Department of Urban Planning
Ball State University

2023-2024

Student Handbook and Policy Guide
Master of Urban and Regional Planning
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Welcome

This handbook is designed to assist your journey through the Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree program. Policies in the university catalog take precedence over the guidelines presented here. So, this handbook is a supplement to the current edition of the Ball State University Graduate Catalog. The Graduate 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. If you believe there to be any discrepancies, please let us know.

Admissions

Admission information is on the website. The department does not have a separate application for admission. If your undergraduate grade point average is 3.0 or above, we will admit you to the department. If your GPA is below 3.0 but above the university’s cutoff of 2.75, the department will ask you for some additional materials (letters of reference and a short essay detailing your interest in planning). If your GPA is below the Graduate School’s cutoff, you may receive information from them about applying for probationary status. We are willing to work with probationary students and will meet with you to discuss an academic plan.

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 also hosts departments of architecture, landscape architecture, and construction management and interior design. A graduate 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.** 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. If you prefer using your own email account, you may forward your BSU mail to your personal account.

We have an official department Facebook page [here](#) where we may post news, upcoming events, stories, and photos. We also have a group page where we post job openings; you can find that by searching Facebook for “Ball State Urban Planning.” We love to post photos of students and to share accomplishments on Facebook. We also have a presence on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com) and on Twitter at [@bsu_planning](https://twitter.com/bsu_planning) and a group for students and alumni on LinkedIn which is under the handle “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 Academic Ethics and Class Attendance policies in the [Graduate 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 class and teams, 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.

**Graduate Assistantships**

Every year, the department usually has a few graduate assistantships. To apply for a graduate assistantship, you will email a completed application with three letters of reference, your resume, and a one- to two-page essay that tells of your interest in planning and what you hope to do as a planning professional. The letters may be sent directly from your reference writers. All materials should be emailed to planning@bsu.edu before the March 1 priority consideration deadline.

Holding an assistantship is a privilege. If you have been awarded such a position, a great deal of trust has been placed in you and your abilities. Graduate assistants are required to work either 10 or 20 hours per week, depending on the position. They must log these hours in Kronos every two weeks as instructed by the administrative coordinator who verifies those hours with the graduate assistant’s supervisor. Some of our graduate assistants work for off-campus sponsors such as the city of Muncie or the Department of Metropolitan Development in Indianapolis.

Graduate assistants are required to work each week during a semester, including finals week. They are not required to work during university breaks (fall break, spring break, etc.) but it is important that students working for off-campus sponsors communicate these dates to their supervisors. All of our off-campus sponsors are supportive of students’ needs to take part in events like field trip week and to attend conferences, but, again, it is critical to discuss these events and the dates with supervisors in advance.

You can learn more about the perks and responsibilities of being a graduate assistant [here](#).

**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 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!

**American Planning Association**

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 the professional (AICP) certification you may wish to earn 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.)

**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 there is an option for online attendance as well. We will keep you apprised about those opportunities.

We also travel to the site of the national APA conference most years. 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 try to schedule at least one into your education plan.

Faculty also attend conferences such as the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) 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, meet graduate students from other planning schools, and is particularly helpful to you if you are considering applying to a PhD program after you finish the MURP program.

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
The chair of the department is Dr. John West, and your academic advisor is Dr. Sanglim Yoo. You are encouraged to make an appointment to talk about your goals with either of them. Graduate School is a time for you to claim a specialty and to explore topics of interest to you. We allow for ample electives because of this. Your advisor can help you select classes that will meet your needs and set you up for future success. The department’s administrative coordinator keeps a check sheet that shows your progress toward graduation. This can help you make sure you are on track. You will receive updated copies periodically; it is okay to ask for an update as well.

Curriculum Overview
See the Graduate Catalog for the complete curriculum.

In your first semester, you must sign up for PLAN 500, an entrance exam. Your score is important for our internal bookkeeping purposes. It is not a test and will
not affect your admission to the program or grades. The exam will be in Canvas, and should be taken during the first month of the semester.

