



Updated August 2016

Dalhousie University
Faculty of Architecture and Planning
School of Planning

Introduction

The School of Planning is the hub of planning education in Atlantic Canada. The School offers two graduate degree programs in planning: the Master of Planning (MPlan), a first professional degree accredited by the Professional Standards Board for the planning profession in Canada and recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners, and the research-focussed, non-accredited Master of Planning Studies (MPS).

The Master of Planning (MPLAN) program prepares students to become professional planners. Many graduates will work for private firms, for government, or in non-governmental organizations. Others will find that the education provides a solid foundation for careers in multidisciplinary spheres such as environmental protection, transportation planning, community development or urban design. Planning provides knowledge, a skill set, and a way of thinking with broad application. Applicants seeking a first-professional graduate degree in planning should consider the Master of Planning degree program.

The Master of Planning Studies (MPS) is a research-focused graduate degree that provides opportunities for graduate students to conduct advanced research in planning, contribute to the development of knowledge in the field, and complete sophisticated supervised research in the specialized field of study. The MPS program will appeal to highly qualified candidates who would like to pursue graduate thesis research in planning, and obtain specific training in a specialised area within the discipline (e.g. transportation planning, climate change and adaptation planning, urban design, etc.). Applicants must demonstrate capacity for advanced research and present a compelling research topic that matches the research expertise and interests of a faculty member in the School of Planning as part of their application. The Master of Planning Studies is not an accredited professional degree: it does not provide a direct route to the Planning profession for those without professional planning designation.

Planners are involved in activities that shape the future of communities, the quality of the environment, and the character of daily life. In their work for government, planners engage and motivate the public, help to develop a wide range of policies affecting the character and potential of communities, and act as guardians of the environment and of our built heritage. Working as consultants in the private sector, planners undertake a wide variety of tasks ranging from physical design and transportation planning, to creating strategies for sustainable or “smart” development. Planners work throughout the world, from the heart of Canada's towns and cities to the fields and villages of the developing countries.

The School of Planning encourages initiative, resourcefulness, and creative questioning of received doctrine. The curriculum of the School emphasizes: (a) specialized knowledge of theory and practice of planning; (b) up-to-date skills; (c) a sound appreciation of the environmental, social, and economic processes that shape the form and character of communities; (d) the active contribution of students in confronting and resolving contemporary planning problems in local communities; and (e) the development of personal capabilities suited to the leadership roles that planners assume.

Through environmental and community-centered learning, teaching, research and practice, faculty members and students in the School engage in the planning and design of settlements in various

scales and contexts. Central to the professional planning program are studio courses (where learning is gained through working on real projects based in the community). Studio course content is delivered in a way that meets academic objectives within the practice of dealing with community planning issues. Thus the studio integrates theory and practice. Students also have opportunities to participate in field trips within the region and to international cities to learn about planning outside of Halifax.

Masters Programs in Planning

- The **Master of Planning** is a first professional degree requiring 20 months of full-time study (or more for part-time students). Students are admitted from a wide range of undergraduate programs offering four-year degrees. Students take required planning studios (including individual and small team research), specified required courses, and selected electives.
- The **Master of Planning Studies** is a research-focused master's degree intended for highly qualified applicants who wish to conduct graduate thesis research in planning. Admission to the MPS program requires a four-year undergraduate degree in planning or related disciplines (such as engineering, geography, geomatics, environmental sciences, architecture, etc.). It is also open to candidates with a four year degree in any subject with four years of planning work experience to make the candidate eligible for membership in a professional planning institute. Students take specified course work, conduct independent supervised research, and complete a thesis. The program can be completed in 12 to 24 months of full-time study, or a longer period of part-time study.

The **Graduate Calendar** identifies current policy for graduate degrees. Check it for degree requirements. The material below is provided for **guidance only**. The guidelines presented here are neither exhaustive nor exclusive, and should be viewed in the context of 'normal' circumstances. It should be noted that ultimately it is the graduate student's responsibility to ensure that all requirements regarding the student's graduate program are fulfilled in a timely manner.

People to contact

If you run into significant issues in your program, you should likely begin by contacting Tamara Adlain in the School Office. If you need other advice, feel free to consult the Graduate Coordinator / the Director of the School. The Dean of the Faculty addresses issues that go beyond the school level.

School of Planning Office

Administrative secretary, Tamara Adlain

902-494-3260 tadlain@dal.ca

Office: 5410 Spring Garden Road, Room HB03C, Main floor of Medjuck Building

Graduate coordinator: Dr Patricia Manuel (acting, 2016/17)

The Graduate Coordinator manages the graduate programs in the School. Issues related to program requirements, funding, space, and special requests should go to the Coordinator.

902-494-3209 patricia.manuel@dal.ca Office: 5410 Spring Garden Road, Room HB03D

Director of the School of Planning: Dr Patricia Manuel

The Director manages the overall operation of the School of Planning. Issues of timetabling, program development, and general academic program supervision belong with the Director.

902-494-6597 Patricia.Manuel@dal.ca Office HB03D, Main floor of Medjuck Building

Dean of Architecture and Planning: Prof Christine Macy

The Dean manages the Faculty of Architecture and Planning. Major issues of space, scheduling, and resources are settled by the Dean. The Dean's office is located in the main floor of the Medjuck Architecture and Planning Building.

Christine.Macy@dal.ca

Dean's office, Medjuck Building

Facilities available

Students have access to facilities in the Faculty including computer labs, printing resources, and workshops. (Some facilities require students to take a safety course prior to use.) The School has a kitchen which students are free to use (and to help keep clean and stocked). The Sexton Campus has library, help desk, student services, and gym facilities available to students; facilities are also available on the other Dalhousie campuses. Check with the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students and with Faculty of Graduate Studies for further information on benefits available to graduate students.

Graduate students are assigned work-space in the planning studios: one is just outside the School Office. First year studio classes are held here. Second year students have work-space on the deck above the Exhibition Room.

Planning faculty members have their offices and research labs in various buildings on the campus including the Medjuck Architecture and Planning building, Sexton House, and Engineering B Building. If you are having trouble locating any faculty member, check with the School Office.

