TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The University of South Florida's Master of Urban and Regional Planning program is housed in the School of Public Affairs, which is a part of the College of Arts and Sciences. Our PAB-accredited program has been operating since 2009 and we serve the urban and regional planning education and research needs of our region and the broader community. This handbook supplements the USF Graduate Catalog.

Program's Mission:
As part of the School of Public Affairs, a group of diverse, interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners, the USF Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program has a strong commitment to community engaged scholarship and to making differences in the Tampa Bay metropolitan region.

As part of a Research I institution, the USF MURP program engages in innovative, applied research; delivers quality education to a diverse student population; and provides public service to the surrounding community. We prepare leaders in the field of urban and regional planning to meet community, national, and global needs.

Instruction:
In addition to our core Urban and Regional Planning faculty, the program draws on a rich and diverse pool of seasoned researchers, scholars, and professionals within the School of Public Affairs and from other units at USF, as well as practicing professionals within the wider Tampa Bay region, to deliver interdisciplinary, comparative, and applied knowledge to its students.

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Master of Urban and Regional Planning:
The MURP is a 48 credit hour professional degree program that prepares students for careers, or advanced research and academic pursuits, in urban and regional planning. Graduates can expect employment in municipal, regional, state, and federal agencies, as well as across the private and nonprofit sectors. Graduates can additionally opt to embark on work leading to a Ph.D., or other advanced degrees, in this field.

Graduate Certificates:
The School of Public Affairs also offers several graduate-level certificate programs, which can be earned concurrently with our MURP degree.

> The *Graduate Certificate in Community Development (GCCD)* explores urban communities that have suffered from decades of disinvestment and examines the efforts of residents towards revitalization. The approach is interdisciplinary, weaving together a variety of perspectives so that students understand what communities are and how they differ; how communities fit into broader social systems; and what strategies are necessary to develop communities. The certificate is also applied, focusing on the current issues and

Foreign transcript evaluation.

Bachelor's Degree and GPA:
Students wishing to gain admittance into the MURP program must have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited College or University in the U.S., or an equivalent institution abroad. Holders of all undergraduate fields are welcome to apply.

Students must have a minimum overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in their undergraduate studies. Applicants with relevant work experience can apply with a GPA lower than a 3.0, but they should include a statement in their letter of intent directly addressing their readiness for graduate school.

Letter of Intent:
A letter of intent, also known as a statement of purpose, must be submitted with the online application. The letter of intent must clearly describe the applicant's academic and professional background, as well as articulate their interest in urban and regional planning. Applicants should consider this letter as an opportunity to express the specific academic goals they would like to pursue within the MURP program and beyond.

Resume:
Applicants should include an updated resume, also known as a curriculum vitae, with their application, that indicates relevant professional experience.

Letters of Recommendation:
A minimum of two letters of recommendation must be submitted online as part of the application packet. Prospective students should solicit letters from sources familiar with their academic/work history and performance. At least one of these references should come from an academic instructor. However, if an applicant has been out of school for a while and can no longer get a letter from an instructor, they can provide letters from professional references.

International Applicant Requirements:
In addition to the program-specific requirements listed above, international applicants from non-English speaking countries must comply with the following requirements:

English Proficiency: TOEFL/IELTS/Duolingo Scores
International applicants from non-English speaking countries must provide a minimum TOEFL iBT score of 79, a minimum IELTS score of 6.5, -or- a minimum Duolingo score of 110 taken within two years of the desired term of entry.

English Proficiency: Writing Sample
International applicants from non-English speaking countries need to submit a writing sample along with their graduate application. The writing sample should demonstrate their ability to analyze information and display their communication skills at a graduate-level.

Foreign Transcript Evaluation Services

All foreign transcripts and documents that are not in English must be accompanied by a certified English translation. The credential evaluation must be submitted directly to the USF Office of Admissions. A list of several credential evaluation services can be found [here](#).

Late applications may be considered, if space is available and time permits, at the discretion of the MURP Program Director. Admissions decisions are ultimately made by the MURP Admissions Committee on a case-by-case basis. The committee reviews the full application packet to

Scholarships, Grants, Work Study, and Loans:
The USF Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) houses a Scholarship Library that allows students to access information on sources of funding through computerized databases as well as source books. The USF Office of Financial Aid (OFA) administers the Federal Work Study program as well as several loan programs.

Students interested in loans or work-study should apply as soon as possible each year (after October 1st) for the upcoming academic year, which begins in August. For more information, or to complete an application packet, students are advised to contact Financial Aid by phone at (813) 974-4700, stop by the first floor of Student Services (SVC 1102), or visit their [webpage](.).

Project Assistants:
Project Assistants are students who are hired to assist faculty with grant-funded projects. Students hired as Project Assistants will complete, for example, computer analysis, cartography, fieldwork, and/or laboratory analysis related to the project. Students may be hired as salaried or on an hourly basis. The rate of pay varies from project to project. Students are selected for these positions based upon the skills needed for individual projects. Students should discuss their interest in these positions with their advisor.

In addition, several centers on the USF campus sometimes hire graduate students. The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) and the Florida Center for Community Design and Research (FCCDR) seek students to work on grant-funded projects from time to time in the areas of transportation, land use, and environmental planning. Students may submit applications for employment at these offices by contacting them directly.

Scholarships and Fellowships:
USF offers a number of financial assistance opportunities, especially to minority students. Preference is given to first-time graduate students in underrepresented disciplines. For more information on financial assistance opportunities, please consult the USF Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) [webpage](.).

