

# **IMPORTANT!**

## **EMENDMENT TO 2023-2024 MURP STUDENT HANDBOOK**

There is a discrepancy in credit hours listed on pages 2 and 3.

Page 3 is correct.

**Page 2 should say:**

USP 584 Negotiation in the Public Sector **2 credits**

USP 525 Design Analysis in Planning **3 credits**

USP 553 Legal Processes in Urban Planning **2 credits**

**Apologies for any Confusion**

**If any questions,  
feel free to reach out to the Program Director  
or the Student Services Coordinator**

College of Urban and Public Affairs

Nohad A. Toulan School  
of Urban Studies and Planning

**Master of Urban and Regional Planning  
Student Handbook**

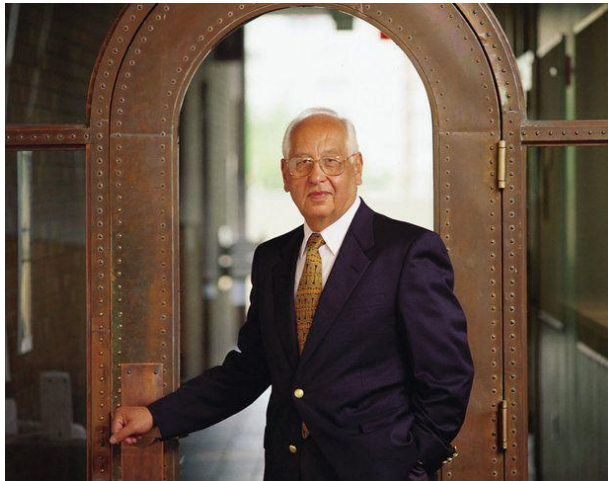
Academic Year 2023-2024



Portland State  
UNIVERSITY

This handbook provides Master of Urban & Regional Planning students with important information about TSUSP requirements pertinent to the pursuit of the MURP degree.

Students should also consult relevant pages in the University Bulletin.



**Founding Dean, Nohad A. Toulan (1931-2013)**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 College of Urban & Public Affairs (CUPA)

The College of Urban & Public Affairs (CUPA) joins the disciplines of urban studies, public administration, criminology & criminal justice, political science, economics, and international & global studies under one roof. We teach our students to flex boundaries and conceive new and practical approaches to stubborn problems. We offer students a hands-on regional laboratory—the Portland metropolitan area, world renowned as a forward-thinking model of civic engagement and livability—where they can design and carry out multi-disciplinary projects that address hot topics in transportation, health, sustainability, and globalization.

Dr. Shawn Smallman is the Interim Dean of CUPA. His leadership ensures coordination and synergy among CUPA's schools and departments, the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government, the Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning (TSUSP), the Department of Economics, and the Department of International & Global Studies. The College offers four doctorate programs, more than a dozen master degrees and graduate certificates, as well as a number of undergraduate bachelor degree programs. The College has several research institutes, centers and public service units. Full descriptions can be found at: [College of Urban and Public Affairs](#).

## 1.2 Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning

The mission of the Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning is to assist in the development of healthy and equitable communities through a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary program of teaching, research and public service. Faculty and students engage the intellectual, policy and practice aspects of urban studies and planning from the local to the international levels and actively participate in the analysis, development and dissemination of the innovations for which Portland and the Northwest are known.

The Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning is one of the country's oldest urban studies programs, founded by Dr. Nohad A. Toulan in the late 1970s. Today, Dr. Greg Schrock serves as School Director, while our faculty members hold degrees from a variety of disciplinary fields (geography, political science, sociology, engineering, and economics) and interdisciplinary fields (urban planning, and urban studies) from prestigious institutions across the country. Faculty energetically pursue research on pressing urban issues and are funded by a range of public, private, local, state and national organizations.

**Commitment to equity and social justice:** Equity and social justice are core values within the Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning (USP), and within our main programs of Community Development, Masters of Urban and Regional Planning, Urban Studies. We continuously engage with equity and social justice-related issues. It is embedded in our research and teaching in many ways. We ask all students to commit and engage with us. See [Equity at TSUSP](#) for more up-to-date information about our School efforts.