Financial support

Scholarships

The School has a limited number of scholarships to offer to students of outstanding academic merit. Entrance scholarships are awarded with offers of admission. These are limited in number, and generally go to students with high averages.

Students are strongly encouraged to apply for national scholarship awards.

- The Canadian Institute of Planners offers several Scholarships ranging in value from \$2000 to \$5000. Candidates must be student members of CIP. Applications are usually due in January. <http://cip-icu.ca/Awards-and-Scholarships/Planning-Student-Trust-Fund-Scholarships-Overview#>

SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR have moved to a shared platform application process for the Canada Graduate Scholarships.

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSM-BESCM_eng.asp

Check the website for further details on the application process and deadlines.

- The Canada Graduate Scholarships for master's students are valued at \$17,500. Students may be working on topics related to the social sciences, the natural sciences and engineering, or the health sciences.

To determine deadlines and other scholarship opportunities, visit the FGS web site:

<http://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/funding.html>

Investigate the requirements for scholarships and plan to apply.

In-progress scholarships for students about to enter year two in the Master of Planning program are determined at the end of the first year. These include the **Rosetti Scholarships** (usually \$1000 to \$2000) that recognize academic excellence and the strength of a proposal for how the student will use the funds. The **Nova Scotia Planning Directors award** (\$500 to \$1000, varying from year to year) goes to a student of high academic standing who has shown leadership within the student body.

Students may be considered for other scholarships provided by donors to the School. The **Dexel-Lawen Scholarship** (\$5000) is awarded to a graduate student in planning pursuing study in urban planning and design.

There are also awards upon completing the final year, awarded at graduation. The **Dykeman**

Scholarship (\$750, varying yearly) is awarded to a student (either BCD or MPlan) committed to rural planning.

Assistantships

The School has a limited number of **teaching and research assistantships** offered to graduate students. Some teaching assistantships may be awarded with offers of admission. In other cases, students apply for these, usually during the summer period. Compensation generally ranges from about \$1000 to \$2000 per term (according to the time commitment required and the pay scale set by the union covering graduate students). Placements are also available in the College of Sustainability or other programs at the university.

Faculty members with external grant or contract funding may offer some students full-year or 20-month assistantships, which would include the summer work term job.

School of Planning Graduate Grading Guidelines (Adopted: 25 November 2002)

The following chart offers a summary of the grading regulations for **graduate courses** in the School of Planning and the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS regulation 7.6.2). The university issues letter-grades, and calculates student averages based on the grade points shown. Faculty members who use percentages to calculate final grades may use the equivalency for conversion to letter grades. Narrative comments are offered to indicate expectations.

(Note that the chart shows the **final grade** scale: grades on interim assignments may fall between B- and F. A graduate student must earn at least B- overall to pass a course. Any final score lower than B- will be converted to a grade of F.)

Grade	grade point	percent equivalent	definition	notes
A+	4.3	90-100	Exceptional	exceptional work which exceeds expectations; high order original thinking, research, and critical skills; excellent capacity to analyse and synthesize; excellent grasp of subject matter; thorough understanding of the literature
A	4.0	85-89	Excellent	high order original thinking, research, and critical skills; excellent capacity to analyse and synthesize; excellent grasp of subject matter; thorough understanding of the literature
A-	3.7	80-84	Very good	strong evidence of original thinking, research, and critical skills; very good ability to analyse and synthesize; very good grasp of subject matter; very good understanding of the literature
B+	3.3	77-79		
B	3.0	73-76	Good	evidence of original thinking, research and critical skills; good ability to analyse and synthesize; familiarity with the literature
B-	2.7	70-72		
F	0	0-69	Failure	insufficient evidence of original thinking, research skills, critical skills, analytical ability, familiarity with literature; or failure to complete assignments on time or according to course specifications
INC			Incomplete	Extensions are available only in exceptional circumstances.
ILL			Illness, compassionate reasons	Documentation must be submitted to the Instructor within one week of due date.
W			Withdrew after deadline	The Registrar's office assigns this grade.

A grade of B- or higher is a clear pass for graduate students. A grade of F is a failure. The course must be repeated (if a mandatory one) or replaced (if an elective). **Note that Graduate Studies will immediately dismiss a student who fails a mandatory course.** Students who are dismissed may apply for re-admission after one year has passed: the Graduate Committee assesses applications for re-admission.

Advanced standing for courses

Students may apply to have some credits they have taken previously applied towards their degree program, only under the following conditions:

- if a student has taken a course in a recognized planning program that covers the content of a specific required course, then the student may request a waiver of the required course at Dalhousie. The student will then be required to take electives for the same credit value from courses offered within the School of Planning.
- if a student has taken courses that would be acceptable as electives within the planning program and those courses did not count towards any other degree program completed by the student, then the student may apply for advanced placement in light of the transfer credit for those electives. A maximum of four courses (or 12 credit hours) outside the School may apply towards the degree.

Students may only receive advanced standing for courses in which they earned a grade of B or higher.

**** An application for advanced standing must be made no later than October 1st of the student's first year in the program.** Students must provide sufficient documentation (including course outlines and transcripts) to allow faculty to assess whether advanced standing may be granted. Receiving credit for a course at another institution does not guarantee that the School of Planning at Dalhousie University will grant advanced standing.

Foreign students working in a second language

Students in planning need good language skills. If English is not your first language, you may find the first term a difficult transition. The School strongly recommends that you take a university level ESL course to prepare yourself for university study. <http://collegeofcontinuingdal.ca/ESL/>

Try to immerse yourself in an English environment, so you are always working in the language. Practice will improve your listening, writing, and reading skills. (Working in your first language outside of school may make it more difficult for you to adjust.)

If you are having trouble with course material, let the instructor know. In some cases, teachers may allow you to tape lectures or give you some lecture notes to help you study. Don't sign up for a heavy workload the first term.

Inclusive Learning Environment

Dalhousie University and the School of Planning are committed to an inclusive and supportive learning environment free of discrimination and harassment. We are committed to respecting and accommodating difference within the academic environment. For more information, see <http://hrehp.dal.ca/index.php> and <http://studentaccessibility.dal.ca/>. Any concerns about discrimination or harassment should be brought to authorities right away.