First semester is also a good time to consider how you want to use your electives. You may choose to organize these around a particular theme and develop a specialty for yourself. The department recommends considering a specialization that aligns with one of the graduate certificates offered at Ball State, such as sustainability, or real-estate development. In special cases, we are able to work with students to complete dual degree programs. Regardless of whether you are choosing a certificate or a dual degree, your electives can often count towards both degree programs.

In your **second semester** you will register for PLAN 690, portfolio review. The portfolio creation and review processes are explained in detail in Appendix B, and will be discussed in depth in PLAN 605. Portfolio completion is required prior to registering for internship.

Usually students complete a **summer internship** between their first and second years.

In your **third semester**, you will have more space for electives and study research methods as you begin thinking about your final project.

In your **fourth semester**, you will register for PLAN 699, an exit exam. Like the entrance exam, it is found in Canvas, and is used for internal bookkeeping purposes.

Typically, you will follow the MURP curriculum plan in the Graduate Catalog, but exceptions can be made if you have taken similar classes in the past or have a design background. If you think you qualify for an exception, provide documentation such as a syllabus or course description of your previous work to the graduate director and discuss your options.

**Hours required**

Even if you are allowed to make substitutions for required classes, you must complete 48 hours to earn the MURP degree (or 36 hours if you are a fast-track student with an undergraduate degree in planning from an institution accredited by the APA). Students are required to take more than 60 percent of the required credit in 600-level courses.
Taking 12 credit hours per semester will keep you on track to graduate in two years. You are permitted to take up to 15 hours per semester. Fast track students must typically take 15 hours per semester to finish in one calendar year and must take care to ensure that 60 percent of their credit hours are taken at the 600 level, a requirement of the graduate school for all MURP students.

**Independent studies**
You are permitted to take up to nine credit hours of independent study as you work toward the MURP 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**
Elective classes at the 500 or 600 level with the prefixes ARCH, CAP, LA, PLAN, SUST and UD can be used toward your MURP degree. Other electives must be approved by the MURP graduate director. Typically, these come from areas such as Sociology, Political Science, Public Administration, Religious Studies, Natural Resources, or Anthropology, but others may be permitted. A limited number of transfer classes may also count either as electives or in place of required classes. Your advisor can answer questions about these.

**How should I organize my electives?**
Electives give you an opportunity to explore multiple topics that interest you or to narrow in on a focused interest that you want to develop. This section is designed to point out some of those focused areas that fit well with our curriculum and are closely aligned with planning. Electives must be taken at either the 500 or 600 level to count toward a graduate degree.

1. **Dual Degrees**
   It is possible at Ball State to earn two masters degrees simultaneously and to share some credits between the two of them. This can sometimes be completed by adding as little as one more semester to your schedule. The
best advice is to start planning early. The most common dual degree our students seek is the Master of Urban Design which is a one-year program offered only at Ball State’s Indianapolis campus.

2. Certificates
You might choose to earn a certificate alongside your MURP degree.

a. **Real Estate Development** is a common choice here and can easily be earned without adding coursework to your schedule. We are in the process of revising this 16-hour certificate and will allow substitutions to give credit for our new RED classes in the 571-576 sequence.

b. **Geographic Information Science** is another certificate option. It requires 15 credit hours, making it a comfortable use for your MURP electives and giving you an expertise in using the mapping software commonly used in cities and towns.

c. **Social and Environmental Justice** is offered through the Department of Architecture in CAP and requires 12 credit hours with our PLAN 613 counting for three of those.

d. **Certificate in Sustainability** is an online certificate that requires 12 credit hours.

**Portfolio Review**
You will create a portfolio of your coursework as detailed in the portfolio guide at the end of this document and throughout PLAN 605, Design and Presentation Techniques. Typically, in spring semester of your first year you will register for portfolio review, PLAN 690. In this zero-credit-hour “class” you will turn in printed and electronic copies of your portfolio and related documents and go through a mock interview with a team of faculty members who will provide feedback on your work. Passing the portfolio process is required before embarking upon an internship.

[Click here to see examples of portfolios.](#)
Internship
An internship of 200 hours or more is required of all students. Most graduate students do their internship during the summer between first and second years. It is permissible to do it during a later semester, however.

