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PhD in REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

STUDENT HANDBOOK v2024

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IMPACTING | URBAN | FUTURES

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### UC Graduate College

This Handbook of the PhD Program in Regional Development Planning in the School of Planning at the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP) contains the specific rules and regulations that apply to students in the PhD program offered by the school. The contents comply with the rules and policies of the Graduate College of the University of Cincinnati. Students should also familiarize themselves with the contents of the [University of Cincinnati Graduate College: Graduate Handbook](#).

### DAAP Governance and Administration

The role of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research in the College of DAAP is to support the School of Planning's Graduate Programs by assisting the school in carrying out its graduate-program mission, updating policies and procedures from the University and the College, ensuring graduate-student awards are distributed in a responsible manner, and mediating/resolving conflicts.

### Student Responsibilities

- Know your rights and responsibilities regarding graduate study at the University of Cincinnati by familiarizing yourself with the contents of this Handbook
- Ensure that you have a curricular plan or equivalent
- Ensure that you have a doctoral committee chair by the end of your first semester
- Ensure that you have a three-member doctoral committee by the end of your fourth semester
- Be aware of all deadlines (dissertation submittal, graduation registration, etc.)

### Introduction

The PhD program in Regional Development Planning at the University of Cincinnati provides rigorous academic training in planning theory, urban and regional theories, advanced research, and planning practice. The purpose of the doctoral program is to educate and train the next generation of high-level practitioners, policy makers, and scholars who will bring new research ideas and knowledge to the teaching and practice of urban and regional planning. The PhD program is served by 12 of the School of Planning's faculty members with expertise in urban design and physical planning; community and economic development; transportation planning; international development; environmental planning; and sustainable development. The University of Cincinnati School of Planning program stresses the interdisciplinary analysis of and solution to regional development problems from inner cities to rural areas. The spatial emphasis of the program, from rural and urban neighborhoods to national levels, recognizes that planning problems increasingly transcend geographic boundaries and require spatially based systems thinking.

All of our current PhD students have completed a master's degree in planning or a related discipline. As part of the application process, potential students need to identify a research topic of interest (part of the essay). Full-time students usually take four courses per semester during their first two years in the program. The School of Planning requires all doctoral students take a total of nine required courses, including required courses in planning and spatial theory; quantitative and qualitative research methods; research design; and dissertation-research-related courses. After passing their comprehensive exam, students typically spend two to three years completing their individual doctoral research. As of fall semester 2018, the School of Planning provides all admitted students with a financial package consisting of tuition scholarship during their two years of coursework and a four-year paid graduate assistantship. As part of their training, PhD students are also required to teach a course under the supervision of a SOP faculty member.

### Major/Minor and Doctoral Committee

Guided by the student's research interest(s) and the availability of faculty advisors in the School of Planning, the student will be matched up with a faculty advisor, who in most cases will become the student's doctoral committee chair, when entering the program. The student then confirms the doctoral committee chair by the end of the first semester and must form a doctoral committee consisting of three members, all of whom must have a PhD, no later than by the end of the fourth semester. In addition, a student selects a major and a minor area of specialization with his or her doctoral committee. Besides areas of specialization offered in the School of Planning, possible minors may include:

- Community development (including housing and poverty studies)
- Regional development methods (including data management and GIS—this could be organized in collaboration with the departments of economics, geography, and/or operations research)
- Environmental management (this could be organized in collaboration with the departments of biology, geology, geography, and/or civil/environmental engineering)
- Urban and regional theory (including regional science, regional economics, location theory, and regional planning (this could be organized in collaboration with the department of geography and/or economics)
- Urban and regional economics (department of economics)
- Real estate development (program in real estate, college of business)
- Politics of development (department of political science)
- Ethnic and gender studies in development (this could be organized in collaboration with programs in African studies, Asian studies, Latin American studies, and women's studies, as well as the department of sociology)

## APPLICATION & ADMISSION

### Application

Students apply to the Graduate College at the University of Cincinnati online via the Graduate College website at <https://grad.uc.edu/admissions.html>.