Academic Integrity

Dalhousie University is committed to academic honesty, integrity and fairness. Students are encouraged and expected to learn early about the policies and practice of sound research and to implement them throughout their academic careers. The School follows the university's established policies on academic integrity and plagiarism. For more information see <http://academicintegrity.dal.ca/index.php>.

MASTER OF PLANNING [Professional degree]

Plan of study

Students take a combination of mandatory and elective courses over 20 months of full-time study (including the four-month work term). Students normally take 15 credit hours per term, but may take more (maximum 18) or fewer. A total of 60 credit hours and a work term are required for successful completion of the degree. The suggested study plan outlines the required courses and the sequence in which they are normally taken. (A full-time load is 9 credit hours or more. Students studying part-time should consult the graduate coordinator or a faculty advisor to develop an appropriate sequence to meet their needs.)

Suggested study plan: Master of Planning [revised 2016]

A normal load is 12 to 18 credit hours per semester.

Term 1: fall	PLAN 5000.06 PLAN 5101.03 PLAN 5102.03 PLAN 5303.03 elective(s)	Planning studio 1 History and philosophy of planning Planning practice Planning methods A <i>Recommended: Plan 6250 Maritime field trip</i>
Term 2: winter	PLAN 5500.06 PLAN 5304.03 PLAN 5035.03 elective(s)	Planning studio 2 Planning methods B Application of planning law
Term 3: summer	PLAN 5201.00	Work term
Term 4: fall	PLAN 6000.09 elective(s)	Planning project and seminar
Term 5: winter	PLAN 6500.06 PLAN 6505.03 elective(s)	Integrated team project Seminar: theories, ideas and debates in planning

Total: required plus elective courses should total **60 credit hours** (plus work term)

Some mandatory courses, for example PLAN 5101 History and Philosophy of Planning, involve heavy reading loads. If in doubt, consult the Graduate Coordinator on course selections for elective courses to ensure a reasonable workload.

Elective courses may be taken in any term. In year 1, students are encouraged to select their electives from among courses offered in the School of Planning. The Maritime Field Trip is especially encouraged in the first term as an orientation to the region. Students may take more than one field trip course as the destinations change each year.

In year two, students who wish to take courses outside the School should consult with the Graduate Coordinator before making a selection. Students should select courses that contribute to the research interests of the student, or that offer grounding in an area related to the student's career plans. Students may take up to half of their elective credits in courses outside of the program. With permission of the Graduate Coordinator, students may take up to two senior undergraduate electives (3000-4000 level). While students may take 1000 and 2000 level courses at Dalhousie, those courses will NOT count

towards graduate degree requirements. If a course is cross-listed as both undergraduate and graduate level, students must take the graduate level option.

Where specialty courses are not available at Dalhousie, students may take graduate or advanced undergraduate courses at other universities only after receiving permission from the Graduate Coordinator: registration for courses outside of Dalhousie University requires a “Letter of Permission” from the Registrar.

Students who have developed a proposal for an independent study under a faculty member’s guidance may register for Plan 6201 or 6202 **Directed Studies**. (A maximum of two courses may be taken in directed studies.) Complete a proposal form available in the School office, and ask the supervisor to sign it. The form will indicate the nature of the work proposed, specify deadlines for completion of the work, and set out expectations for the final product.

Residency requirement

The Master of Planning program normally requires **twenty (20) months of full-time study**. This generally involves four terms of study on campus (fall/winter, fall/winter), separated by a four-month (minimum of 500 hours) co-op work term (summer).

The program may be completed through **part-time study**. Students should note, however, that taking the first year studios requires a significant time commitment. We recommend that, where possible, students take the first term of study on a full-time basis. Where that is not possible, a student should contact the Graduate Coordinator for advice on course selection.

Students must complete all requirements **within five years** of initial registration in the program. (Under extenuating circumstances, and after providing evidence that all requirements are nearing completion, students approaching the five-year limit may apply to Graduate Studies for a one-year extension of that deadline. In their request, students should indicate how they propose to complete the remaining requirements.)

Independent Project supervisor

In the Winter semester of Year 1, students prepare a proposal for the independent project which they execute in the Fall semester of Year 2. Most students will select a topic from an approved list of project options. The list is available in the fall, but final topic confirmation happens early in the winter semester as part of Plan 5304 Research Methods. Supervisors are identified with particular projects that reflect their research or professional practice interests and experience. Some students may alternatively identify a project based on a prior proposal to meet a scholarship requirement, or if working on a research project with a faculty member. The supervisor supports the project proposal development and continues the support the student through the independent project. Students meet with supervisors independently. They also meet as a group once a week in the independent project seminar, Plan 6000.

Peer mentor

Graduate students in the School of Planning have organized a peer-mentoring program. Students in the upper year volunteer to offer advice to new students coming in. The peer mentor can offer tips on issues like housing, settling in, dealing with the bureaucracy, and surviving your first year as a planning student. The Graduate Planning Society provides information about the mentoring program.

Professional mentor

In association with the Atlantic Planners Institute, the School and the Graduate Planning Society (GPS) established a professional mentorship program some years ago. Professional planners within the region may volunteer to be mentors to planning students. Contact the GPS to determine whether the program is operating this year.

The program has two key objectives:

- to assist planning students in making the transition into the planning profession through creating a professional network;

- to provide a professional development opportunity for practicing planners to help coach the next generation of practitioners.

Work term

In addition to completing course work, students in the Master of Planning program are required to complete a **cooperative work term** of at least 15 weeks (minimum 500 hours) of paid work. The work term normally occurs between the first and second academic years. The purpose of the work term is to give planning students a meaningful work experience in a planning-related occupation.

The Faculty of Architecture and Planning Career Services Director works closely with the School of Planning to ensure appropriate placements for students. The Career Services office maintains a data base of work term employers and recruits placement opportunities, but students are responsible for securing their own placement. The Career Services Director meets with the first year students early in the Fall semester for an orientation to the work term and the services the office provides. There is more support as the Fall term progresses and the placement search intensifies in the winter.

