have the option of enrolling in the two year Master of City Planning and a PhD program in City and Regional Planning. The Master of City Planning degree provides five concentrations; transportation policy and planning, housing, community and economic development, urban design, land use planning and environmental planning and policy. The two fields offered in the degree program include Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Analysis and International and Comparative Planning. Dual degree programs with the Department of Architecture, landscape architecture and environmental planning and law school are also offered. The curriculum prepares students for the planning profession through extensive study in theory, history and practice and developing critical and reflective thinking skills. Students participate in research projects and public service opportunities.

## **8. Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning at Massachusetts Institute of Technology is housed within the School of architecture and Planning. Established in 1933, the department of Urban Studies and Planning is committed to improving the world by providing students with the knowledge and skills to help create and implement safe and effective city designs which elevate the quality of life and ensure the sustainability of communities and resources. Emphasis is placed on recognizing the positive and vital roles of government leadership and technological innovation in accomplishing these goals. Massachusetts Institute of Technology boasts the largest planning faculty in the nation with 60 faculty members. Students of the School are offered the opportunity to participate in research and design projects abroad; exploring and assisting with the planning issues in other countries. Field work and internships are integral aspects of the degree programs.

The two year master degree program in City Planning or Master of Science degree offered at Massachusetts Institute of Technology are individualized programs of study designed by the students with the assistance of faculty advisers. There are four areas of specialization, also known as program areas, from which students can select courses; city design and development, environmental policy and planning, international development group and housing, community and economic development. Students must complete the introductory course provided in each of the four program areas if courses are selected from that specialization. The introductory courses provide an overview of that area of specialization. The advanced curriculum provides a comprehensive understanding of the field and helps students develop analytical skills and techniques. Students are taught through lectures, case studies and practical experience.

## **7. Cornell University**

The College of Architecture, Art and Planning within Cornell University has earned recognition for the high quality and flexibility of the degree programs, the dedication and expertise of the instructional faculty members and the extensive opportunities at which students are able to gain practical and real world experience in their fields of interest. There is a strong emphasis by the Department on correlating academic and experiential learning. Students are encouraged to participate in workshops and research projects where various methodologies can be applied to objectively analyze their individual theories and views in addition to the critical analysis performed in the classroom settings. The study abroad program provides opportunities to examine international research problems in areas such as Asia, Africa, Latin America and even a study option in Rome. The internship requirement provides students with substantive and valuable job

related experience and networking connections from Cornell University's unparalleled resources.

An array of degree options are offered in the field of planning at the College of Architecture, Art and Planning within Cornell University. Students can choose to obtain either a Master of Regional Planning in City and Regional Planning or a Master of Arts in Historic Preservation Planning. Joint Degree programs are also offered in Architecture, landscape architecture, law degree or real estate. A doctorate program in the field of planning is also offered. The curriculum provides students with the advanced skills and planning analysis tools required to understand 'the structural forces that cause social inequity, environmental damage, and economic decline'. Students study planning and spatial theory and practice as it applies to both domestic and international settings, economics and law. Concentration areas are offered in land use and environmental planning, economic development planning and international studies in planning. The independent project options required of all students include a research paper, a thesis or professional report.

## 6. Rutgers University

The Edward J Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, founded in 1967, is a central contributor to the international world of planning. The Department is committed to research and education with special emphasis on the importance and ethical responsibility of public service. Students are instilled with an appreciation for innovation, leadership skills and an understanding of the vital importance of recognizing the impact of planning on the populations affected by the projects and ensuring they are beneficial to the communities without becoming a detriment to the environment. The department recognizes and understands the continuously evolving and changing needs of the planning profession and endeavors to prepare its graduates to effectively respond and adapt to these needs. Graduates of Rutgers University have the benefit of the continuing education courses and seminars offered. The school also hosts international fellows programs for students from around the world.

Students enrolled at The Edward J Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University are offered various degree options in the field of planning. Both a Master of City and Regional Planning and the Master of City and Regional Studies are comprehensive degree programs which provide training in both theory and practice. Students are expected to select from five concentration areas which afford them the opportunity to develop degree programs suited to their individual interests and career goals. These areas include environmental and physical planning, housing and real estate, international development and regional planning, transportation policy and planning and urban and community development. The curriculum includes coursework in methodology, history, economic development, social policy, urban design, workforce development and land use. Students develop skills in analytical and critical thinking and the application of quantitative methods for analysis.