### Admission Requirements

- Official University of Cincinnati application to the Graduate College and \$65 application fee for domestic applicants (\$70 for international applicants).
- Unofficial transcript(s) from all colleges/universities attended showing cumulative GPA that also includes diploma and translation showing completion of a US four-year bachelor's degree (or what is the equivalent to a US four-year bachelor's degree) and diploma and translation of master's degree if applicable. Note: Official transcripts are not required during the application process; only unofficial transcripts are required for the application. Applicants should not send official transcripts until they are admitted. For complete requirements please visit the Graduate College transcript requirements: <https://grad.uc.edu/admissions/policy.html>
  - For international students, records of prior academic study must be submitted in English
- Official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, taken in the past five years. Note: The school normally expects successful applicants to exceed the median test scores on the GRE.
- Official TOEFL or IELTS scores (international students only).
- Three reference letters (to be submitted online).
  - At least two should be academic recommendations
- Sample of written work (e.g., master's thesis or published article).
  - Select a piece relevant to admission to the program
- Statement of purpose; should include the following:
  - Summary of your career goals and reasons for pursuing doctoral education
  - Discussion of how your undergraduate/graduate studies have prepared you for doctoral study in regional development
  - Proposed area of concentration (e.g., transportation planning, urban design, economic development, environmental planning, community development, etc.). What might be the subject of your doctoral research?
  - Potential advisor for doctoral studies. To which School of Planning faculty member's work is your research interest related?

### Admission

The minimal prerequisite courses for entry into the program include either statistics or mathematics/algebra (3 semester credits), natural sciences (4), and humanities/social sciences (20).

Students who are deficient in one or more of these areas but are otherwise qualified for admission into the PhD program may be admitted conditionally with the stipulation that these deficiencies will be addressed within one year of entering the program.

### International Students

Information about admission to the University of Cincinnati for international students is available on the International Student Services Office website at <https://admissions.uc.edu/information/international.html>.

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is required of all applicants whose native language is not English—including those with F-1 visas, J-1 visas, and green cards. This test must be taken in the applicant's own country before admission is granted. The minimum acceptable TOEFL score for School of Planning applicants is 550 (paper based), 213 (computer based), or 80 (internet based). Please note that the TOEFL is not a pass-fail test. While a score of 80 is the minimum score to be accepted into the School of Planning PhD program, a score of 90 or above is preferred.

The TOEFL requirement may be waived for students with a degree from an accredited US college or university in which coursework was taught in English; for citizens of Canada or England who lived in that country for at least the past five years; and for students who can document achieving a required score on a TOEFL taken in the five years immediately prior to their application to this program. Requests to waive the TOEFL requirement should be sent with the appropriate documentation to the Program Director, Rainer vom Hofe (vomhofr@ucmail.uc.edu) for consideration.

The Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT) tests the language skills of non-native speakers of English who are awarded teaching assistantships at the University of Cincinnati. The required score is 3.0. Students who pass are certified for oral English proficiency and may assume the full range of duties associated with their teaching assistantship. Those who do not pass are recommended for an English as a Second Language (ESL) class appropriate to their needs. Students whose oral English proficiency has not been officially certified may not assume instructional responsibilities. Typically, students are required to take the test at the beginning of their first semester of study. Students who score 26 or above on the speaking section of TOEFL IBT or students with a score of 50 or above on the Test of Spoken English are exempt from OEPT. Each student is permitted to take the OEPT twice without charge during an academic year.

## **DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

### Course of Study

See the [University of Cincinnati Graduate College: Graduate Handbook](#).

## Important Deadlines

The following deadlines are recommended for all students. Students receiving a scholarship and/or a stipend through the Graduate College or through the School of Planning must meet these deadlines to demonstrate their progress and to continue receiving financial support.

- PhD committee chair: Students must confirm a PhD committee chair by the end of the first semester. The faculty advisor assigned at entry to the program does not automatically become the student's PhD committee chair.
- Full PhD committee: Students must have selected a full PhD committee by the end of the fourth semester of their studies.
- Comprehensive exam: Students are encouraged to take the comprehensive exam the summer before or during their fifth semester of study. It must be taken no later than by the end of the fifth semester to continue receiving financial support.
- Dissertation proposal defense: Doctoral students in the School of Planning are expected to defend their dissertation proposal during the sixth semester, but no later than by the end of the sixth semester to continue receiving financial support.

To advance to PhD candidacy, PhD students must have taken the comprehensive exam and defended their dissertation proposal.

When forming a committee, taking the comprehensive exam and defending the dissertation proposal, students must seek the signatures of their faculty advisors, i.e., the PhD committee, and turn in the signed forms to the School of Planning.

Any students receiving a scholarship and/or a stipend through the Graduate College or School of Planning are required to meet these deadlines as a condition of continued financial support. Meeting the above-outlined deadlines demonstrates that the student is in good standing, guides the School of Planning Director in assigning teaching duties, and guarantees the continuance of financial support through the SOP. It cannot be overemphasized that missing deadlines can lead to discontinuation of financial support.

## Study Plan Prior to Candidacy

In order to assess the progress of a doctoral student properly, the student's PhD advisor will review the transcripts of each of her/his/their advisees at the beginning of each semester. If a student is in good standing, no action will be taken. Otherwise, the PhD advisor will meet with the student to discuss her/his/their concern and possible remediation action.