Hiring activities normally run from January through April. Work terms generally begin around May 1. The specific start and end date of the work term is negotiated between the student and the employer.

Students should begin considering where they want to work early in their first year of study. While the Career Services office will receive and distribute job announcements, it is also important that students make their own contacts with potential employers, and do so early to avoid disappointment in the job search. The Career Services Director will hold workshops on job searching skills, such as resume preparation and interviewing, and will meet with students one-on-one to review job interests and prospects.

Work terms must be at least 15 weeks of work (at least 500 hours), in order to satisfy the requirements of the educational program. Students may find work placements in Canada or abroad. During the term students keep a log of their responsibilities and prepare a reflective paper on the experience; during the fall they give a public presentation on the experience.

Suitable jobs for a work term placement include the wide range of employment opportunities that planners may pursue. This could include, for example, employers such as municipal planning departments, federal or provincial agencies, non-profit/NGO groups, consulting firms, research centres, or development companies. The kinds of duties that may be acceptable include research, analysis, planning, design, advocacy, coordination, or writing.

Remember: while the Career Services office and the School assist in promoting employment opportunities and in arranging for workshops or other activities to help students prepare for work term, **each student has the personal responsibility to find an appropriate work term placement.** The work placement is normally a paid position. *A successful job search requires an early start and flexibility.*

The draft course outline for the Work Term follows. Each student completes a tracking form at the beginning of the work term, and submits a work log and a reflective paper at the end of the term. Students give a public presentation on the work term in the next academic semester.

Note: Don't forget to REGISTER for this course during the summer term to get credit for it!

School of Planning, Dalhousie University

General Course Outline: PLAN 5201.00 Work Term

Instructor: Graduate Coordinator with the assistance of the Director of Career Services

Official Description

The work term provides an opportunity for students to integrate practical work experience within the educational environment. A student must complete a work term of not fewer than 15 weeks and at least 500 hours in an employment placement approved by the School of Planning. The student maintains a work journal during the work term, and prepares a synthesis paper at the end of the work term reflecting on the lessons learned during the work term. The student makes a presentation within the School upon completion of the work term.

Restriction: Master of Planning students

Grading system: pass/fail

Requirements to pass

- The student obtains a **placement pre-approved** by the School of Planning.
- The student works full-time for 15 weeks (not fewer than 500 hours), as confirmed by the employer. Confirmation is to be submitted to the Director of Career Services.
- The student maintains a **journal** during the experience. The journal provides an opportunity for recording observations and questions that result from the work experience. Students are encouraged to reflect on their practice on an on-going basis. The journal need not be submitted for evaluation.
- The student completes a Logbook Experience Validation Form available from the Professional Standards Board website (www.psb-planningcanada.ca/CERTIFICATION/worklog.php) and provides a written evaluation of the acceptability of their experience by the PSB. This is due September 1 to the Director of Career Services.
- The student and the employer each complete an **evaluation** of the work placement as requested by the Director of Career Services. The employer verifies the number of hours and weeks worked by the student.
- The student completes a work term **reflective paper**, describing the work undertaken, reflecting on the lessons learned and considering the links between education and practice. The paper should consider how a year of planning education prepared the student for the work term, and what the student wants to learn more about because of the lessons of the work term. The paper is due September 1. (Suggested length 3-6 pages.) Copies should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (School Office) and to the Director of Career Services.
- The student gives a **presentation** on the work term during the subsequent semester (date: TBD), reflecting on the lessons learned. (The presentation is normally about 8-10 minutes – maximum 8 slides.)

Students are responsible for finding suitable jobs for a work term placement and requesting approval from the School for it to meet the work term requirements. The Director of Career Services and/or the Faculty of Architecture and Planning provide assistance in that search but cannot find each student a placement. Students are advised to begin their job search early and to explore all possible avenues to find a placement that suits their interests. Students may contact the Director of Career Services for addresses of potential employers, and for assistance with job searching strategies. The work term is a cooperative employment experience accounting for 30 percent of the academic learning context.

Suitable jobs for a work term placement include the wide range of employment opportunities that planners may pursue. This could include, for example, planning work with employers such as municipal planning departments, federal or provincial agencies, non-profit groups, consulting firms, universities, or development companies. The kinds of duties that may be acceptable include research, analysis, planning, design, advocacy, coordination, or writing. The Canadian Institute of Planning defines planning

to mean: "The planning of the scientific, aesthetic and orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities and services with a view to securing the physical, economic and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban and rural communities." Thus the profession is highly inclusive, and reflects an approach as much as a body of knowledge.

Note: Students who already work as planners may take their work term with their regular employers. To meet the work term requirement they will do one of the following options.

- A. Augment their normal responsibilities with planning projects or community activities outside the usual scope of their work duties. Present this along with your regular duties in your reflective paper.
- B. Prepare a longer reflective paper on "a month in the life of a planner" documenting the kinds of challenges and duties experienced in practice.
- C. Prepare and submit a paper to *Plan Canada* on some important issue, project, or contribution to planning from experiences in your community or with your employer. Present this with your reflective paper on the work term.

School of Planning

PLAN 5201.00 Work Term

Tracking form

Complete the top portion of this form and then return it to the Career Services office as soon as you confirm your work-term position with your work-term employer.

Student name: _____ **ID:** _____

Academic Term / Year: _____

Employer: _____

Supervisor on job: _____ phone: _____
email: _____

Student's work term job title: _____

Work term job description: _____

Number of weeks: _____ number of hours _____

begin date: _____ end date: _____

Return this form to the School as soon as possible.