## 2 PROGRAM STRUCTURE

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This handbook provides MURP students with important information about general University master's degree requirements and the regulations specific to the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning. Students should also read relevant sections of the University [Bulletin](#), particularly the section on graduate studies, which discusses University regulations not contained in this handbook.

### 2.1 Overview

The MURP program provides preparation for professional planning practice. Graduates of the program will acquire skills and knowledge needed for gaining employment in public agencies, nonprofits, and private firms involved in the urban development process. This program is fully accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board and is structured as follows:

Total number of credits needed to graduate:	72
Core course credits	43
Elective credits	<u>29</u>
	72

### 2.2 Core Courses

#### 2.2.1 Planning Sequence

USP 540	History and Theory of Planning	4 credits
USP 541	Dynamics of Planning Practice	3
USP 550	Participatory Planning	3

#### 2.2.2 Methods Sequence

USP 533	Planning Methods I	4
USP 535	Planning Methods II	4
USP 531	Geographic Info. Systems (GIS) for Planners	4
USP 584	Negotiation in the Public Sector	4

#### 2.2.3 Analytical Sequence

USP 515	Economics: Applications in Urban Studies	4
USP 525	Design Analysis in Planning	2
USP 553	Legal Processes in Urban Planning	1

#### 2.2.4 Workshops

USP 558	Planning Workshop	9 (3+6)
USP 559	Internship Seminar	1

### 2.2.5 Recommended full-time MURP course sequence

Most MURP students completing the program on a full-time (9 credits or more per term) basis do so in six academic terms, not counting summer. In order to do this, students must average 12 credits per term, unless they take courses in the summer or have pre-admissions credit.

Year 1		
Fall	Winter	Spring
USP 540 – History & Theory of Planning (4 credits)	USP 541 – Dynamics of Planning Practice (3 credits)	USP 525 – Design Analysis (3 credits)
USP 533 – Planning Methods I (4)	USP 535 – Planning Methods II (4)	USP 553 – Legal Processes (2)
USP 515 – Economic Applications (4) (or in spring)	USP 531 – GIS for Planners (4) (or in Spring) [Optional Elective]	USP 531 – GIS for Planners (4) (or in Winter) [Electives]
Year 2		
Fall	Winter	Spring
USP 584 – Negotiation in the Public Sector (2 credits) (or in Year 1 Fall or Summer as offered)	USP 558 – Workshop (3 credits) USP 559 – Internship (1 credit – see section 2.4 below about timing) [Electives]	USP 558 – Workshop (6 credits) [Electives]
USP 550 – Participatory Planning (3) [Electives]		

### 2.2.6 Completing the MURP program part-time

Some students opt to complete the program on a part-time basis, in which case they can expect to complete the program in approximately three years. Part-time students are recommended to begin by taking USP 540 and USP 533 in Fall term of year 1, and USP 541 and USP 535 in Winter term of year 1. Students intending to go part-time should consult with the MURP Program Director to develop an appropriate plan of study.

## 2.3 Planning Workshop

Planning Workshop (USP 558) is the capstone course for the MURP program. MURP students work in teams of four to six members, on a professional product for a client. More details and examples of past Planning Workshop products can be found on the TSUSP Website at [MURP Workshop Projects](#).

A planning project must incorporate the elements of the planning process, particularly direct interaction and contact with affected citizens. Further, the Toulon School expects that Planning Workshop projects will address important planning issues and will help to lessen inequities by utilizing planning to better articulate the needs and aspirations of all communities, particularly those historically under-represented in public policy debates.

Students **WILL NOT** be permitted to take USP 558 until they have completed all MURP core courses (except USP 559). The course takes place over the Winter and Spring terms of the second year and involves a significant time commitment. Please plan accordingly.

All students eligible to enroll in Planning Workshop in Winter are urged to participate in a Project Management course offered in the preceding Fall term. This course can be taken for credit, but you do



not need to be registered to take this course. Project management is an essential skill needed for success in this course. The more familiar you are with the concepts and practices of project management, the more smoothly your workshop project will proceed.

An organizational meeting for all students arranging to take the Planning Workshop will be held Fall term, and the date/location will be circulated.