At the beginning of the first semester, the assigned academic advisor (or doctoral committee chair) and the student will work together to develop a plan/course of study prior to candidacy. The plan should include:

- Name of doctoral committee chair
- Primary research interest(s)
- Tentative schedule of courses for the next two years of study

Once the study plan is established, if a revision is requested, the student will work with her/his/their doctoral committee chair to revise the study plan.



## Student Evaluation Prior to Doctoral Examinations

The purpose of this evaluation is to ensure that doctoral students have the capabilities, knowledge, and critical-thinking abilities to continue their studies; conduct independent and creative dissertation research; and earn a PhD degree. The student evaluation is the sole responsibility of the student's doctoral committee chair.

The doctoral committee chair shall talk to instructors the student has taken courses with, as well as other professors the student has worked with, to assess the student's academic performance, including the student's graduate-assistant performance. Should a student be in bad academic standing—for instance, a grade-point average of below 3.0—the doctoral committee chairperson and the PhD program director will meet and decide about the student's standing within the program. The PhD program director will inform the student about the decision after the meeting:

- Good academic standing with financial aid
- Good academic standing without financial aid
- Probation (without financial aid)
- Dismissal

## Doctoral Examination Process

There are two major milestones after the successful completion of the coursework to become a PhD candidate: the comprehensive exam and the dissertation proposal defense.

The comprehensive exam is related to a student's coursework and research area. The comprehensive exam is administered by the student's doctoral committee. To be able to take the comprehensive exam by the end of the second year or the beginning of the third year, students need to have a full doctoral committee consisting of a doctoral committee chair and two committee members. Note: A student that has failed to establish a full doctoral committee cannot take the comprehensive exam.

All students are required to take the comprehensive exam; no exceptions will be made. The exam covers topics related to the student's area of study. The overall objective of the exam is for a committee to assess a student's mastery of the appropriate literature, theories, and methods in the major and minor areas the student has chosen and, as such, show that the student is ready for doctoral-dissertation research. The exam can be given as an in-class exam or as a take-home exam, typically lasting a few hours. The comprehensive exam will be graded on a *Pass/Fail* basis, and those that pass this exam can continue to prepare and defend their dissertation proposals. If a student does not pass this exam, she/he/they will be allowed one retake. The timeframe and the terms for retaking the comprehensive exam need to be discussed with the student's doctoral committee. If a student fails a second time, she/he/they will be dismissed from the program. On the rare occasion when the doctoral committee is undecided about whether to pass or fail the student, the committee has the right to invite the student for an oral follow-up examination. The result of the comprehensive exam must be made available to the student within two to three weeks of taking the exam. It is strongly recommended that students take the comprehensive

exam no later than during the 5<sup>th</sup> semester in the program, i.e., the Fall semester during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study.

The defense of the dissertation proposal will be administered by the student’s doctoral committee. The dissertation-proposal defense must consist of a written proposal and an oral presentation that is open to the public. It is at the discretion of the committee to determine when the quality of a student’s proposal is good enough to proceed with the oral presentation. Once a student passes the defense of her/his/their dissertation proposal, the student can then apply for candidate status with the university. For an organized and diligent person, the comprehensive exam and the proposal defense can both be completed in the first semester of the third year. To be in good academic standing and to receive continued financial support, students must complete the comprehensive exam and the proposal defense by no later than the end of the Spring semester of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study. Note: ongoing financial support during the fourth year of PhD education in the RDP program is not guaranteed

### Teaching Assignment

To prepare a doctoral student for teaching, he/she/they are required to work one semester as a teaching assistant (TA) for a member of the SOP faculty prior to the teaching assignment. It is highly recommended that a doctoral student is a TA for the class that he/she/they plans on teaching independently as instructor on record. Each doctoral student is required to teach at least one course, ideally supervised by a member of the SOP faculty. Students who teach during the first four years of study and who receive funding in form of a graduate fellowship/stipend can apply 10 hours per week of their required 20 hours per week towards the teaching requirement. Students who are either funded through their own sources or are in more advanced standing (fifth year and beyond) will be paid according to the SOP adjunct-faculty pay structure.

### PhD Curriculum Summary (60 credits required)

The doctoral curriculum has the following minimum number of courses by category: Theory: 1; Required Methods: 2; Elective Methods: 1; Minor: 2; Free Electives: 6; Research: 6; Colloquium: 4.

All students must complete all prerequisite courses and the following courses or their equivalent.

