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**Department of Urban Planning  
Ball State University**

**2023-2024**

**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 will allow students to enter the urban planning program after completing PLAN 100 and a six-hour introduction to design thinking studio. 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 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 primarily 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 [Twitter](#) and 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. One exception is that some professors might create a Facebook group page for a field trip or a special project. If they direct you to do so, be sure to join that group and follow updates posted there.

## 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 member 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 2023, field trip week is Oct. 2-6. We expect to have three options: a one-day Indiana trip; a mid-price trip to Lexington, Ky., and nearby areas; and a Mexico trip. (Interested in Mexico? Get your passport now because the U.S. is experiencing a rush of requests for passports and delays are affecting residents' ability to travel). Watch your email over the summer for the itineraries.

Typically, a deposit will be required **early** in the semester for a field trip, maybe even during the first week of classes. The deposit must be submitted to the bursar's office in Lucina B32 along with the field trip permission form we will distribute for the trip. The payment cannot be paid online, and it cannot be paid without the field trip permission form. 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 and will be emailed to you when a trip is

announced. 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!

### 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.

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.

## Community Service

Each year volunteers from our department participate in several local events as a way of giving back to our community. You are encouraged to join us. A White River Cleanup each fall is a popular event. Sometimes students arrange volunteer opportunities with Habitat for Humanity or another organization.

## Advising

Your academic advisor is Julie Maugherman, and her office is in AB 508. You are encouraged to make an appointment to talk with her about your classes and to make sure you are on track to graduate. She 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.

## 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 26-credit hours includes core courses in introduction to community development, methods of public interest development, planning & land use law, property & contract law, and third-year studio in economic and real estate development, all urban planning courses. 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 spring semester of your junior year. It 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.

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. It's best to do this early, even over the December holiday break. 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 are able to 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, in particular 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.



# PORTFOLIO GUIDE

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**April 2020**

This guide benefited from input and suggestions from Bruce Frankel, professor of urban planning, BSU

# 01 COVER LETTER



- Every cover letter must be written for a specific job description. Therefore, your skills and work experience must relate to and emphasize the job skills that the employer is seeking.
- Be sure to include your address and that of the firm/business at the top right corner and left corner of the cover letter, respectively.
- Include your contact information in the cover letter, including your phone number and email address.
- Begin the letter with a salutation to the person to whom you are sending the letter.
- Do not use “To Whom It May Concern”. This may be interpreted as not doing enough of a background research on the firm to know who to send your letter. If no name is included in the job ad, you should call the firm to find out to whom you should address the letter.

# More Tips

- Use a byline after the salutation to indicate the position you are applying for in the organization. Since the firm is likely to have more than one position opening, it is important for them to know how to file your application letter and documents.
- Your letter should directly link your skills to the job for which you are applying. Highlight both your professional skills and technical skills in the letter. You will be hired for your professional planning skills so those are the most important ones to emphasize in the letter. Your technical skills are supportive of your planning skills and not the other way around.
- The cover letter should show how you will add value to the work or service that the company provides.
- End the letter on a positive and proactive note. E.g., I look forward to hearing from you and discovering more about your firm [agency]. Please allow me to contact you [please receive my call] in two weeks to discuss the status of my application.



# 02 RESUME



- At your age, resumes should be single page. As you gain work experience they get longer.
- Every resume should be written and tailored to a specific job. You should therefore avoid using the same resume for all job applications.
- Start with your profile “Seeking...[match your interests and experience with agency needs and agenda]”
- It is conventional practice to have your education credential first, followed by your work experience, and skills.
- Be sure that your resume differentiates between your professional skills and your technical skills. Indeed, you should categorize your skills into the two areas of professional skills [e.g. land use and comprehensive planning, data analysis, economic analysis, development impact analysis, GIS], and technical skills [e.g., sketch-up, spreadsheet formulations]. Skills may be graphed on a scale of competency; don’t puff your ego.

- Your latest educational attainment should come before previous educational degrees. For your Ball State degree, since you have not yet completed the degree requirements, you can show the anticipated graduation date or year.
- You are likely to have worked in non-planning jobs such as landscaping, retail, or customer service. Do not discount these jobs in your resume. However, be sure to identify the skills sets you used or gained from these work places that will be relevant to your planning career. These are your transferable skills. For example, a job as a restaurant waiter provided you with skills in multi-tasking, customer relations, time management, dealing with difficult customers, teamwork, and organizational skills. These same skills will be useful in your planning career.
- Your resume should be comprehensive onto itself. This means it should also provide your contact information, including your address, phone number, and email address.
- Hobbies and references are best left to the interview or follow-up letter. However, travel and volunteer/ political/ social experiences can be of relevance.

## 03 Prelude to Your Sample Work

In a page before your sample work on writing, analysis, and graphics, you should provide the reader with:

- The types of work you are including for each of the sections.
- The rationale for including the sample work [e.g., this demonstrates by capabilities in site plan review, etc.].
- Which of the work included is your individual work, and which is group work, if any. If group work is included, then you should specify your contribution to the group work as a collaborator.
- Preliminary to presenting each work you should provide context [e.g., the studio assignment \_\_\_\_, and my team assignment \_\_\_\_\_].



# 04 Writing Work

The purpose of the written section of the portfolio is to show that you have the experience and the skills to conduct a variety of written work. At a minimum, you should include three types of written samples: Memorandum (Memo), technical reports, and research papers. Given your job opportunity, the preference is work that belongs in your planning and development profession.