Internships:
Students must complete 180 hours of internship work, as well as the URP 6940 internship course, which can be taken concurrent with or after completing the 180 hours. Faculty may circulate notices of open internship positions, but ultimately students are responsible for securing an internship, with the approval of the MURP Program Director. When the student has obtained an internship position, coordinate with the MURP Program Director to obtain a permit to enroll in URP 6940. Some internship placements may require more than the 180 hours required by the program. Students who have previously or are currently working as professional planners may be exempt from the internship requirement, at the discretion of the MURP Program Director.

International students are eligible to apply for off-campus internship and employment opportunities once they have completed a full academic year (Fall and Spring semester) at USF.

Additionally, international students who engage in full-time [Curricular Practical Training](#) (CPT) may be eligible to enroll in less than a full course load.

Transfer of Credits:
With the approval of the MURP Program Director, up to 18 credit hours earned under non-degree seeking status, in a graduate certificate, or at another accredited graduate school, may count towards fulfilling the MURP degree requirements. Credits are not transferred automatically; the MURP Program Director will review the course description and syllabus of each course to determine which, if any, will be accepted towards the MURP degree. Students may transfer only graduate-level (5000-7999) structured coursework with a grade of "B" (3.0 GPA) or better, [per USF policy](#).

Satisfactory Progress:
Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA ("B" grade average) in all graduate coursework. Failure to do so will result in the student being placed on academic probation. A student may remain on

URP 6115	Planning Policy and Politics	3 credit hours
URP 6316	Land Use Planning	3 credit hours
URP 6549	Urban and Metropolitan Economic Development	3 credit hours

Analytical Methods Core Requirements (6 credit hours):

| URP 6201 | Quantitative Analysis | 3 credit hours |
| URP 6232 | Research Methods | |

Graduate-Level Courses:
Students in the MURP program are only allowed to take graduate-level courses (5000-6999). Undergraduate-level courses (1000-4999) will not be accepted towards your degree under any

THESIS GUIDELINES
Things to Consider:

A thesis is a two-semester commitment, minimum. Students are expected to complete all work for a thesis within two semesters. Failure to meet deadlines or requirements may result in termination of the thesis-track, in which case a student will be directed to take

Thesis Enrollment – Second Semester:

Students are required to submit a copy of their thesis to the MURP Program Director no less than six weeks before the anticipated defense date.

After the advisor has approved the thesis and thinks the student is ready for the defense, the student should submit the thesis to the faculty committee members and the USF Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) no less than three weeks before the anticipated defense date.

After the thesis has been submitted to the faculty committee, the student should set a date and time for the defense.

Students should adhere to the USF Office of Graduate Studies' (OGS) [thesis submission requirements](#) and any required notifications for the defense.

On the appointed date, the student will defend the thesis by conducting a short presentation of their work before their committee and any additional guests/audience who choose to attend. After the presentation, the student will engage in a discussion (for approximately 1 to 1.5 hours) with the three members of the committee, who will determine if the thesis is acceptable as-is, needs revisions, or is not acceptable.

Thesis Research Proposal:
Guidelines adapted from [NYU Gallatin](#).

1. *Thesis Statement*

   Following an optional introduction section, the basic function of this section is to articulate a phenomenon that the student proposes to investigate (whether a social event, process, literary work, an intellectual idea, or something else), and the question(s), issue(s), or problem(s) related to that phenomenon that the student plans to address in the thesis. The core of the statement may take the form of a hypothesis that the student

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Student Chapter: The USF ASPA student chapter strives to connect theory and practice by putting an emphasis on value systems such as professionalism, social equity, and code of ethics.

Enrolled MURP students can log onto [BullsConnect](#), using their USF NetID and password, to join a student organization.

Community Engagement:
MURP students have numerous opportunities to engage with local governments throughout the Tampa Bay region. Students may network by attending public meetings attended by elected and appointed officials, as well as events through the American Planning Association (APA) Florida Chapter ([Sun Coast](#) and [Heart of Florida](#) Sections) and other professional organizations:

[Hillsborough County Government](#)
[City of Tampa](#)
[City of Temple Terrace](#)
[Pinellas County Government](#)
[City of St. Petersburg](#)

The USF Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) offers service learning and applied research opportunities for MURP students seeking relevant, real-world experience in community engagement. For more information, students are advised to contact OCP by phone at (813) 974-3044, by [email](#), or visit their [webpage](#).

Mentor A Planning Student (MAPS) Program:
MAPS is a program conducted each academic year in collaboration with the Sun Coast Section of APA Florida. All MURP students are eligible to participate. The program matches MURP students with local planning professionals who provide shadowing opportunities, career advice, resume critiques, and valuable opportunities to network. A call for student participants goes out each Fall semester and the program runs through the Spring term. All MURP students are highly encouraged to participate.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND SERVICES
International Students:
The Office of International Services (OIS)

writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process—from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information, or to make an appointment, students are advised to contact the Writing Studio by phone at (813) 974-2713, by email, stop by the second floor of the Library (LIB 233), or visit their webpage.

Subject Librarians:
Research librarians are available to MURP students through the USF

STUDENT-TO-STUDENT MESSAGE

The purpose of this handbook is to help you succeed in your graduate studies and to prepare you for a career in planning. Our MURP students have offered some of their own recommendations for success in the program:

Become active in one of the School of Public Affairs' student organizations;

Monitor your Canvas and USF email accounts frequently;

Get to know the faculty and staff members, and consult with them often;

Attend regional and national conferences if/when possible; and

Take advantage of our mentorship and internship opportunities.