<b><i>Theory (1 required)</i></b>	Semester	Cr. hr.
Advanced Planning & Spatial Theory (PLAN7053) <sup>1</sup>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><i>Methods (3 required)</i></b>		
Advanced Quantitative Methods (PLAN8012) <sup>1</sup>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4</b>
Advanced Qualitative Methods (PLAN8011) <sup>1</sup>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>4</b>
Elective Research Methods	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3-4</b>

<b>Minor (2 required)</b>		
Elective Minor course	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3-4</b>
Elective Minor course	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Free Electives (6 required), including Independent Studies</b>		
Free Elective	<b>Tbd</b>	<b>3-4</b>
Free Elective	<b>Tbd</b>	<b>3-4</b>
Free Elective	<b>Tbd</b>	<b>3-4</b>
Free Elective	<b>Tbd</b>	<b>3-4</b>
Free Elective	<b>Tbd</b>	<b>3-4</b>
Free Elective	<b>Tbd</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Research (6 required, 14 credits of research is required)</b>		
Research Design (PLAN8021)	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>4</b>
Research Apprenticeship I (PLAN8026)	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>4</b>
Research Apprenticeship II (PLAN8027)	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4</b>
Dissertation Research I (PLAN8022)	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4</b>
Dissertation Research II (PLAN8023)	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>1</b>
Dissertation Research III (PLAN8024)	<b>6<sup>th</sup> and on</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Doctoral Colloquium (1 credit each in four semesters)</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Required credit hours</b>		<b>60</b>

<sup>1</sup>Offered in alternating years. Please see detailed [curriculum map](#).

### PhD Curriculum Summary (60 credits required) for Students without a Planning Background

Students with a Master's degree in a discipline other than planning are required to complete up to six additional graduate planning courses offered by the School of Planning Masters of Community Planning (MCP) program listed below in order to ensure their preparation within the field of planning. The student's doctoral committee has the discretion to waive one or more of these courses based on graduate coursework completed in a non-planning graduate program.

All students must complete all prerequisite courses and the following courses or their equivalent.

<b>Theory (1 required)</b>	Semester	Cr. hr.
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Advanced Planning & Spatial Theory (PLAN7053) <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup>	4
<b>Methods (3 required)</b>		
Advanced Quantitative Methods (PLAN8012) <sup>1</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup>	4
Advanced Qualitative Methods (PLAN8011) <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup>	4
Elective Research Methods	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3-4
<b>Minor (2 required)</b>		
Elective Minor course	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3-4
Elective Minor course	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3-4
<b>Required MCP courses (6 required)</b>		
PLAN7001 Planning in Urban Communities	1 <sup>st</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3
PLAN7002 Structure and Dynamics of Human Settlements	2 <sup>nd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup>	3
PLAN7005 Methods of Planning Systems Analysis	1 <sup>st</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3
PLAN7006 Methods of Physical Planning and Design Analysis	2 <sup>nd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup>	3
PLAN7020 Economic Development Planning: Theory and Practice	1 <sup>st</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3
PLAN7022 Land Use Planning: Law & the City Around You	2 <sup>nd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup>	3
<b>Research (6 required, 14 credits of research is required)</b>		
Research Design (PLAN8021)	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4
Research Apprenticeship I (PLAN8026)	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4
Research Apprenticeship II (PLAN8027)	4 <sup>th</sup>	4
Dissertation Research I (PLAN8022)	4 <sup>th</sup>	4
Dissertation Research II (PLAN8023)	5 <sup>th</sup>	1
Dissertation Research III (PLAN8024)	6 <sup>th</sup> and on	1
<b>Doctoral Colloquium (1 credit each in four semesters)</b>		
	1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup>	4
<b>Total Required credit hours</b>		<b>60</b>

<sup>1</sup>Offered in alternating years. Please see detailed [curriculum map](#).

### Credit Hour Requirements

For the first two years, PhD students must be registered for 10 or more graduate credits each fall and spring semester to be considered full-time students, and for at least 12 graduate credits if

receiving a university-sponsored fellowship or assistantship. Audit or undergraduate credits do not count toward full-time status and cannot be supported by a university graduate award.

Part-time doctoral students must satisfy the UC Board of Trustees residency requirement, which requires that they have one year of full-time study (defined as being enrolled for at least 10 graduate credits in her/his/their program in each of two semesters [fall and/or spring and/or summer semester] during a span of three consecutive semesters).

Students must register, after completion of all required courses, for a minimum of one graduate credit hour each academic year (preferably the fall semester) to maintain graduate status at the University of Cincinnati. Courses that are audited, as well as courses in which students received grades of W, UW, or F do not count towards the minimum-credit requirement. Students that use university facilities and equipment, such as libraries, computer labs, or office space must register for one graduate credit per semester. International students must register for a minimum of one graduate credit hour each fall and spring semester to maintain student status and to have access to university facilities.

All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within nine consecutive academic years of the date of matriculation into the program.

For more information, please see the [University of Cincinnati Graduate College: Graduate Handbook](#).