School decision: _____ (date: _____)

Completed: (indicate signature where approval required, otherwise date)

Employer's evaluation received: _____ Hours completed as required: _____

Log book submitted: _____ Reflective paper received: _____

Paper approved: _____ Presentation made: _____

All REQUIREMENTS COMPLETED: _____
Instructor's signature Date

Dalhousie University
Master of Planning

Name: _____

Student check-list

Date of entry: _____ Previous degree: _____

Any transfer credits or waivers: _____
 (submit application for advanced standing or transfer credits **by October 1** of year of entry)

Status	[] full-time	[] part-time
Deadline for completion	5 years: _____	7 years: _____

Planning Requirements:

[] Plan 5000.06 Planning studio 1 [] Plan 5101.03 History /philosophy of planning [] Plan 5102.03 Planning practice [] Plan 5303.03 Planning methods A	[] Plan 5500.06 Planning studio 2 [] Plan 5035.03 Application of Planning law [] Plan 5304.03 Planning methods B
[] Plan 5201.00 Work term (Semester: _____ [] Presentation <i>Employer:</i> _____ [] Report	
[] <i>Application to graduate (by November of graduation year)</i>	
[] Plan 6000.09 Planning project and seminar	[] Plan 6500.06 Integrative team project [] Plan 6505.03 Seminar in theories, debates
<i>Electives: (15 credit hours)</i> [] _____ [] _____ [] _____	[] _____ [] _____ [] _____ [] _____

Projected graduation date: _____

Master of Planning Studies [Research-focused degree]

The Master of Planning Studies (MPS) program is a research-oriented graduate degree intended for highly qualified applicants who wish to conduct graduate thesis research in planning. The program consists of 15 credit hours of course work and a thesis. The program may be completed in 12 to 24 months of full-time study, or a longer period of time for part-time study (up to five years).

The curriculum includes compulsory and elective courses. The compulsory courses are Plan 6505.03 Seminar: theories, ideas, and debates in planning, and Plan 8000.06 Thesis proposal. The student selects an additional six credit hours of elective courses that support the thesis research focus. One of the elective courses must be a graduate-level research methodology course chosen from the approved list of methodology courses or another methodology course with the approval of the thesis supervisor and Graduate Coordinator.

Students select a thesis topic in consultation with the thesis supervisor. Plan 9000.00 Thesis is a requirement for the MPS degree. Students must complete a thesis to the satisfaction of the thesis supervisory committee (normally the thesis supervisor and one advisor) and an external examiner, and in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Program of Study for Master of Planning Studies

The program comprises 15 credit hours of courses and a thesis.

Compulsory courses: 9 credit hours

- PLAN 6505.03 Seminar in Theories, Ideas and Debates in Planning.
- PLAN 8000.06 MPS Thesis Proposal

Elective courses: 6 credit hours

- graduate-level research methodology course
- elective

APPROVED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY COURSES

- PLAN 5303.03, Planning Methods
- PLAN 5304.03, Planning Research Methods
- ENGM 6671.03, Applied Regression Analysis
- CIVL 6139.03, Transport Operations
- INTE 7100.03, Research Methods from management, policy and science
- OCCU 5030.03, Advanced Research Theory and Methods for Occupational Therapy
- ENVI 5001.03, Environmental Assessment
- PLAN6106.03, Transportation Planning

Other methods courses may be considered depending on the student's research interests and the course offerings at Dalhousie in a given year (alternatives require approval).

Students will take at least two graduate level electives (6 credit hours), including a research methods course. The electives required will be determined in consultation between the student and the thesis supervisor. The electives are intended to support preparation of the thesis proposal and research by giving students appropriate background and skills.

Students may register for the Thesis after the Thesis Proposal has been presented and approved. The Thesis represents an original piece of research that makes a contribution to the discipline.

The program of study for the MPS must be approved by the thesis supervisor, graduate coordinator and the Faculty of Graduate Studies using the Graduate Studies Information System (GSIS) that manages admission, program, thesis, and convocation information for graduate students.

Every graduate student in a thesis program must submit an Annual Progress Report to the Faculty of Graduate Studies each year, one month prior to the anniversary of the student's admission date. This means that they are due August 1 for September admits, December 1 for January admits, and April 1 for May admits. The progress report requires approval in GSIS by the thesis supervisor, graduate coordinator and the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Sample scenarios for MPS completion

Scenario A

	Fall	Winter	Summer
Year 1	Methodology course Elective	6505.03 Seminar 8000.06 Thesis proposal	9000.00 Thesis
Year 1	9010.00 Thesis continuation		

Scenario B

	Fall	Winter	Summer
Year 1	Methodology course 8000.06 Thesis proposal	6505.03 Seminar Elective [thesis research]	9000.00 Thesis
Year 2	9010.00 Thesis continuation		

Scenario C

	Fall	Winter	Summer
Year 1		6505.03 Seminar Methodology course Elective	8000.06 Thesis proposal [thesis research]
Year 2	9000.00 Thesis	9010 Thesis continuation	

Thesis Supervisor:

When a student applies to the program, s/he will identify a member of the faculty with whom s/he hopes to work. If the faculty member agrees to take the student on as a thesis student, then the faculty member will become the student's thesis supervisor. Because each faculty member's research interests are specialized, students should recognize that it may be difficult to change thesis supervisors in mid-program.

Students should check with the supervisor to determine whether periods of sabbatical leave may affect thesis supervision. (If necessary, students may find another faculty member willing to serve as co-supervisor.) Students who anticipate completing the thesis during the summer semester should consult with the thesis supervisor about the supervisor's availability.

Supervisory Committee:

The Supervisory Committee shall normally consist of a thesis supervisor, another faculty member from the School of Planning and may also include a third faculty member from outside the School. A supervisory committee should complement the expertise available to the student in completing their research program. The membership of all Supervisory Committees must be recorded in GSIS, and changes to membership must be submitted on the student's program update form and recorded by the department in GSIS.

The Supervisory Committee will advise the student on course selection, and will review the thesis proposal. Once the student has passed the thesis proposal, the Supervisory Committee becomes the Thesis Committee. For the thesis defence, an additional external examiner is added to the Thesis Committee. Normally the agreement of all committee members is required before the School brings forward a thesis for examination.

COURSES for MPS

Plan 8000.06 MPS Thesis Proposal

Under the supervision of the faculty supervisor and thesis committee, the student prepares a thesis proposal that outlines the research question, background literature review and synthesis, approach, methods (of data collection and analysis), ethical implications, and schedule of work. The student gives a public presentation of the thesis proposal, and an oral defence before the thesis committee.

Restriction: Limited to students in the Master of Planning Studies program

Plan 9000.00 Master of Planning Studies Thesis

Under the supervision of the thesis supervisor and thesis committee, a student in the Master of Planning studies program prepares a thesis that investigates an original and significant question in planning research. The student gives a public presentation of the thesis research, and an oral defence of the thesis before the thesis committee.