## 2.4 Internship Requirement

Every student seeking **must complete 400 hours of internship experience**. You may obtain these hours at one or more placements. The internship requirement incorporates hands-on experiences with practice and enables students to gain important insights into the field, link theory and practice early in their careers, build professional networks, establish practice-based credentials to offer future employers, and better articulate their own career goals. The Internship Seminar (USP 559) provides a means for sharing internship experiences, promoting engagement in reflective practice, and tapping the combined knowledge and reach of the entire group of active MURP students to help all students seek and secure the internships that best enable them to develop as professionals.

Internships may be paid or unpaid, but should incorporate direct experience with professional planning practice, broadly interpreted. Students are generally given flexibility in this interpretation; as students, you need to decide how best to utilize the scarcest resource you have – your time – to advance your career goals. **Work as a Graduate Research Assistant is sometimes, but not always eligible for meeting this requirement.** Students with questions about proposed internship placements and satisfying the internship requirement should contact Dr. Megan Horst, Internship Coordinator, prior to engaging in the internship. Internships completed prior to starting the MURP program generally do not count toward the requirement, though we make exceptions in strong cases.

To meet the internship requirement, MURP candidates must:

1. **Attend and actively participate in a series of seminar meetings and four career development workshops. (About 5 in the 1<sup>st</sup> year and 1 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year.)** The internship seminar meeting schedule will be distributed via email and posted on the Canvas site for Internship Seminar, into which you will be automatically enrolled as a MURP student. *You must attend these sessions regardless of when you register for USP 559.*
2. **Log 400 hours of internship activity and submit a reflective essay.** You may fulfill these 400 hours at one or more internship positions. When you complete an internship, you must complete a brief form (linked from the Canvas page) that indicates where and when you worked, the number of hours, your supervisor's name and contact information, a brief description of the tasks completed during your internship. This form should also be signed by your internship supervisor. Whenever you complete a placement, you should also log that information under the "Internship" tab of your Degree Planning Form (**section 3.2**). After you have completed your 400 hours, you will write a reflective essay about your internship experience.
3. **Register for USP 559: Internship Seminar (1 credit).** You may register for USP 559 during any term but are recommended to do so within the final year of your coursework. You will receive an "I", or Incomplete, until all seminar meetings, internship hours and the required reflective

essay are completed. For example, if you register for USP 559 in Spring 2024, you would have until the end of the Spring 2025 term to complete all requirements, including internship hours. If you fail to do so, you would need to re-register for USP 559. (See **section 5.6 regarding Incomplete grades.**)

There is no “system” for matching students with internship opportunities. The school provides information about past internship placements, and will disseminate internship postings received from employers via the “Non-Campus Jobs” Google Group (**section 3.5.2**). Students are encouraged to utilize the various Career Services resources of the school and the college (**section 6.3**) to prepare for the internship search process.

#### **2.4.1 Internship Waiver for Professional Experience**

A MURP student may request a waiver of the 400-hour internship requirement if the student has substantial (generally 3 years or more) professional planning experience. The student should supply evidence in the form of reports, publications, or other relevant materials and indicate the level of responsibility the student had for the preparation of the materials submitted. Only professional work completed within five years of admission to the program may be used. A request for waiver should be submitted to the MURP Internship Coordinator and Program Director for their consideration. If a waiver is granted, the student is still expected (1) to enroll in USP 559 Internship Seminar and participate in mandatory seminar meetings and career services modules; and (2) complete a reflective essay about their professional experience. Students with a waiver are exempted only from the requirement to log 400 hours as a condition of course completion.

## **2.5 Elective Courses and Advising Pathways**

At least 29 out of the 72 required credits for the MURP degree are “electives,” meaning that students may choose to take courses that suit their desired academic and professional interests and allow them to develop specialized knowledge and skills within the planning field.

MURP students are not required to declare a “specialization” and complete a defined set of courses within that specialization. Instead, students will develop their own degree plan in direct consultation with their faculty advisor and “**advising pathways**” developed by the faculty. (See section 3.1 for discussion of advising.)