### Course Waiver

Under certain circumstances, a PhD student has the right to request a course waiver for one of the required courses (see the list of required courses above). One of these circumstances could be that the student has taken a similar course as part of their prior graduate studies towards a master's degree. Please note that undergraduate courses do not count towards the credit-hour requirement of a PhD student and as such cannot be used to request a course waiver. A second reason to request a waiver for a required course could be that based on the student's own research interests, she/he/they prefers to substitute the required advanced qualitative or quantitative-methods course with another advanced quantitative or qualitative-methods course taught in another department that better fits with the student's research focus. Each waiver of a required course must be petitioned in writing and be based on solid arguments (e.g., proof of the claim, such as the syllabus, samples of assignments and tests, a letter from the instructor, etc.) and must be supported by the student's doctoral committee chair. The request will be reviewed by the School of Planning PhD committee. If a waiver is approved, another course must be taken to meet total credit hour requirements.

### Candidacy for Degree

A doctoral student becomes a candidate for the PhD degree upon successful completion of the comprehensive exam and the written and oral dissertation-proposal defense. Students are expected to enter PhD candidacy by the end of the sixth semester (spring semester of the third year). Doctoral students must complete all departmental requirements to be admitted to candidacy. These requirements include:

Successfully Finished	Timeline / Requirement
Required doctoral courses	- First four semesters for full-time students - Grade point average of at least a 3.0
Comprehensive examination	- Summer after fourth semester, but no later than end of fifth semester
Dissertation proposal defense	- fifth semester, but no later than end of sixth semester

Once they meet these requirements, the student should ensure that they submit the signed comprehensive examination and dissertation-proposal defense forms to the PhD program director. Students should then receive a letter of candidacy from the UC Graduate College.

Dissertation

The primary responsibility for guiding the student through her/his/their PhD program rests with the student’s **doctoral advisor (chair)** and the student’s **doctoral committee**. An individual doctoral committee consists, at the minimum, of a chairperson and two members:

- The chair will act as the student’s main doctoral advisor. It is expected that she/he/they represents the student’s major area of specialization and, as such, the area where the student intends to conduct her/his/their own doctoral research. The doctoral advisor must be a full-time faculty member in the School of Planning. An assistant professor in the School of Planning may chair one, and only one, doctoral committee when she/he/they:
  - Is at least in her/his/their third year of full-time teaching at the University of Cincinnati and has had at least one successful Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) review leading to a contract extension of two years or more, or alternatively, has the approval of the SOP PhD program committee, and
  - Chairs a committee with at least one tenured SOP faculty member.
- The doctoral advisor will, if needed, assist the student in selecting a minor area of specialization(s).
- The student is responsible for forming a full doctoral committee in a timely manner but no later than by the end of the fourth semester, i.e., identifying the remaining faculty members to serve on the student’s doctoral committee. One faculty member usually represents the minor area of specialization, while another faculty member can be chosen concerning some methodologies the student intends to use for the conduct of her/his/their doctoral research.
- All three required doctoral committee members must have a PhD and must have graduate faculty standing at UC; no exceptions will be made. While the chair of the doctoral committee must be a member of the School of Planning faculty, the student can select faculty members, related to the student’s area of interest and doctoral research,

from different departments or colleges at UC. The student can also select an additional faculty member-at-large from a different university (as a fourth committee member).

A student must determine the doctoral committee chair no later than by the end of the first semester. The student further must have a full doctoral committee no later than by the end of the fourth semester, in order to take the comprehensive exam in a timely manner.

The doctoral committee will supervise the student's dissertation research. The dissertation is submitted as a part of the requirements for the PhD degree and is the property of the University of Cincinnati, governed by the University's copyright and patent policies.

Each defending student is required to schedule her/his/their dissertation defense in consultation with her/his/their committee members and to notify her/his/their program office of the scheduled defense.

Subsequently, the program office is responsible for advertising the defense to assure it is open to the public and all members of the academic community. This complies with university rules.

All university regulations as outlined in the Graduate Handbook concerning dissertations pertain. Students should consult the Graduate Handbook and should familiarize themselves with the various deadlines that they must meet to graduate at a particular time.

The completion of the dissertation and awarding of the degree are governed by university regulations. Students should be aware that all relevant university regulations and schedules apply. No exceptions will be made, and it is the responsibility of the student to know these schedules and adhere to them.

### Alternative Dissertation Format

The three-paper dissertation option is in lieu of the dissertation monograph and intended for students who seek to use the dissertation process towards building a publication record that may build an employment advantage in fields which place great emphasis on students' publication records. The three individual manuscripts must be thematically related to one another, without overlapping significantly. The three papers must contribute new knowledge to the student's field of study and must be written to be published in peer-reviewed journals relevant to the student's focus of research.

