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**Department of Urban Planning  
Ball State University**

**2024-2025**

**Student Handbook and Policy Guide  
Bachelor of Urban Planning and Development**

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## Welcome

This handbook is designed to assist your journey through the Bachelor of Urban Planning and Development degree program. It is a supplement to the current edition of the Ball State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#). Policies in the university catalog take precedence over the guidelines presented here. We believe our policies to be in conformance with those in the Undergraduate Catalog. The Undergraduate Catalog has additional information that is important to know. This includes student rights, campus security, admissions, course withdrawal, fees, counseling, accessibility, and many other issues. You are encouraged to become familiar with both guides.

## Admissions

Complete CAP and Ball State University admission information is available on the [website](#).

The traditional pathway into urban planning is via the first-year CAP program. Upon completion of that program with passing grades, students are asked to declare a major (urban planning, landscape architecture, or architecture) and to upload a portfolio for review.

Beginning in spring 2023, an alternative pathway allows students to enter the urban planning program after completing PLAN 100 Introduction to Planning and PLAN 105, a six-hour studio class called Introduction to Physical Planning Processes. Alternative entry students must pass both classes and submit a portfolio. A committee reviews the portfolios and student grades and makes decisions about admission. You will be notified of the admissions decision via email.

All students who apply to the urban planning program will be admitted, denied admission, or placed on probation. To ensure that you are admitted, submit an excellent portfolio and keep your GPA above a 2.75. If you are admitted on probation, you must have a GPA of 2.75 or above and a successful third year portfolio to continue in the program.

## College of Architecture and Planning

The Department of Urban Planning is part of the R. Wayne Estopinal College of Architecture and Planning, established in 1965. The college is also home to the departments of architecture, landscape architecture, and construction management and interior design. A program in historic preservation is housed within the architecture department, and an urban design program is located in Indianapolis.

The college has a long history of academic excellence and community engagement and enjoys strong alumni support. The dean of CAP is Dave Ferguson. You can find his office in AB 104. CAP also hosts events each year, including exhibits in the first-floor gallery and a guest lecture series.

Also on the first floor you will find the Drawings and Documents Archive, the Building Materials Sample Collection, and a branch of University Libraries. In the basement you will find the Communications Resource Center (commonly called the CRC) where you can print documents and purchase basic art supplies. These are resources available to you as a CAP student. Also in the basement is the Institute for Digital Intermedia Arts, a newer addition to the CAP family.

## Communications

**Email via your Ball State email account is the primary means of communication at Ball State University.** You may forward your mail to your personal account, but it is important that you get in the habit of checking and reading your Ball State email from faculty and from the department's administrative coordinator.

We have an official department Facebook page [here](#) where we may post news, upcoming events, stories, and photos. We also have a group page that you can find by typing in Ball State Urban Planning; be sure to request to join the group as that's where we post job announcements. We love to post photos of students and to share your accomplishments on Facebook. We also have a presence on [Instagram](#). Our LinkedIn group is called BSU Urban Planning.

In general, we are going to email you when we have critical information to share, not post it on social media.

## Ethics and Teamwork

Ball State students must conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be treated in accordance with procedures outlined in the Student Academic Ethics Policy section of the Faculty Handbook. See also the Degree Requirements and Time Limit in the Undergraduate Catalog.

The studio culture we cultivate in CAP requires teamwork which mirrors what you will encounter in the workplace and daily life outside of home. Working as part of a team can be both exhilarating and challenging. We urge you to spend time getting to know the members of your team and learning each other's communications styles and problem-solving abilities. Although some assignments might be group efforts, we expect all team members to pull their own weight in a helpful and respectful manner.

## Accreditation

Both our Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) and our Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (BUPD) program are accredited by the [Planning Accreditation Board](#) (PAB). Ours are the only accredited planning programs in Indiana. Both programs are accredited through Dec. 31, 2027. That means we can expect an assessment visit in 2026, after which we would expect our accreditation to be extended. Students will be asked to take part in the accreditation process as it is important for the department and for the accreditation team to hear from you. It is also important for us to hear from you when you have found a job and to have your permanent email on file so we can keep track of how well you believe your education prepared you for your career. We use this information to make any adjustments needed to our curriculum as well.