The purpose of the advising pathways is to link academic advising and career advising. They provide students with information about the range of career pathways within a broad planning sub-field (e.g., transportation or community development), including:

- Where planners, including MURP alumni, within that sub-field work;
- Foundational skills and knowledge for careers in that sub-field; and
- Recommended coursework for students interested in careers within that sub-field.

As the name implies, these pathways are “advisory” in nature. The only requirements are:

- All elective coursework must be taken at the graduate level (i.e., 500-level or higher) and on a letter grade basis. Professional development courses are generally not acceptable as elective courses;

- At least half of a student's non-core credits must be taken within Urban Studies and Planning (i.e., courses with a USP prefix); and
- The student's faculty advisor must review and approve the student's Degree Planning Form (see Section 3.2), which outlines the student's choice of non-core coursework, on an annual basis.

Advising Pathways have been developed for:

- Affordable Housing
- Community Development
- Economic Development
- Environmental Planning
- Food Systems Planning
- Gerontology/Age-Friendly Cities
- Land Use Planning
- Transportation Planning

Additional pathways may be developed. For information about these Advising Pathways, including faculty associated with each pathway, see the program website: [MURP Advising Pathways](#).

Projected course offerings for the current academic year are available on the Office of the Registrar's [Course Projections Guide](#). However, course schedules are subject to change; from time to time, courses (especially non-core courses) shift from one term to another, or are cancelled, for a variety of reasons. Generally speaking, students are not notified of course scheduling changes for non-core courses unless they occur during the registration period for an upcoming term. Also, not all courses that are listed in the course catalog are offered regularly; on the TSUSP website under "[Courses](#)" we provide syllabi from the most recent terms that courses were offered. If you have questions about whether and when a particular USP course will be offered in the future, you can ask the TSUSP Office Coordinator [askusp@pdx.edu], or ask the faculty member who taught it most recently. Provisional information about course offerings for the subsequent academic year will be made available to students in winter term to inform their degree planning.

## 2.6 Field Area Project

Students may choose to prepare a research paper or project that demonstrates a capacity to synthesize and apply knowledge within a particular area of planning. At least three and as many as six credits of USP 501 Research may be taken to prepare the paper or project.

MURP students doing field area projects must:

1. Find a faculty chairperson who will accept responsibility for supervision.
2. Register for USP 501 Research. The chairperson will assist in completing a by-arrangement form for this purpose. MURP students may register for up to 6 credits to do a field area project. These credits count as electives.
3. Select, with the advice of the chairperson, one additional faculty member to complete the committee.

The final product need not be limited to a written text. A video, along with a script and notes, for example, may be appropriate. It should be of publishable quality, containing a problem definition, analysis, and a discussion of results and of the significance of the results for various audiences. The project is expected to involve original research, or result in the development of an original idea.

Once completed and approved by the faculty committee, four bound copies of the field area project must be delivered by the student to the department. Copies of field area projects by graduated students are in the CUPA library, where they are available for review.

## 3 MURP PROGRAM DYNAMICS

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### 3.1 Advising

Students have three resources available for academic and career advising, each with different roles and responsibilities:

- The **Student Services Coordinator** (Ms. Pauline Duffy) is your “first stop” for questions pertaining to program requirements, forms and other basic programmatic questions.
- The **MURP Program Director** is available to answer more detailed questions about program requirements. Prof. Megan Horst is currently the program director.
- Finally, each student will be assigned a **faculty advisor** during the fall term of the first year, once students have had the opportunity to meet the faculty and consider potential career pathways within planning. The role of the faculty advisor is to help the student understand the field of urban and regional planning, think through advising pathway options, and select courses that help the student gain the skills and knowledge to pursue their desired career path.

**Students are responsible for ensuring that they have proper advising.** You should make advising appointments and contact your advisor when you have questions. You will be expected to meet with your advisor at least twice to approve your Degree Planning Form (**section 3.2**), but you are encouraged to meet on a quarterly basis to discuss your progress.

As you proceed through the program you may want to change advisors if you find that your career interests change. This is entirely acceptable. If that faculty person agrees to become your advisor, simply notify the Student Services Coordinator of this change. Of course, you are free to consult with multiple faculty for academic and career advising purposes.