Joint and dual degree programs are offered; the Master of City and Regional Planning and Juris Doctor degrees and the Master of City and Regional Planning and Master of Science in Agricultural Economics.

## 5. University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign began as just a few courses in the Landscape Architecture Division in 1913 and eventually evolved

into its own department. The department is one of the oldest and largest planning departments in the nation; offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field. A leader in research, public service and academic advancement, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning endeavors to produce graduates capable of developing and implementing ethical, safe and sustainable designs without detriment to the environment. The emphasis placed on understanding the impact of regional and urban development on the ecological, social and economic aspects of society prepare students for the challenges the planning process. The design aspect of the field is also considered and studied.

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning offers students a Bachelor and Master of Arts in Urban Planning and a Doctor of Philosophy in Regional Planning. Students enrolled in the Master degree program are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to become leaders in the planning field. The curriculum includes eight core required courses, and the completion of 60-64 hours of major requirements. The coursework includes interdisciplinary theoretical and interpretive views of human settlement and history and theories of planning. Students will take courses in physical planning, urban history and theory, urban and regional analysis, survey design and analysis, economics for planners and law and planning. Students are expected to develop a specialization in community development for social justice, geographic information systems and analysis, land use and transportation planning, local and regional economic development and sustainable design and development.

#### **4. Harvard University**

The Department of Urban Planning and Design within the Graduate School of Design in Harvard University was the first to establish official programs in regional planning and later urban design. Since the inception of these programs beginning in 1923, Harvard University has been regarded as a leader in the education of urban planners. The interdisciplinary approach of the department instills graduates of the program with a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and impact of the planning field. The programs focus on the importance of the planner's role in developing private and public structures and spaces which are productive and equitable. The faculty members are experienced professionals and highly regarded academic scholars. Students have the opportunity to become a member of the Harvard University student group, the Harvard Urban Planning Organization, which sponsors tours, lectures and film screenings related to the field of urban planning. Additionally, students who exhibit excellence in varying areas such as academics, thesis and research are honored with awards, fellowships and scholarships.

The two year Master in Urban Planning degree offered at the Department of Urban Planning and Design is a comprehensive program which encompasses the breadth of the discipline and explores the relevance of related subject areas to the field. Students are taught in small studios and classes, lectures and seminars. The curriculum includes in depth exploration of theory, history, technology and contemporary design problems. Students are taught the techniques and equipped with the analytical tools necessary to become effective, successful planners capable of the creative application of both. The courses provide students with the foundational skills and knowledge necessary to develop and implement equitable plans and designs which will serve the needs of the populations they serve without producing detrimental effects to the environment or the economy. Concentration areas can be developed in housing and neighborhood development, real estate and urban development, transportation and infrastructure and urban design. The program is accredited

by the Planning Accreditation Board.

### 3. University of Pennsylvania

The Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania or PennPlanning, as it is also known, has earned its ranking among the top planning schools due to its innovative programs and pioneering research efforts. The history of the department dates back to the early 1900's where it began with architecture and evolved to include a range of fields including city planning. The University of Pennsylvania is committed to providing relevant programs by consistently reviewing and updating them to ensure students are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills. New programs are also added to the department as advancements in technology and knowledge result in the emergence of new fields. In addition to the degree programs, the Department also offers several certificate programs which can be completed simultaneously with the graduate degree programs. The planning degree programs at the University of Pennsylvania have earned accreditation through the Planning Accreditation Board.

The Master of City Planning Degree offered at the University of Pennsylvania is a two year program which encompasses the extensive topics of relevance to urban planning professionals. Students are trained in the areas of urban design, community and economic development, land use and environmental planning, urban revitalization, neighborhood planning, sustainable development and housing and transportation. The curriculum includes coursework in history, theory, law and methods. Among the offered and required courses are inferential statistics, introduction to city planning, urban economics, quantitative planning methods, modeling geographic objects, planning by numbers, negotiation and city engagement and urban design methods. Workshops and studios provide opportunities to explore and analyze real world planning issues and problems and to develop effective designs. Students are required to complete an internship where they will gain experience in planning. Dual Degree programs are also offered in Landscape architecture, law, social work, historic preservation and architecture.