## Field Trip Week

Planners must become familiar with a variety of cities, neighborhoods, and be exposed to new environments. These first-hand experiences will be part of the toolbox of ideas you will take into the world as a professional planner. The trips provide a great opportunity to really get to know the faculty members leading the excursion and students in other cohorts in the department as well.

Field trip week happens each year in October and includes most departments in CAP. You may be able to take a trip to a major US city such as New York or Seattle (budget in the \$800 to \$1,000), a medium-range trip to a large Midwestern city such as Pittsburgh or Nashville (budget in the \$300 to \$500 range) or a one-day Indiana-based trip of minimal cost. You may choose which trip best suits your needs and budget. We will give you a form to show to instructors whose classes you will miss by attending our trip. Plan ahead and talk with each instructor to be sure you understand what work is required of you and the associated deadlines.

**Field trip week is NOT a vacation from classes.**

In fall 2024, field trip week is Sept. 30-Oct. 4. We expect to offer several options. This year we will not have an expensive option during field trip week; we suggest you save up for the spring APA conference in Denver.

Typically, a deposit will be required **early** in the semester for a field trip, maybe even during the first week of classes. You will be able to make the payment online after you have signed and returned a field trip permission form to the department. The down payment is not refundable. The balance of the trip cost must be paid before the trip begins.

We will also require you to fill out an emergency contact form before the trip. The form can be filled out electronically at the beginning of the school year. If the trip you have chosen includes airfare, you will be required to provide us a copy of your driver's license so that we can secure your flight.

**It is important to pay attention to communications about field trips so that you do not miss any important deadlines! Be sure to read your email!**

## What is APA?

The [American Planning Association](#) is the national association of professional planners. Membership is free to students, and you are encouraged to join. It is up to you to sign up for membership. The APA website contains career resources, news, and an explanation of the AICP Candidate Pilot Program which is a path to earning AICP certification, the professional certification you may wish to earn if you decide to become a professional planner. (AICP certification is not required to be a planner, but being able to put those initials after your name shows that you have a depth of knowledge and experience in the field.)

## Professional Planning Conferences

Sometimes we travel to the fall and spring conferences offered by the Indiana APA chapter. These typically rotate among such cities as Bloomington, Lafayette, Muncie, and South Bend and provide great networking opportunities with people who may someday be your internship supervisor or even your employer. We encourage students to attend, and we help with the costs when we are able. Typically these are inexpensive trips and involve only one overnight or perhaps none at all. Sometimes conferences have an online option as well. We will update you as the year goes by.

We also travel to the site of the national APA conference each year. These conferences are in major US cities such as New Orleans and San Francisco. There is much you can learn at such a conference as there will be many professional sessions for you to choose from each hour of the day. The networking opportunities are endless, and we typically have a meet-up event for students and alumni as well. We encourage you to plan ahead for these springtime conferences and to try to schedule at least one into your education plan. In spring 2025, the national conference is in Denver. We expect to take a large group of students.

Faculty also attend conferences such as the [Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning](#) which is the gathering of planning professors and scholars in North America but is also attended by a large number of the same across the world.

Attending these will enable you to learn the latest knowledge developed in the field, learn about research, and meet students from other planning schools. It may be particularly helpful if you are considering earning a master's or PhD.

There are many other conferences in the areas of geography, anthropology, GIS, transportation, and drawing that may be useful for you. Some of our faculty members attend these and they can provide timely information if you need. Don't hesitate to ask.

## Advising

Your academic advisor is Caleb Grubb, and his office is AB 333. You are encouraged to make an appointment to talk with him about your classes and to make sure you are on track to graduate. He will help you select classes that will meet your needs and set you up for future success; you are also always welcome to stop in the department office and talk with the chair about your classes or goals. The department chair is Dr. John West, and he is also happy to talk with you about your classes and to answer any questions or concerns you may have. His office is AB 328.

## Curriculum Overview

See the Undergraduate Catalog for the complete BUPD curriculum. The catalog and your Degree Works record will help you make decisions about what courses to take each semester. Following these guides will help you graduate on time.

