

Student Assessment in the Department of Urban & Regional Planning

Update 2009

The Department of Urban & Regional Planning offers two graduate degrees – the Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning and the Doctor of Philosophy in Urban & Regional Planning. Our assessment of student learning is tied to our Masters degree which is a professional degree accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board. While the timeframe for reaccreditation has changed over the years, generally every 7 years the Department undergoes an extensive review subject to the criteria established by the Planning Accreditation Board. We are in the final months of our most recent reaccreditation. This involved an extensive self-study report and a subsequent site visit by a team of two planning academics from other planning schools and a practicing planner. This process assesses student success based on surveys and interviews with current students, alumni, and non-alumni employers. It also reviews student pass rates on a national certifying exam for planners. As a result of this assessment process over the past several years we have made changes to the required courses that students need to take adding courses on the structure and function of cities and planning law. This assessment process also resulted in the Department changing the way the Department assesses student performance at the end of their program. The Department now requires a professional project and presentation that all students must complete before they can graduate. As part of that process students also provide evaluations of the Department. As a result of these evaluations individual instructors have made changes to the content and focus of some courses.