### 3.2 Degree Planning Form

The Degree Planning Form (DPF) is the most important document for tracking progress toward the degree. It is a “living document” that maps your route to the 72 credits necessary to graduate from the MURP program, and facilitates discussion with your advisors.

Each student will receive their DPF as a personalized Google Sheet that includes their year of entry (e.g., “MURP 2023 Degree Planning Form – Student Name”), with shared access between the student, the Student Services Coordinator, Program Director, and faculty advisor once assigned. The form is only accessible through your PSU Google Account, and cannot be shared with your personal account or other students.

This form provides spaces for you to enter your coursework by term, and tallies the credits across terms to ensure that it adds up. It also provides separate sheets for you to enter any pre-admissions or transfer credits you may have earned prior to your term of entry into the program; approved course waivers or substitutions (**Section 3.3**); and a log for your internship hours. There is also a page at the end of the form for you to obtain your advisor’s signature and any comments.

Although you are encouraged to use and update your DPF on an ongoing basis, you are responsible for meeting with your faculty advisor and gaining her or his approval twice during the program:

- **Year One Requirement:** During **Winter term of the first year**, students must meet with their advisor to review and approve their DPF. Once approved, with the faculty advisor's signature (electronic is okay) and meeting date, the student must submit an electronic (PDF) copy of the DPF to the Student Services Coordinator via a Google Form. **An advising hold for Spring term registration may be placed on your account until your signed DPF is received.** In other words, you won't be able to take Spring classes unless you complete your DPF. *Plan ahead!* Faculty schedules get busy at the end of the term, so don't wait until the end of the term in March to do this. You are encouraged to meet with your faculty advisor in January or early February.
- **Year Two Requirement:** During Winter term of the second year (and each subsequent year, if your plan of study is longer than two years), you must meet with your advisor to review and approve your degree plan. The purpose of this second meeting is to ensure that you have covered (or will cover) all the requirements for the degree, and that approvals for transfer or pre-admissions credits, substitutions or waivers have been submitted to the Student Services Coordinator for entry into DARS (Degree Audit Reporting System), which determines your readiness to graduate.

*What if my plans change?* Because the DPF is intended to be a living document, it is expected that your coursework plans will change as your interests evolve and course availability changes. It is not necessary for you to submit a new DPF every time you change your plans. However, if you decide to make a significant change in your degree plans (i.e., multiple classes, different professional focus within planning), you are strongly encouraged to meet with your faculty advisor to review these plans. However, it is not necessary for you to submit a revised DPF.

### 3.3 Waivers and Substitutions

Students may request to waive one or more required course(s) based on previous academic work or professional experience, or to substitute courses for those on the required list. These are two different procedures!

**Waivers** are given at the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course for which the waiver is sought. You need to prove your case for the waiver. Students are advised to write a note to the faculty member explaining the request for the waiver; the waiver request should be accompanied by evidence (i.e., syllabi, assignments, and graded outcomes) for review by the faculty member. If a waiver has been granted, the student is responsible for forwarding the approval (e.g., email from faculty member indicating approval) to the MURP Program Director and Student Services Coordinator, and submit an updated Degree Planning Form if necessary. Note that in case of an approved course waiver, the student does not get to claim the credits associated with the waived course: the equivalent number of credits must be earned by taking other courses.

**Substitutions** allow a student to use a course in place of a required course. Students wanting to substitute a course should meet with the faculty person teaching the required course and obtain his or her approval. If approved, the student should submit documentation of this approval to the MURP

Program Director and Student Services Coordinator, so that the substitution can be entered into DARS. Course substitutions should be clearly indicated on the Degree Planning Form.

### 3.4 Transfer Credits

A request to transfer credits is different from a request to recognize a course for waiver. A transfer credit reflects a course that you took prior to enrollment in the MURP, but was NOT utilized for another degree. A **maximum of 24 transfer credits** may be requested to be counted toward your MURP degree. To be eligible, transferable credits must be graduate-level courses in which you earned a grade of "B" or higher. Transfer credits will be granted only for courses that readily fit into a student's program, and were completed within 7 years of the projected graduation date. Preliminary acceptability of transfer credit as part of a student's program is determined by the student's advisor and the MURP Program Director.