## Independent study

You may elect to complete an independent study project as you work toward your degree. You must submit your proposed course of study to a faculty member and gain that faculty member's approval to work with you and to supervise your study. Faculty members are under no obligation to grant requests to do independent study, and it is important for students in an independent study course to work diligently and meet their obligations as in any other course. If a faculty member agrees to work with you, the administrative coordinator will create an independent study course specifically for you and will give the CRN for that course only to you.

## Electives

Eligible electives with the prefixes ARCH, CAP, LA, and PLAN can be used toward your BUPD degree. The eligibility will be determined by the department chair. Charrette Graphics, typically offered in the spring and with a CAP prefix, counts as a planning elective.

## A Minor in Real Estate Development

In addition to our degrees in urban planning, our department also offers a minor in Real Estate Development (RED) which can be earned alongside your BUPD degree if you are careful with your selection of electives. The chair or your advisor can help you with class selection.

The required 18 credit hours includes core courses in real estate development, property and contract law, and more. BUPD students must select some electives outside of the Planning Department classes to earn the certificate. See the Undergraduate Catalog for complete information.

## Portfolio Review and Internship

You will create a portfolio of your coursework as detailed in the portfolio guide at the end of this document. This is due in the fall semester of your junior year when you will enroll in PLAN 368. This one-credit class will guide you through the portfolio process and is required before embarking upon an internship. An internship of 200 hours or more is required of all students. The office receives many notices of internships each year. These are posted on the bulletin board outside the conference room and emailed to students. Students often find internships as early as December by watching for openings and by contacting planners in their hometowns to open a discussion about possible summer positions.

It is important to realize that just earning a degree is not enough to guarantee you a career in planning. Your grades and your coursework are critical. These building blocks help you to develop a strong portfolio. That portfolio helps you get a solid internship. And a good internship unlocks doors by introducing you to professionals, teaching you new skills, building your confidence, and strengthening your resume.



Typically, CAP organizes a job and internship fair in early spring; planning representatives will be among those attending. Most of our providers, however, do not make the trip for the fair and will be expecting you to apply online and visit their offices for interviews or will conduct online interviews with you. Often students find internships by approaching people they would like to work for and asking for an opportunity. The [Career Center](#) provides many opportunities to have your resume reviewed, practice interview skills, and other job-related helps.

Besides signing up in Banner to do your internship (PLAN 369), you will also fill out the internship registration form and send that to the administrative coordinator once you have confirmed a position. At the close of your internship, you and your supervisor will both evaluate your work. [The forms required for these steps are here.](#)

## Graduation

Graduation is not automatic. You must apply in Banner to graduate and pay the fees. Do this at the beginning of your final semester.

## After Graduation

You will always be part of the CAP family, and we hope you will continue your relationship with us after graduation. Toward the end of your program, we will ask for your permanent email address so we can keep in touch. It is important to our accreditation, and to our ability to continue to meet the needs of professional in the field, that we can occasionally send you a survey to see how your education is meeting your needs and to hear any feedback you have for us. We will occasionally share news with you as well. You will be welcome to come back and serve on review juries in our studio classes, to take part in the annual job/internship fair, or perhaps to be a guest lecturer. We hope you will follow us on social media and keep us informed about your accomplishments as well.

## Earning a Fast-track Master's Degree

Finishing your BUPD degree and thinking of a master's? Consider staying in familiar environs and earning our fast-track degree, available only to students who hold undergraduate degrees in urban planning from institutions accredited by the American Planning Association. Typically one to three students from each

cohort go through the program each year; in the past we've been able to provide graduate assistantships to each of them, often working for off-campus sponsors such as nearby governments and non-profits. This makes the program quite affordable and ensures graduates leave with strong resumes in hand.

## The Job Market

Each year many of our graduates land jobs before they even finish classes. They find work with city, state, regional, and national government agencies, nonprofit organizations, community development corporations, architecture firms, real estate development firms, and others. Some stay and complete a master's degree either in our MURP program or in the Indianapolis-based MUD program.

Many of our grads work in Indiana, particularly in Indianapolis and its suburbs, and increasingly in Fort Wayne. Chicago draws other alumni. Our graduates are scattered across the United States from Florida to Montana and from California to Rhode Island. A few work overseas as well. The job market for planners is strong: The US Bureau of Labor Statistics says it is growing at an average clip. Median pay is listed at \$78,500.