Restriction: Limited to students in the Master of Planning Studies program who have completed Plan 8000.06

PLAN 6505.03 Seminar: theories, ideas and debates in planning

The final capstone course provides a venue for debate and discussion about theory, ethics, ideas, and contemporary issues in planning. It considers the relationship between theory and practice, and allows students to reflect on the profession they are about to join.

Format: lecture / seminar (2 to 3 hours)

Restriction: graduate students in the Faculty of Architecture and Planning, or permission of instructor

Thesis Guidelines and Policy for Students

This guide should be used in conjunction with policies in the Graduate Calendar and with guidelines given by the Faculty of Graduate Studies on thesis submission and format.

Responsibilities of Supervisors

When faculty members accept the supervision of graduate students, they assume several responsibilities:

- to provide reasonable access to their student(s) and to be available for consultation at relatively short notice;
- to be as helpful as possible in suggesting research topics and in assisting students to define their theses;
- to tell students approximately how long it will be before written work, such as drafts of chapters, can be returned with comments;
- to be thorough in their examination of thesis chapters, supplying, where appropriate, detailed comments on such matters as literary form, structure, use of evidence, relation of the thesis to published work on the subject, footnoting, and bibliographical techniques, and making constructive suggestions for rewriting and improving the draft;
- to indicate clearly when a draft is in a satisfactory final form or, if it is clear to the supervisor that the thesis cannot be successfully completed, to advise the student accordingly;
- to know the departmental and University regulations and standards to which the writer of a thesis is required to conform, and to make sure that the student is aware of them;
- to continue supervision when on leave, possibly with arrangements also being made for members of the supervisory committee to assist the student for the leave period;
- to advise and help the student to approach other faculty members for assistance with specific problems or even to request the reading of a chapter or section of the thesis;
- to see that all ethics and animal care approvals, as appropriate, are secured.

Responsibilities of Students

When graduate students undertake the writing of a thesis, they assume several responsibilities:

- to choose a topic (with the supervisor's aid and advice) and to produce a thesis that is essentially their own work;
- to produce a thesis that meets the standards of scholarship required by the University and the department, including demonstration of their capacity for independent scholarship and research in their field;
- to acknowledge direct assistance or borrowed material from other scholars or researchers;
- to realize that the supervisor has undergraduate or other duties which may at times delay the student's access to the supervisor at short notice;
- to give serious and considered attention to advice and direction from the supervisor;
- to submit their work to the judgment of the department and to abide by its decision when any rights of appeal, if exercised, have been exhausted;
- to know the departmental and University regulations and standards to which the writer of a thesis is required to conform;
- to comply with all ethics and animal care requirements.

Thesis Requirement for MPS

All candidates for the Master of Planning Studies degree are required to complete a written thesis. This requires:

- (I) submission and approval of a thesis proposal (Plan 8000.06);
- (II) an oral defence of the completed thesis draft (Plan 9000.00);
- (III) submission of the final thesis to the Supervisor, School of Planning and FGS

Dalhousie Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) facilitates thesis format checking and submission for all graduate students. For further information, please see FGS website:

<http://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/currentstudents/thesesanddefences.html>

What is a thesis?

A thesis has two meanings. First, a thesis is a document deposited for reference purposes with the University library. Consequently, it must be a clear, complete and accurate source of reference produced and bound so that it does not deteriorate over time. Second, a thesis means an argument carefully presented with appropriate evidence brought to bear to explore a research question.

The range of potential subjects for a thesis in planning is vast because planning integrates knowledge from many fields. The subject areas covered by the *Journal of Planning Literature* offer a good guide to topic areas and related journal sources.

When you write you have to consider both the type of the argument or case you are going to present and the way you may present it. Scientific arguments must invariably be logically rigorous and carefully quantified. But 'hypothesis testing' is just one of many possibilities. Planning research is often couched in terms of persuasive arguments where the author builds a case to show that his/her explanation or proposal is superior to those that have gone before. If you decide to complete a 'case study' you need to ensure that the case adds to an argument or contributes to knowledge about an unexplored topic. Consult appropriate reference works in research methods to be sure you have a sound and reliable approach.

The basic form of a thesis is a book with chapters, sections, subsections, references. For the vast majority of theses, this is the most natural way to record the work so that it is readily available to future users. If you have a valid reason to step outside this format, you should first have the approval of your thesis committee and consult Faculty of Graduate Studies' regulations.

A master's thesis need not be monumental in scope. The School encourages you to keep the thesis under 120 pages in length (although longer or shorter may be accepted if the subject warrants). The thesis must be well-organized, properly referenced, and reasonably well-written. Explain your assumptions, what you did, why and how you did it, and what you found in a logical, clear, and concise manner.

Finding a Thesis Topic

Students entering the Master of Planning Studies program normally present a research idea as part of their application to the program, demonstrating that their interests align with potential supervisors in the School of Planning. Some students consult with a potential supervisor as they prepare their application for the MPS. Some students are responding to an invitation to apply to the MPS to work on a specific subject area under the direction of a particular faculty member. Students are the authors of their own ideas and proposals, however. Learning to develop an idea independently, even one building from an existing project or research program, is an essential part of graduate level research.

It may seem that, at one and the same time, you have an abundance of researchable questions and nothing specific that you can put your finger on. You are likely quite used to finding out about a subject by reading other people's research but perhaps less comfortable in defining an original research question within that subject. In past you have been more interested in what the researchers have to tell you about the subject than in the research process and judgments they have used. To prepare your own thesis you need to find an original research question that will allow you to contribute to the planning discussion.

Try looking at articles in your area of interest in journals like *Plan Canada* or the *Journal of the American Planning Association* to see what research question did the authors ask; how simple and effective was their research method; how interesting are the results? A good research question is quite straightforward and the method simple, effective and carefully executed. Articles are a good source to get a 'feel' for research in terms of the question, range of methods (and some clever short cuts to avoid a lot of arduous work) and style of writing. Moreover, they often begin with a critique of the state of knowledge in a particular subject area: you can use this to generate your own ideas about appropriate questions.