The office receives many notices of internships each semester. These are posted on the bulletin board outside the conference room and emailed to students. CAP organizes a job and internship fair each spring, and typically half a dozen providers of planning internships attend. 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 conduct virtual interviews.

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 holiday break. The Career Center provides many opportunities to have your resume reviewed, practice interview skills, and other job-related helps. Sometimes employers post internship there as well.

Besides signing up in Banner to get credit for your internship (PLAN 691), 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.

CAPSTONE, THESIS, OR CREATIVE PROJECT
Part of your education includes a final ‘capstone’ experience. The capstone sequence includes PLAN 694 Planning Research Methods which you will take in the fall of your second year, and PLAN 692 Planning Analysis Studio, which you will take in your final semester. These classes will be oriented around a year-long collective project, with real-world impact.

Alternatively, if you choose, you can elect to do a six-hour thesis (see Appendix A) which will be submitted to the graduate school in lieu of the final studio project. The thesis comes with deadlines and forms that will need to be completed, and it requires some early planning on your part. If you think you will want to pursue a thesis, please talk this over with the graduate advisor early in your academic
career and familiarize yourself with the dates and deadlines available from the Graduate School.

Our qualitative and quantitative courses, PLAN 613 Qualitative Methods and Social Justice and PLAN 614 Quantitative Analysis will prepare you to understand and conduct research for the capstone or thesis. The research course, PLAN 694 Planning Research Methods, will teach you how to apply those skills to your own project.

What does a class project look like?
Beginning with the 2020 fall entry class, students are no longer required to submit a paper to the graduate school to earn the MURP degree. If a formal thesis does not meet your interests, you will choose a different kind of final project to complete during your semester in PLAN 692 Planning Analysis Studio. You might choose for your final project to write a research paper. This might describe something in depth without trying to solve a problem. A research paper might trace the history of planning in Muncie or compare (without necessarily evaluating) two state programs for preserving agricultural lands.

You might choose to complete a creative project instead of a research paper. This reflects the application of creative skills in developing an appropriate professional product. It differs from a thesis in that it does not ask and answer a research question. Instead it presents a piece of top-quality applied work of the sort a professional planner might be expected to do. It often deals with specific local problems.

Examples of Topics
Examples of creative projects might include:

1. A professionally done plan or proposal for part or all of an urban area, grappling with real issues and interacting with the appropriate policy decision makers.

2. A thorough impact analysis of a proposed project, investigating in detail the relevant fiscal, environmental or social impacts, as appropriate, of the proposal.

3. A substantial and thorough inventory of some resource or area, such as a detailed historic structures inventory of an urban area, with policy suggestions or recommendations for proper use of the resource.
4. Modifications of an existing planning tool, such as improvements to an existing model or computer package, to make it more useful.

5. A detailed feasibility study for development or re-use of a building or area, with cost estimates and all details worked out.

The creative project is less research oriented and more applied.

A typical outline of a creative project might look like this:

**Statement of the Creative Project.** This should include an explanation of the project, including the reason for its selection, the writer's reaction to the project, as well as the general need and value of the creative project.

**Planning Background.** This section should provide the context for the creative project – an explanation of the problem addressed, a description of its physical context and the parameters guiding a solution, if any.

**Literature Review.** Planners take pride in finding new solutions to old problems, but it is important to learn from those who have studied the same problem before. The literature review provides a summary of the research that you have done to understand how others have addressed similar problems, and it gives the reader a context in which to evaluate how your solution relates to what other planners have done and what scholars have recommended.

**Project Description.** This section should describe your solution to the problem that you set out to solve or the plan that you developed in a particular context. When viewed in the context of your literature review, your solution may turn out not to be new but to be a successful application of what you have learned from others in a new context.

**Summary and Conclusions.** This section – often fairly brief – should explain what you have learned from the process that might be useful to others. Sometimes it is helpful to think of this section as a series of “Lessons Learned.”

**Bibliography.** The bibliography includes all sources used, even if not mentioned in the report. Classify sources alphabetically and preferably in the following subdivisions: books, yearbooks, magazine articles, bulletins, unpublished theses, laws, newspaper articles, and encyclopedia references.

**Appendix.** The appendix includes any supplementary data in the form of tables, questionnaires, records, or other information which is pertinent to the report but
not appropriate and/or too bulky for inclusion in the text. This might include a professional report or other major piece of work.