### 2. University of California – Los Angeles

The Department of Urban Planning is located within the School of Public Affairs at the University of California Los Angeles. Founded in 1994, the School of Public Affairs is a relatively young department which gained recognition for the superior quality of their faculty members, resources, degree programs and research projects and the productivity of their results. UCLA is considered the most published institution in urban studies and urban planning. The faculty members are internationally renowned academic and research experts with extensive experience in their respective fields. The department sponsors a visiting scholars program; extending the benefit of the university resources for the research of experts from other universities with doctoral degrees. The community scholars program is a forum attended by various community leaders and university students to discuss and consider solutions for pressing planning and policy issues and to participate in certain research projects. Study abroad trips are also offered as part of the program curriculum; permitting students the opportunity to study urban planning issues in various international contexts. Regions participating in these programs include Geneva, Switzerland and Tokyo.

The two-year Master of Planning degree is accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board. All

students are required to complete the core courses for planning which provide the foundational knowledge essential to the field. The program prepares students to address the social and economic aspects of planning while considering the spatial relationships. Students are expected to choose an area of concentration from among community development and housing, design and development, environmental analysis and policy, regional and international development and transportation policy and planning. The curriculum includes a field work requirement for students who enter the master degree program without industry experience for which they must complete 300 hours. A Master thesis, applied research project, comprehensive project or a two examination must be completed as part of the degree program. Joint degree programs are offered permitting students to complete both degrees in planning in conjunction with Juris doctor (J.D.), business administration, Latin American Studies and Architecture.

## 1. University of Southern California

The School of Policy, Planning and Development at the University of Southern California is committed to improving the quality of life for people around the globe through high quality degree programs and research projects exploring solutions for the most pressing issues of today. The university recognizes the urgency and necessity of addressing the critical problems in planning and endeavors to prepare their graduates to become leaders in the various areas of specialization within the planning field and to work in collaboration with experts in a range of areas. In order to secure a safe and comfortable future for populations across the globe, the University of Southern California provides an interdisciplinary program which ensures their graduates attain a comprehensive understanding of the planning field as well as the many other fields which substantially affect it. Courses are taught by renowned, expert faculty members with experience in the industry.

The 48 credit dynamic Master of Planning degree program at the University of Southern California provides in-depth, comprehensive exploration and study of the field which examines the problems and solutions from the smallest scale to the largest. Students enrolled in the degree program are trained to consider and seek answers to the most vital questions in urban planning from determining the types of services needed, the effect of structures and infrastructures on the health and quality of life of the people, the sustainability of the communities and resources and the economic impacts. The curriculum is designed to prepare students for service in all segments of the field through academic study and an emphasis on experiential learning. Students are equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to serve in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Five concentrations are offered in economic development, preservation and design of the built environment, social and community planning, sustainable land use planning and transportation and infrastructure planning. The program is accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board.

[← The 10 Best Paleontology Graduate Programs](#)

[The 10 Best E-Commerce / E-Business Degree Programs →](#)

## College Rankings

Top 10 Online Colleges For Public

## Most Popular

Top 10 Online Catholic Colleges &

## Career Guides

How To Become A Chiropractor

Administration

10 Best Online Real Estate College Programs

Top 10 Online Colleges for Teaching Degrees

10 Best Film Schools In The United States

Top 10 E-Commerce / E-Business Degree Programs

10 Best Grad Programs In Urban & Regional Planning

Top 10 Colleges With Paleontology Graduate Programs

10 Best Landscape Architecture Programs

10 Popular Online Degrees

Universities of 2011

Top 10 Online Christian Colleges & Universities of 2011

6 Colleges Where You Can Spend Your Money On Beer Instead Of Tuition

Top 25 Online Colleges & Universities Of 2011

Top 10 Easiest and Hardest College Degree Majors

The World's 15 Most Extraordinary Homeschoolers

7 Generous College Donations (With Insane Strings Attached)

7 Tips for Parents in College

Doctors of Rock: 10 Musicians with PhDs

9 Baffling College Mascots From Across The Country

How To Get A Job In Culinary Arts