Transfer credits can take three forms:

1. **Post-baccalaureate credits at PSU:** Graduate credits taken at PSU on a post-baccalaureate (non-degree) basis prior to admission to the MURP program must be approved by the advisor as part of the degree, listed on the student's Degree Planning Form (on the sheet entitled "Pre-Admit and Transfer"), and submitted to the Student Services Coordinator to be entered into the DARS system. There are no additional forms that need to be completed.
2. **Credits from other institutions:** Graduate credits earned at other accredited higher education institutions within the United States may be applied toward the MURP degree provided they were not utilized toward a degree at that institution (e.g., as a non-degree student, or if you later withdrew from a program). Generally speaking, this will need to be approved by the TSUSP faculty person who teaches the most similar courses, who will likely need you to submit a course syllabus, and possibly also completed work from the course. You will need to complete and submit a **GO-21M** form, available from the Graduate School website [forms section](#). Courses taken on a semester basis will be converted to a quarter basis (1 semester credit=1.5 quarter credits).
3. **Reserve credits taken as PSU undergraduate:** Up to 12 credits from graduate-level courses taken at PSU while an undergraduate and not applied toward a bachelor's degree may be applied toward the MURP degree, pending advisor approval. If approved, the student must ensure it gets applied to the DARS audit no later than the term following admission to the graduate program.

### 3.5 Electronic & School Communications

#### 3.5.1 Email Account

All students must use their pdx.edu e-mail account as that is the standard method that the university uses to communicate with students. Students are advised to check this email account regularly, including over the summer, or have email from the account forwarded to another account that is checked regularly.

Students not enrolled for 6 months may have their account deactivated.

### **3.5.2 Google Groups**

The School manages several Google groups to use for communicating with students. All current MURP students are added to the following lists:

MURP Students: USP MURP School News.

Students should not unsubscribe from this list, or you may miss important news. To keep the volume of email manageable, students are not allowed to post to this list. It is used primarily for official School announcements and on-campus jobs. Students will be removed from the list once they graduate.

There is a separate list for all off-campus opportunities, including internships and jobs: USP Non-Campus Jobs. Students will be added to this list and may stay on after graduation. Since you will lose your pdx.edu email account 6 months after graduation if you wish to stay on this list, we recommend that you use a non-PSU email address for this list.

Students can manage their PDX Google groups by going to <http://groups.pdx.edu>.

### **3.5.3 Website**

The TSUSP website has a great deal of information regarding the program, internships, student work and other interesting information related to the Student experience and urban planning in Portland. The School website is maintained by the front office staff. The website has a calendar which is updated on a weekly basis. Please check the calendar often to keep up with what's going on at TSUSP. If you have a student event to list on the calendar, please contact the Office Coordinator.

### **3.5.4 Student Mailboxes**

Mailboxes for students are housed in a filing cabinet in the School office. Mailboxes should be checked regularly, as faculty regularly return graded papers through these mailboxes.



## 4 OTHER GRADUATE DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES

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### 4.1 Dual Masters Degrees

Dual-degree programs allow students to share a certain number of credits between two complementary graduate programs in which the student is concurrently enrolled. The university allows students to complete dual degrees between any two PSU graduate programs, but only if the programs have a written agreement specifying shared coursework between the two programs. You must apply, and be admitted, separately to each program in order to complete a dual degree.

Presently, MURP students have two pre-approved options for dual degrees:

- MURP-Master of Science (MS) in Civil & Environmental Engineering, with a focus on transportation planning; and
- MURP-Master of Public Health (MPH), Health Promotion track.

This means that faculty have developed advising materials specifically for dual-degree students. Dual-degree students should work *very carefully* with faculty and staff from both programs to develop their plan of study; if so, students are generally able to complete both degrees in three years. However, students may need to complete summer coursework and/or higher than normal credit loads in certain terms. Special advising materials are available from the Student Services Coordinator and TSUSP website.