Your Supervisor and your Committee are your most valuable thesis resources. You want a Committee that will help you prepare a good thesis on time. You will have developed a preliminary proposal as part of your admission application. Use it as a starting point to discuss thesis questions with your Supervisor and Committee. Plan to prepare several drafts of your thesis proposal during the term you are taking the course, Plan 8000.06 Thesis proposal.

An efficient search of information and material for your thesis is no easy matter, but is key to your success. You need to quickly and accurately acquire the 'state of the art' knowledge that is relevant to your thesis, avoid glaring gaps, and selectively choose what you will use. Develop a good system for tracking your information as you collect and read it. Your proposal will need a synthesis of the key literature that leads to the formulation of the research question. Your best tactic is often to be parsimonious: pick out the essential and important literature. Try to avoid getting buried under an avalanche of literature that may not be relevant. A quick way to get started is to find authors who are writing in the same area of concern as your thesis and to follow their citations. You should also plan a thorough review of relevant journals and books in the field by searching electronic indexes and databases. Use the university library resources efficiently. As well as the holdings in local libraries, you have access to other libraries for material. Consult the planning librarian, Helen Powell: she is your library research expert. Explore the internet efficiently.

Don't do work that has already been done. This includes not just doing, say, a carbon copy field study but doing a study which so parallels work already done that it merely repeats what has already been found with no further refinement or degree of certitude. Direct field work such as data collection, interviews, etc., can be extremely valuable but the research plan must be doable. Make sure you have the research skills to tackle the task. Select an approach and method that you can defend as appropriate. The information you plan to collect must unambiguously answer the questions you have in mind within the time available.

The thesis proposal

Register for the thesis proposal course, Plan 8000.06, when you are sure that you will have at least 18 to 20 hours per week to devote to preparing the proposal during a term. The proposal will outline the thesis research in sufficient detail to permit the Thesis Committee to assess the practicality and potential contribution of the proposed topic. The proposal should be a clear and succinct statement of what you intend to do.

The proposal will typically include the following elements:

- problem statement - description and analysis of the proposed research focus;
- existing research and literature that creates the context for the research;
- research question (a succinct and clear statement of the question you will seek to answer in your thesis);
- approach, scope, and objectives of the study;
- theoretical significance and/or practical importance of the project;
- research plan and methods, including roles of participants, if any, and sources of research material; methods of analysis;
- ethical implications of the work and any associated risks to participants;
- possible contributions the study can make to the literature and to the profession;
- list of sources or references.

Also identify:

- previous work or research you have completed in the area of the thesis topic or previous relevant areas of study;
- work already completed and in progress;
- budget of the costs likely to be incurred;
- schedule of work to be done.

Outline any questionnaires or other research instruments you will use.

Remember that the central aim of your thesis proposal is to provide an explicit, straightforward statement of what your research is intended to do. You may need several drafts as you focus general ideas and drop tangential concerns to produce a clear theme with a singular aim.

You will make a public presentation on your thesis proposal and defend it before your Thesis Committee at the end of the term of registration in the course Plan 8000.06. If the Committee approves the proposal, you may proceed to ethics review or to thesis research, as appropriate.

Ethics approval

Research that involves human subjects must be submitted to the University's ethics review process after your Committee has approved your proposal. The Ethics Review committee may take several weeks to months to consider the proposal. Consult the web site for more information and appropriate forms: http://researchservices.dal.ca/research_7776.html

Conducting your research

Once your Supervisory Committee and the Ethics Review committee has approved your proposal, you may begin your thesis research.

Preparing the thesis

Once you have collected and analysed your data, you will prepare the thesis. Consult with your Supervisor and Committee to decide whether to submit chapters for comment and review as you prepare them. The thesis will normally contain several chapters. It might include, for instance, an introduction that sets out the background literature and formulates your research question; a method section that explains how you approached the research and framed the method; a findings section that describes the information gathered, and analyses it to interpret its significance; and a concluding section that considers

the implications, need for further research, or recommendations. Develop a thesis outline to discuss with your Committee so that you may reach agreement on the appropriate strategy for preparing the thesis. Plan to make revisions along the way as the thesis takes shape.

Follow the University's guidelines on thesis preparation and formatting as you prepare the draft for defence. You will present the Thesis publically and answer questions from your Thesis Committee at the Thesis Presentation. Following the defence the Committee will decide if the Thesis receives a Pass with Distinction, Pass, Pass with Revisions, or Fail. A grade of "Pass with Revisions" gives you a period of time (as set by your Committee) to revise the manuscript to address the concerns raised: if they are addressed to the satisfaction of the Thesis Supervisor, then a grade of "Pass" will be entered.

Register for the course Plan 9000.00 upon the completion of Plan 8000.06: MPS Thesis Proposal. You must register in Plan 9010.00 MPS Thesis Continuation in every semester until the thesis is completed.

Since the summer is a non-teaching semester for faculty members in the School of Planning, note that your Thesis Committee members may have reduced availability during that time. Consult with them in advance of the summer term to discuss possible arrangements for meetings or feedback on work during that period.

Editing the thesis

A typical thesis runs from 80 to 160 pages. This is a lot to write. You may be organizing and expressing what you have to say utilizing a standard of accuracy, consistency and grammatical skill beyond anything so far required of you. This can be a daunting task. It is almost certain to be a time consuming one. It therefore pays to plan your moves. Break down your tasks; keep things simple; don't get entangled in convoluted, caveat-riddled statements. Strive for an active and clear articulation of your ideas. (Back up your work often to avoid having to begin again!!)

Your Thesis Supervisor will help you understand the standard of editing needed to satisfy university requirements, but your Supervisor is not your editor. Only you have the time and responsibility to correct and refine your writing. (Consult writing services if you need advice.)

Everyone who writes for circulation to peers (as you are when your thesis goes in the library or into an online collection) expects extensive editorial comments or criticisms. This is part of the process of getting a document into fit condition for presentation. Don't be surprised if you get a fair amount of 'red ink' on your first draft: this is not unusual. If you find it hard to respond to some editing queries or demands, get help: approach your committee or anyone else you think might help. If necessary, consult an editor or writing tutor for tips on how to revise your work. Expect to write several drafts before the thesis is ready for defence.

