FAQs & Facts

Distinguished Program
Year after year, SJSU Master of Urban Planning (MUP) students receive awards from the American Planning Association. For example, in 2012 students received an award from APA California, Northern Section for research on parking utilization at transit-oriented developments in Santa Clara County. In 2009 and 2010, MUP students received the top national planning student leadership award from APA.

Career Connections
Students find internships or jobs while in the program (and for many, these internships lead to full-time employment). The department faculty, the SJSU Career Center, and peers help students find internships and jobs by posting job ads to an active e-mail list. The department also helps students network with alumni and other local professionals.

Graduates of the MUP program benefit from a strong alumni network of over 900 MUP graduates, many of whom work in Northern California.

Opportunities for Research and Publication
Faculty in the department hire MUP students as research assistants. In addition to providing training in research methods, these jobs offer some students publication opportunities. Past MUP students have teamed up with professors to co-author professional reports, conference papers, and journal articles.

Flexible Program for All
The MUP program attracts a highly diverse student body—diverse in terms of ethnicity, age, and educational and professional background. Students enter the program with degrees in fields ranging from environmental studies, to political science, to engineering, to journalism, to business. Some students enter the program directly after completing their bachelor’s degree, while others begin their MUP studies after having established themselves in a professional career.

The MUP program has been designed to accommodate both working professionals and full-time students. More than half of SJSU MUP students hold full-time jobs and attend the program on a part-time basis, while the others attend the program full-time. Students can decide each semester how many classes to take, allowing them flexibility to balance school, work, and family responsibilities. To accommodate students working full time, most classes meet just once a week and begin at 4:30 p.m. or later.

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What Do Urban Planners Do?
Planning professionals devise strategies to help local communities and regions develop in ways that are responsive to the present and future needs of society, socially equitable, and environmentally and economically sustainable. The major issues planners work to solve cover a wide variety of objectives, including revitalizing neighborhoods, providing affordable housing for all community members, creating sustainable and efficient transportation systems for people and goods, and designing public spaces. Because planning is a highly interdisciplinary field, planners often collaborate with experts in other professions such as civil engineering, social work, public policy, and architecture.

To achieve these goals, planners take on widely varied tasks, from researching and developing policy programs, to designing physical urban landscapes, to facilitating community-based dialogues through which local people decide on the types of change they want to support in their communities.

A master’s degree in urban planning equips students to work for many types of employers. Career opportunities exist at the city, county, regional, state, and national government levels, as well as with real estate development firms, transportation and environmental consulting firms, non-profit advocacy organizations, and research and academic institutions. Alumni of the Master of Urban Planning (MUP) program at San José State University have worked in numerous different specialties within planning, including jobs as land-use planners, community development specialists, non-profit and for-profit housing developers, GIS specialists, transportation modelers, and university professors. Many alumni reach the highest levels within their organization, whether serving as the planning director in their community or owning their own consulting firm.

Graduate Education in Urban Planning at San José State University
San José State University’s Department of Urban and Regional Planning offers master’s degree and graduate certificate programs in the following concentrations: Applications of Technology in Planning, Community Design and Development, Environmental Planning, Real Estate Development, and Transportation, Land Use Planning, and Affordable Housing and Community Development Finance. The MUP degree is accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board. SJSU has the only accredited MUP program in Northern California that can accommodate the educational needs of both full-time students and working professionals who complete the program on a part-time basis.

Students in the department benefit from small class sizes (10-20 students), access to faculty actively involved in research and public service projects, and classes that engage students in projects with local communities. Many classes work with CommUniverCity, San Jose’s community-university-city partnership that brings together students and faculty to work closely with local residents and city staff in addressing core community issues. Among other achievements, past classes have developed comprehensive neighborhood plans that were later adopted as official city policy. Through these studio classes students get hands-on experience in planning practice while serving local residents.

Applying: MUP and Certificate Programs
MUP applicants submit transcripts, three letters of recommendation, and a personal statement. GRE scores are not required for students with an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher. International students who graduated from a university outside the U.S. must meet English-language proficiency exam requirements.

Graduate certificate students should consult with the department’s Graduate Adviser about how to register for classes.

For more information on department admissions, see http://www.sjsu.edu/urbanplanning/admissions/.

San José’s location in the southern portion of the San Francisco Bay Area region, in the heart of Silicon Valley, offers students direct access to local examples of cutting-edge planning practice, numerous lectures and conferences on planning topics, and a wealth of employers who hire students as interns and full-time employees.