Some students apply and start both programs concurrently, while others start one program and decide to apply to the other during their first year. *If you are considering applying for a dual degree program during your first year, please contact the MURP Program Director as soon as possible*, since it may impact your course plan during your first year. Admission to the second program in the dual degree program must be attained no later than the term prior to the term in which the final coursework is completed for the first degree.

MURP students are not precluded from concurrently pursuing master's degrees in other colleges, schools or departments within PSU without a dual-degree agreement between the programs; however, this is not recommended. In this case, no credits applied toward the 72 required MURP credits may be applied toward that other degree.

### 4.2 Other TSUSP Graduate Degrees

All coursework taken in the Toulon School of Urban Studies and Planning or accepted for advanced standing while working on one Urban Studies degree will count toward any other Urban Studies degree at a different level if: (1) the coursework meets the current curricular requirements of the second degree applied for, and (2) the coursework is allowed by the faculty at the time of the program approval. If students in a Master's program wish to enter the Ph.D. program, they must formally apply and go through the admissions process.

### 4.3 Graduate Certificates

Graduate certificates allow students to gain and certify specialized knowledge and skills within an area. MURP students may concurrently apply credits between the MURP degree and one of several approved [graduate certificates](#) at PSU, including:

- Affordable Housing;
- Collaborative Governance (administered by the Department of Public Administration);
- Energy Policy and Management;
- Geographical Information Systems (administered by Geography Department);
- Public Interest Design (administered by School of Architecture);
- Real Estate Development;
- Sustainable Food Systems;
- Transportation;
- Urban Design;

The number of credits required by graduate certificates varies, and credits earned toward a graduate certificate may be applied toward the 29 non-core (elective) credit requirement in MURP. Students who wish to do so should work with their faculty advisor to incorporate the required certificate coursework into their MURP degree plan and advising pathway. However, in some cases, students may need to go beyond the 72 credits required for the MURP degree in order to complete the certificate, which may require additional terms of study. This is especially true for certificates that contain a significant amount of coursework outside of TSUSP, since at least half of your elective coursework must be taken within TSUSP.

Students must apply to the certificate program and then complete a **GO-19 form**, [Request for Change of Program](#), (now electronic) and obtain the signatures of the MURP Program Director and the faculty head of the certificate program, and then submit to the Graduate School. Graduate certificates may be added up until the term prior to the one in which the student intends to graduate from the certificate. Although students typically graduate from their certificates in the term in which they graduate from the MURP program, students may graduate from the certificate in an earlier term if all of their requirements have been met, or a later term if there are remaining requirements once the MURP is completed. Here's a cheat-sheet around the certificates.

### 4.4 Graduate Certificates: Cheat-Sheet

Interested in adding a graduate certificate? We offer quite a few through TSUSP which might not even mean extra coursework but just a careful selection of your classes as you go through your program. [Here are the certificates](#) and if you have questions about the specifics and how you can fold the coursework into your current program, check in with your advisor.

Adding and graduating with the certificate: it's really easy, but messy and stressful (for all of us!) if you don't do it right. There are two main steps (1) applying to be enrolled in the certificate program (no later than the term before you intend to graduate), and (2) applying to graduate from the certificate program.

As soon as you figure out you want to add a certificate, you should apply for it. This can be before you start taking the relevant classes, when you have some of them already taken, or when you look at your transcript and realize – Eureka! – I have enough qualifying credits to earn a particular certificate.

1. Apply for the certificate just as you would apply for any other program. Since you are already a PSU student, all you need to do is [complete the GO-19](#). Presto!
2. In order to graduate with the certificate, you will have to [apply for graduation](#). This is in addition to your primary MURP degree program application for graduation. But you don't have to wait until you are finished with your degree, you can apply for certificate graduation as soon as you have met all the requirements. It's a really good strategy to apply as soon as you have all the certificate credits because when you're trying to finish up your degree program it can be quite hectic and you'll have a lot on your plate. Nobody will say "hey, do you want to add a certificate?", this is up to you. And often students have missed out by not being on top of this.

Go for it – graduate certificates are a nice extra notch in your belt!