Some readings on how to write a thesis

K. E. Rudestam and C. A. Parker, *Surviving your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process*, LB 2369 R83 1992

D. Madsen, *Successful Dissertations and Theses*, LB2369 M32 1983.

G. W. Campbell, *Form and Style: Theses, Reports, Term Papers*, 6th Ed., LB2369 C3 1982, 4th Ed.

Linda Flower, *Problem Solving Strategies for Writing*, PN187 F56 Arch.

P. Elbow, *Writing with Power*, PE1408 E39 1981.

G. B. Davis and C. A. Parker, *Writing the Doctoral Dissertation: A Systematic Approach*, LB2369 D.357 ref.

Natalie Macris. 2000. *Planning in Plain English*. APA Planners Press

The following is taken from *How to Write a Thesis: The Inner Game*, by **Martin H. Krieger**.
[circulated by email – visit his website <http://priceschool.usc.edu/profiles/krieger/>]

Outline:

You always have an argument or story - even if you think you don't. It may not be too good an argument, but it is a beginning.

You'll keep making the argument better. That is human nature.

If you believe that all you have is bits and pieces, make them (mosaic though they be) into a story. Then you'll only need to improve the story, and find the missing pieces.

Cut out what is impossible or too hard. Or at least put it aside for the while. Focus your project. Then it will be a matter of do-able tasks, rather than a cosmic confrontation with yourself.

Outlines can be small to start. Even using little bits of paper. Architects make small sketches and then go to larger scales. Elaborate on your outlines using any devices you wish, including pasted on bits of paper, diagrams, pictures, charts, squeezed in inserts, different colored ink, bells and whistles.

Eventually you might want to make the outline clean and neat. Mostly to impress yourself with what you have done, and to convince yourself it all holds together. It might even make the outline a better one, for you then could see how to fix it. But if it is frightening to redo the outline, don't. Write first. You don't have to do anything but write.

Outlines can be in any form. Change them as you go along, adding in bits and pieces, elaborations, working out the next section as you need to.

You can always eliminate repetitions later. And you can add in transitions, rationalizations, and summaries.

One idea is good enough. Some books have only one major idea. Most have none.

Have an outline, even if it keeps changing.

Be explicit about the outline. You almost surely have one already in any case.

If it does not scare you, outline what you have done so far to find out where you have gone. Otherwise, if it does scare you, don't.

Research and Theory

Research serves writing. Writing makes clear what you need to know next. The writing can be rough. So can the research.

Idling is a good idea. But if you have a deadline, it may not be worth it. If you are paralyzed, still try idling for a while.

Do quick and dirty research:

Go backwards in time and topic. Find out the most recent work. At the same time, look for forgotten pathways.

Use experts, indexes, the latest books and reviews.

Look for settled areas. Look for controversies.

Check with others about the lay of the land.

You'll miss things.

Start off with the answers you expect. Check if they are right.

Ask experts, and be wary of them too.

Change your expectations if they lead you incorrectly.

Do as little as you need to. Quit early to write. Then go back to learn more.

OR: Wander in research. Tell yourself when to come home. Once in a while you'll stay out all night.

You've been out too long when the work is overdue.

Scan and check so as not to miss too many of the main points. If you do miss them the first time, they will stand out the second or the third.

Mix depth with breadth. Follow your nose. But remember deadlines and leave time to eat and sleep.

Decreasing returns do set in in research. After a while, things repeat and there are few surprises. Of course, if you persist long enough there may be the big reward, but do you have time to do that now?

Maybe it is best to stop.

Leap forward to a guessed answer. Guess as often as you can. Check out your guesses. Desultory reading may be useful, especially early on. But reading for a purpose is very different, for then you are always up to something else: the research you must get done. Look for surprises and dis-confirmation of your beliefs. They'll be apparent if you are paying attention at all. Don't be anxious if there are none; but then it might be wise to look somewhere else. It is also more interesting and you stay awake more easily if there are surprises. You need cases for comparison to mark the differences that matter, to help you note surprises. The comparisons suggest what is important or at least what is significant. The cases are convenient examples that help you pay attention to the current situation. Theory works in the same way that comparative cases do. It gives you a baseline from which you can be surprised. It makes sense of what you are doing. You always have a theory, perhaps unarticulated, but you always do.

Writing

WRITE FIRST!

Write yourself brief notes about bright ideas. Then go on. (Thinking is valuable, but maybe the draft should be done first.)

If you can't write a section or a chapter or a paragraph now...skip it, note what seems important, and then go on to what you can do now. Whittle the project down.

Write . . .

Edit later.

Look up things later.

Footnotes later.

But write notes to yourself about these later items and additions, summarizing what you know. Otherwise you may well forget. And once it is on paper you can clear your mind of it.

If you get lost, check your outline. Go on. That will prevent fretting and paralysis.

Neatness does not matter. Getting done does.

Clean up when all else fails - or weekly, or annually.

Drafts can be sloppy and idiosyncratic.

Clean up your act in front of non-friends.

If your words or sentences or pages are radioactive and anxiety provoking, store the "hot" stuff until it cools, and then you can manipulate it. You'll be taken in by what you write - thinking it awful or genius-like. But when the radioactivity dies down, it'll be words on paper.

Maintain momentum. You may be scared by what you have written. It may be terrible. Find out later. Go on.

After you have crumpled up bad pages, smooth them out. Put them in the pile of the draft. Go on. don't look back.

You may well be lost. Maybe you should start over. But go on, at least for a while. Write first!

VIOLATE ALL THESE RULES IF YOU WILL!

Editing

Writing is a habit, a relief from the chaos of life. Habits have set times and places, and they become comfortable and easier that way.

You can learn how to write more adequately. Get help from the professionals. But first, write, edit, rewrite, retype, write again. You will become a better writer just because of this regimen.

Read what you write out loud, to others, to yourself.

The passive voice kills (or at least is hard to keep alive).

Editing is the main skill.

Fix. Repair. Insert. Cut.

Simple may be easiest.

PROOFREAD!