Students considering the three-paper option should discuss this with their dissertation committees. The dissertation proposal must be written to clearly reflect the three-paper option. As such, the content for each paper must be discussed in detail. The relevant literature and the intended methodology must be addressed in the proposal for all three proposed papers. The dissertation proposal should include a rationale for choosing the three-paper option, as well as a brief discussion on how the three papers thematically relate to one another and how they contribute new knowledge to the field of study. The three-paper option must be approved by the student's doctoral committee.

There is no strict requirement that one or more of the three papers (i.e., manuscripts) must have been accepted for publication at the time of graduation. The three papers must, however, be of publishable quality as determined by all three committee members. While PhD candidates can

choose to jointly publish one or more papers with one or more PhD committee members, the PhD candidate must develop the idea for the paper, conduct all the research, and write the paper her/him/themself. As such, a paper cannot be jointly written with a PhD committee member or another faculty member. The role of the faculty member is the same as when choosing the standard dissertation, i.e., the monograph, option. Students working in sequential order on the three manuscripts are encouraged to submit a finished manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal while still working on the other two manuscripts.

## Graduation

All the university rules and requirements can be found in the [University of Cincinnati Graduate Handbook](#). See also the [Graduation Website](#) for information on deadlines for grade changes and applications. All grade changes must be completed by the deadline specified for that year. If not, the student will not be certified for graduation.

Upon completion of all academic requirements, the student may complete the official online [Application to Graduate](#). The School of Planning advises that the PhD dissertation be near completion one semester prior to the time of planned graduation. Further, students are advised to consult the [Graduate College's website](#) for deadlines and instructions on submitting their electronic thesis. A completed transcript from the University Registrar's office must accompany the application for graduation. Degrees are awarded each semester.

The University requires that all fines (library, parking fines, etc.) be paid before the student can receive a diploma.

## **COURSE REGISTRATION**

### Registration

The University offers a variety of times to register, from early registration for continuing students to open web and in-person registration. Information about registration can be found at the One Enrollment Services website <http://www.onestop.uc.edu>; important registration dates can be found under Important Dates & Deadlines. The Enrollment Services website provides information for students to help register for classes, check financial aid status, view their bills, check grades, and request transcripts.

Early registration begins well in advance of the semester and offers the best opportunity for students to secure a spot in classes they are interested in taking. Graduate students are given the first "window" for registration. Links to the dates available for early registration can be found on the Enrollment Services website. Students will also be notified by UC email of their registration windows.

The University of Cincinnati has a tuition reciprocity agreement with Northern Kentucky University that applies to matriculated graduate students who are residents of Boone, Bracken, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, and Pendleton counties in Kentucky. Please see the Office of the Registrar's site for [Ohio Residency and Reciprocity](#) information.



## Academic Advising

Incoming PhD students will be assigned an academic advisor depending on faculty availability and student research interest(s). Students must confirm a doctoral committee chair, who also will be the student's academic advisor no later than the end of the first semester.

## Registration Changes/Schedule Adjustments (Drop/Add)

During the official drop/add period, students may make changes to selected classes and credits in which they are enrolled (drops or adds). A student may change her/his/their schedule after having registered and having received a schedule/bill. Students can add new courses or drop courses they are already enrolled in to/from their schedule. In addition, the number of credit hours can be changed in variable credit-hour classes, and sections can be changed. Schedule adjustment can be done online via Catalyst, or in person. Important dates to make schedule adjustments are linked on the Enrollment Services website at Important Dates & Deadlines.

After the seventh calendar day of the semester, adding a course requires approval from the student's college office and must be signed by a college representative. Adding a course also requires a faculty signature and a signature from the college offering the course. During this time, adds cannot be submitted by the student over the web.

After the 21st calendar day of the semester, the student must obtain the instructor's signature and a grade of W or F will be recorded on the student's transcript when dropping a class. At this time, the class becomes part of the student's permanent academic record.

## Changing Degree Programs

See the [University of Cincinnati Graduate College: Graduate Handbook](#).

## Advanced Standing

See the [University of Cincinnati Graduate College: Graduate Handbook](#).

## Independent Study

PhD students often enroll for independent studies when courses on specific subjects are not being offered or to devote more time to their doctoral research, with the approval of their committee chair or acting advisor. To carry out an independent study, a student and the faculty member supervising such a study must agree upon a workload appropriate for the number of credits to be awarded. An independent study form should be filled out by the student and must be signed by the faculty member. The signed form will be included in the student's file. The faculty member will submit a grade for the work completed at the end of the semester. It is highly advised that not too many independent studies be used for coursework and should be used with discretion.