A creative project or research paper will be completed in class and will NOT be submitted to the graduate school. (This is a change applicable only to students entering the program in fall 2020 or afterward.)

Some students, especially those who write a thesis, go on to publish something related to their research. A few alumni of our program have authored or co-authored journal articles and book chapters. Others use it as a springboard to study at the doctoral level. PhD programs require certain GPAs and test results such as GRE. However, the competitiveness to get admissions and to receive funding increases when the student can prove that s/he is PhD material, i.e., s/he already has a research background. This can be demonstrated through a good thesis.

**Graduation**

Graduation is not automatic. You must apply in Banner to graduate. Do this at the beginning of your final semester. If you are working toward a dual degree or have added a certificate to your curriculum, be sure to apply to graduate from both programs. The Graduate School web pages contain important information about deadlines, forms, and procedures. Please become familiar with what is there.

The department’s administrative coordinator keeps a check sheet showing your progress toward your degree as required by the Graduate School and can help you make sure that you are on track and that any substitutions are properly documented.

If you have not finished your course work by the end of the fourth semester, you may still walk at graduation. You will have to reapply for graduation and pay the fee again in the semester you expect to complete your work. In order to receive the degree, you are expected to complete it within 6 years from enrollment. See the Graduate Catalog for full details.
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.

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. A few pursue teaching or apply to PhD programs as well. Many grads work in Indiana, in particular in Indianapolis and its suburbs. 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 Bureau of Labor Statistics says it is growing at an average clip with a median salary of $78,500. Good places to hunt for open jobs include APA, ACSP, Planetizen, Indiana APA, LinkedIn and our department’s own Facebook groups page, along with other social media sites.

Revised July 2023. CR
Appendix A

What is a Thesis?
A thesis is a research project. It is an attempt to contribute to our knowledge about planning by thoroughly investigating some problem. A thesis poses a question or hypothesis and sets out to answer it using data or evidence from the real world. The "issue" should be a significant one, relevant to planning. It should also be sharply focused, so that you can do a convincing job of investigating it. The most common thesis problem is picking a topic that is too broad, and then being unable to deal with it conclusively.

**Topic Examples**
Examples of thesis topics might be:

1. Determining whether a particular public program is successful (example: Does urban homesteading work in Indianapolis?). This requires setting the criteria for success, and collecting data to see whether these criteria are met. The data could be a case study of a single program application, or it could be statistical analysis of data from lots of applications.

2. Determining options or strategies for a planning body to follow (Example: Would regional planning agencies in Indiana be more effective if they concentrated on economic development or on coordination?). Usually this involves comparing what is actually being done with some alternative models, or comparing two examples which follow different models.

3. Developing a new technique for dealing with some planning problem (Example: Developing a new methodology for locating transit extensions in peripheral urban areas). This approach requires thorough knowledge of the present state of the art in some area, so you don't simply re-invent the wheel.

4. Investigating problems or aspects of applying some present planning methodology (Example: Exploring problems and consequences in applying a standard air quality dispersion model in urban areas).

5. Studying the dynamics of urban growth (Example: Why and how does a "commercial strip" evolve in a specific city?).
6. Examining various roles of those involved in planning (Example: How do neighborhood planning groups interact with the central planning agency in shaping city plans and priorities?).

The key to a good thesis topic is one that is specific and one that has a clear methodology. A good topic is one on which there is a reasonable amount of data or information – but not an overwhelming amount. Studying the relative interest of eighth graders in Muncie in planning-related issues would be a manageable topic; examining the correlation between commuting distances in the New York metropolitan region and the ownership of hybrid cars would require far too much data gathering and analysis to be worth undertaking for a masters’ thesis or project. On the other hand, an attempt to study the careers of all professional planners who graduated from Muncie Central High School could be very frustrating -- first, because the data would be difficult if not impossible to assemble; second, because there may be none. It is also important to pick a topic that interests you, because you will be spending a lot of time on it. A thesis is worth six credit hours.

The Graduate School provides a guidebook for students working on a thesis. Use this page to find the document.
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.
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.
- 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.