## Memo

A memo is a short paper written for an audience that provides information, makes a recommendation on a subject, informs employers of a procedural change, policy recommendations, or summarizes terms of agreement, among others. In your professional planning careers, you are likely to write memos to the planning commission, city council or staff of your employer.

The conventional structure of a memo includes the person to whom it is addressed (TO), the person that the memo is from (From), the date of the memo, the subject matter or purpose, and conclusion or recommendation.

The Memo should be concise, its purpose clear, and content well organized. The body of the memo should begin with a clear purpose, explain what you need the readers to know, and conclude with what you need readers to do, if necessary. Keep in mind that the readers are likely to be busy and may just skim the memo to get an idea of what it is about, so use short paragraphs, and avoid jargon.







## Sample Memo

To: Heather Jones, Chairman,

From: Wilson Gayle  
Community Development Department  
Milton, NY 10945.  
January 12, 2012

Subject: Meeting for the Inspection event planning.

This to inform all the project heads and team leaders that management has decided to conduct a meeting on 13.01.2012. The agenda of the meeting is to discuss the audit and inspection to be conducted. Therefore, we request you all to attend the meeting without any fail.

We also like to request the accounts department to be ready with all the accounts of the company and its sales. The administration is also requesting all the project managers to provide a report on the production and services offered by the team on the last month.

The board is also arranging an award ceremony on the inspection day for the best employees and staffs of the organization in various categories. Therefore, we would request the staffs and other concerned persons to perform well on the day.

The management is also attaching all the information and details related to the meeting along with this memo. For any doubts or queries, contact us.

## Technical paper

A technical paper is usually an internal paper written by an organization to provide information about the process, progress, or results of a technical or scientific research or problem. In urban planning this is likely to take the form of an environmental impact assessment, housing needs assessment for a community, level of service by transportation mode, or an infrastructure project. The goal of the technical paper may be to change people's behavior, or to disseminate a new approach to doing things. The technical paper should grasp the interest of the audience, and show how the problem can be solved or addressed.

Best practice in writing a technical paper is to know your audience, and communicate clearly the main ideas of your research or study. The paper should also be concise and to the point, use the active rather than passive voice, and avoid using the first person, and value judgments. State the facts and let the reader judge for themselves. Be sure to explain concepts clearly to the reader.

## Research Paper

A research paper is an academic writing that documents research into a topic, describes the procedure and methodology, and presents the findings from the investigation. A research paper builds on existing knowledge on the subject. A research paper includes a title, a statement of the problem and hypothesis, review of the literature on the subject, limitations of the study, methodology, body of the paper that includes a discussion of the results of the research, and conclusions or proposals.

# 05 Analytical Work



This section should demonstrate your ability to conduct planning analysis and understanding of planning problems or how to solve them, or both.

The analysis sample should not just be a dumping of information, and should not end with a graph or chart, but with the interpretation and implications of your findings. It should include work that demonstrates a multistep process of analysis in each of your sample work. These include:

- What problem or challenge were you presented?
- What you did to better understand or solve the problem (the methodology used in the analysis).
- What you found as salient and significant?
- What you recommend as to actions in addressing the problem and acting on your findings? How the findings should be or were used (the action you took, for example how the findings were used to prepare a plan, a policy, adopt regulations, or design modifications to the environment)?

The analysis section should include examples of your work in at least three areas as relevant to your profile:

1. land use and development controls.
2. urban economics or economic development.
3. demographics.
4. development impacts on human settlements and the environment.
5. functional areas, such as affordable housing, transportation, public facilities, etc.

Examples of three areas of analysis on land use, economic development and demographics should give you an idea of the expectations in this section.



### Land use

This section should provide an example of a land use analysis you performed and the proposals emanating from the analysis. An example would include a site analysis, a land use compatibility analysis, a land use change analysis, etc. The document should show how you used findings from the analysis to make proposals for improving the site or land use.



### Economic analysis

This segment should demonstrate your ability to conduct economic analysis including economic base analysis, basic and non-basic activity analysis, changes in the economic sectors of a settlement over time, shift share analysis, input-output analysis, etc. Here again, the goal is to show that you have a good understanding of these analytical skills, and also that you used the results of the analysis to take action to improve the situation. This could take the form of a plan, policy, design or regulation.



### Demographic analysis

All plans are for the purpose of improving the welfare of a population. It is therefore important to know the population that will be beneficiaries of the plan. Planning is also about the future so we need to know the demographics of the future population of the municipality or settlement for which we are planning. This makes understanding the present and future population critical to planning. The demographic analysis should therefore include a projection of the future population, its composition, and structure.

# 06 Graphics Work



People have different ways of absorbing information, and graphics is one way to communicate planning information to our audience. The graphics section of the portfolio is a means to show how you communicate information visually. A Chinese proverb admonishes that “A picture is worth a thousand words.” However, the medium of “boards” presents both graphics and narratives.

The graphics sample of your work could take several forms including hand rendering visuals, computer aided design, and digital drawings and graphics. Basic information that should be included in your graphics include:

- Scale, so the reader can tell distance.
- North arrow, to provide orientation.
- Context of the graphics, so they are not in an island but provide information of the surrounding land uses.
- Legend where appropriate, to tell different land uses apart from each other.



# 07 Important Final Steps

- Request an official transcript from the registrar.
- Fill out self assessment.
- Upload digital portfolio as instructed. Upload transcript and self-assessment.
- Print a hard copy of the portfolio and deliver to office by deadline. Tuck original transcript and hard copy of self-assessment inside.

Instructions, deadlines, and self-assessment form will be sent via email by the administrative coordinator.