## Audit

The audit option is used for cases in which coursework is desired or needed to satisfy remedial or deficiency instruction. Decisions regarding the use of the audit option should first be discussed with the student's academic advisor or doctoral committee. The student must also seek permission from the course instructor to audit a course.

## Withdrawal

See the Registrar's site regarding [Withdrawal](#) policies.

## **GRADUATE CREDIT AND GRADES**

### Graduate Credit

Graduate credits may be earned for 6000-level courses and above. Special topics courses are usually listed at the 6000 level, except for a few 7000-level courses. These courses are open to advanced undergraduates (6000 levels only) and graduate students and usually carry three credit hours. Most 7000-level graduate courses are three credit-hour courses, except for studios, which can have five credit hours or more. Advanced graduate courses open to both Master of Community Planning and PhD students carry 8000 numbers. In all cases, when registering for a course, it is necessary to indicate a graduate-credit course (G). Note: undergraduate courses do not qualify for graduate credit and as such do not add to a student's credit hours required for graduation.

A full-time PhD student receiving financial assistance in the form of a scholarship and/or a stipend must register for 12 or more graduate credits each semester for the first two years. A foreign student, under the terms of her/his/their visa, must also enroll as a full-time student every semester, either 10 hours per semester per university standards, or 12 hours if receiving a scholarship and/or stipend.

A doctoral student conducting research, but not taking courses, must enroll for one credit per semester to be allowed to use university facilities.

### Grading

See the Office of the Registrar's site:

[https://www.uc.edu/registrar/faculty\\_resources/grading\\_scales.html#grad](https://www.uc.edu/registrar/faculty_resources/grading_scales.html#grad)

## **ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND STANDARDS**

### Minimum Standards

A student is considered in good standing if reasonable progress is being made towards the degree sought. This means that students must maintain a minimum B average GPA of 3.0. For

more advanced doctoral candidates this implies making significant progress towards their doctoral research and towards writing their dissertations. For those rare occasions when a student receives an incomplete 'I' grade for a course, the student should make up the missing work and complete the required coursework within the next semester. Within one year, such 'I' grades will automatically be changed to F grades if not given a grade for completing the coursework. A student cannot graduate with an NG (no grade) on his or her transcript.

Following the four semesters of coursework and during the years of dissertation research, a student must register for one credit hour per year to maintain student status, or one credit hour per semester to use university facilities.

Consistent with university policy, a candidate for a doctoral degree in the School of Planning must complete all requirements no later than nine years from the date of first registration in the PhD program. A petition for extension or reinstatement, if necessary, must be initiated at the School level.

### Graduate Student Annual Review

See the University of Cincinnati Graduate College: [Graduate Handbook](#).

### Withdrawal from Program

See the University of Cincinnati Graduate College: [Graduate Handbook](#).

### Probation/Dismissal

Students who fail to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or above or have received a grade of C or lower in one or more courses will be placed on probation. The school director will issue a letter of probation, warning of this status. Dismissal will occur if the student's grades do not improve enough in the following semester to be removed from probation.

If a student receives a second grade of C, she/he/they will be expected to repeat the course(s) in such a manner that only one uncorrected C grade remains. Probation will cease upon successful completion of the course with a grade of B or above and the GPA rising to 3.0 or higher.

### Leave of Absence

See the University of Cincinnati Graduate College: [Graduate Handbook](#).

## **TUITION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

### Tuition

See [Tuition & Fees, Graduate & Professional Students](#).

### Graduate Scholarships (Tuition Remissions)

The School of Planning can award each year a limited number of graduate scholarships. These scholarships are usually funded by the University of Cincinnati Graduate College and cover all, or a portion of, the tuition for full-time graduate students. A scholarship does not automatically come with a stipend. Students receiving a graduate scholarship must be registered for at least the number of graduate credit hours required by the Graduate College in each semester for which they are receiving support. In addition, the School of Planning requires that students be registered for at least 12 credit hours if they are receiving a scholarship. If a scholarship is cancelled for whatever reason, the student will be responsible for any tuition balance that results from this cancellation, based on the date of the cancellation. Students may not receive scholarships for audited courses.

Students registered for more than 18 credits in a semester, i.e., 19 credits or above, will be billed tuition and general fees on a per-credit rate for each credit over the 18. The graduate scholarship is a tuition remission only, and no service/work by the student is required in return for the award. Students who receive a scholarship, but no stipend, shall not be assigned duties, including teaching or graduate assistantships.

### Graduate Assistantships (Stipends)

A student awarded a graduate scholarship may also receive a stipend in the form of a graduate assistantship (GA) in addition to the tuition remission. Students receiving a graduate assistantship must be registered for a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours during the first four semesters of full-time coursework. Graduate assistantships will be cancelled if the awardee does not meet his or her enrollment obligation.

Recipients of a graduate assistantship are governed in their duties primarily by their academic advisor and secondarily by the School of Planning. If awarded an assistantship outside their program, graduate assistants are governed in their duties by the academic program, college, or the area of responsibility that made the award.

A student who receives a graduate assistantship devotes his or her effort to a combined program for formal study and assigned duties of teaching, research, or administrative service. The stipend received by the student is in recognition for these services.

The appointing academic program, college, or area of responsibility determines the workload requirements of students who hold assistantships, although the awards obligate awardees to no more than 20 hours per week of services that make a substantive contribution to the student's academic and professional development. If the student determines that she/he/they cannot meet the requirements of the award, it is imperative that she/he/they notifies the program to initiate renegotiation or reassignment of the award with correspondingly less support. A student is not required to be available during break periods, such as spring break, unless she/he/they is given additional compensation.

Graduate assistantships require teaching, research, or administrative services of 20 hours per week for both the fall and the spring semester, including finals week, for a total of 16 weeks per

semester. Also, students receiving a GA get a 10% discount on all purchases made at the UC Bookstores when they show their UC student identification card.

When graduate students are employed over and above their assistantships, several legitimate academic concerns can be raised (including the length of time to earn their degrees). Consequently, the practice is highly discouraged. Permission to do so must be obtained from the director of the School of Planning. International students are forbidden to work more than 20 hours per week under any circumstances while school is in session. Violation of this regulation will result in the loss of financial aid.

The School of Planning attempts to assign stipends depending on student's needs and academic performance. For students already in residence, GAs are awarded to those individuals who are judged to have prior superior academic performance (generally an overall GPA of 3.5 or better) and who are judged able to perform the required research or instructional services. All financial awards/stipends depend on continual high-level academic performance and are renewed on an annual basis. The School of Planning aims to provide incoming full-time students with two years of scholarship (tuition waiver) and four years of a stipend in the form of a graduate assistantship, but depending on the availability of funds, exemptions can be possible. No PhD student may receive a stipend for more than four academic years.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### Program Standards

This handbook clarifies minimum university level requirements and policies that apply to all graduate students throughout the University of Cincinnati, as well as outlines the specific requirements, policies, and procedures for the PhD in Regional Development Planning program in the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning.

### Records Privacy, FERPA, Right to Review

The School of Planning complies fully with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) of 1974, which was designed to protect the privacy of education records. Students have the right to inspect and review their education records and to request the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal and formal hearings. If any student desires to review her/his/their educational records, the student should contact the PhD program director or the director of the School of Planning.

The academic record of a student is confidential, and an official transcript of such records is sent only at the written request or with the written consent of the student. The only information that will be released, with the student's permission, is name, dates of attendance, degree(s) awarded, honors and awards, college, class, major, residency/internship site, address, and telephone number, unless other specific instructions are received from the student.

## Non-Discrimination

The School of Planning supports University Rule 3361:10-13. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical, or mental differences, or status as a disabled veteran of the Vietnam era will not be practiced or tolerated in any of its activities. Questions concerning this policy should be addressed to the Office of Equal Opportunity & Access (5150 Edwards Center 1, 45 Corry Blvd.). The full policy can be read here: [Notice of Non-Discrimination](#)

## Student Code of Conduct

It is expected that students will conduct their relationships with faculty and others in a professional manner. Students have the responsibility for being honest in carrying out any written or oral assignment. A student who has been dishonest in coursework could receive a grade of F in the course. Typical actions which are considered dishonest include: plagiarism—defined herein as using the conceptual framework and/or words of others without proper referencing; deception of effort; unauthorized assistance; and/or cheating on an exam—defined as both copying and using unauthorized notes. Dishonesty in any form may result not only in a failing grade in the course but also in suspension or dismissal from the School of Planning PhD program in Regional Development Planning.

Investigations of incidents of alleged dishonesty will be conducted in accordance with procedures published in the [University of Cincinnati Graduate College: Graduate Handbook](#) and the UC Student Code of Conduct.

## Responsible Conduct of Research

See [University of Cincinnati Graduate College: Graduate Handbook](#) and [Institutional Review Board protocols](#).

## Graduate Student Grievance Procedures

Grievance procedures have been established to provide PhD students with a formal chance to appeal, and possibly to secure the redress of grievances arising out of their academic relationship with the school, college, and the University of Cincinnati.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

For information on student resources, dual degrees, international students, financial support, maintaining graduate-student status, international graduate assistantships, and more, visit the UC website, and refer to the [University of Cincinnati Graduate College: Graduate Handbook](#).

Health Insurance: All students are required to have [health insurance](#).

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**FORMS**

Please see the SOP main office.