## 5 MISCELLANEOUS REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

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### 5.1 Continuous Enrollment

Students must be continuously enrolled for **at least one credit per term** (excluding Summer term), unless on an approved Leave of Absence, including the terms during which they complete a field paper. If unable to maintain continuous enrollment, you are required to fill out a Leave of Absence (LOA) request form. Leaves may be granted for a period of one to three terms with the approval of the student's faculty advisor. A second period of up to three terms may be granted with the approval of the MURP Program Director and School Director. A maximum of two periods of LOA can be used during the student's tenure in the program.

**Students failing to register or complete a LOA for three (non-Summer) academic terms will have their admission status revoked with the Graduate School.** Students who are removed from the program must re-apply to the program in order to return and complete the degree. Prior credits earned may be applied, subject to the program's pre-admissions transfer credit limitations (**Section 3.4**) and university guidelines on expiration of graduate credits (**Section 5.4**).

### 5.2 Grades

Students must receive a grade of "B-" or above in all core courses. A student receiving more than nine credit hours of "C" grades after admission will be dropped from the MURP program. All courses for MURP program credit must be taken on a graded basis except for USP 558 Planning Workshop and USP 559 Internship Workshop, which are taken on a Pass/No Pass basis. Courses that are only offered on a Pass/No Pass basis may be counted, if approved by the student's advisor as part of her or his degree program.

### 5.3 Use of 400/500 Level Courses

It is recommended that no more than 12 credit hours of courses offered simultaneously at the 400/500 level (e.g., USP 456/556) be used as part of a student's program. This recommendation is designed to ensure that coursework is largely at the graduate level and in classes where the majority of other students are graduate students. If you have questions, please contact your advisor.

### 5.4 Time Limits

According to PSU's Graduate School, all work toward a graduate degree must be completed within seven years, and no coursework that is more than seven years old at the time of graduation may be accepted towards the degree. This rule applies equally to terminal Master degrees (such as the MURP), to Master degrees taken *en route* to a Ph.D., and to transfer credits applied to a Master degree. A limited number of PSU courses that are more than seven years old at the time of graduation, but no more than 10 years old, may be used toward master's degree requirements after a [petition](#) is submitted and approved by the Graduate Council.

## 5.5 “Credit By-Arrangement” Hours

In addition to regularly scheduled courses, students may register for courses “by arrangement” with individual faculty, either to:

- Conduct research of interest to the student, faculty member, and/or an external partner (USP 501); or to
- Complete a “reading and conference” around a specific subject or body of literature not covered in other classes (USP 505).

The number of credits may vary, but it is expected that such credits will be commensurate with the demands of regular course offerings, approximately 3.5 hours of work per week for each credit hour. Students are expected to develop a proposal with specific tasks, deliverables and timelines, in consultation with the faculty member.

If you wish to do a by-arrangement course, please contact the faculty member early; faculty are not obligated to work with interested students, and so it may be necessary to make alternative arrangements with other faculty members. By-arrangement courses within USP (USP 501/505) may be completed only with full-time TSUSP faculty ([see the TSUSP website](#)), not adjunct or affiliate faculty. Students may complete by-arrangement courses with faculty in other PSU departments (under 501/505 course codes in those departments), but are strongly encouraged to obtain their faculty advisor’s approval before doing so. Enrollment forms for by-arrangement courses are now available electronically on the TSUSP website (under “Current Students>Forms”), and must be submitted with faculty approval by the end of the first week of classes. Students who wish to complete by-arrangements for work during the Summer term should be advised that most TSUSP faculty are not on contract in summer and not available to supervise 501 or 505 courses; they should either seek out a faculty person who is on contract in summer, or arrange with the faculty person to enroll for credits in the Fall term once the work is complete.

MURP students may include no more than 12 credits of by-arrangement classes (501 and 505) in their programs. In cases where more than 12 credits are needed because of the lack of regularly scheduled classes, a waiver must be submitted for approval by the MURP Program Director after a review by the MURP Executive Committee. Students are permitted to arrange a 501 or 505 to earn credit that may be related to a particular work experience, however, it is expected that such credits will reflect the normal expectations of a by-arrangement course mentioned above, and will not be granted solely for the work experience.

MURP students may not register for practicum credit (USP 509), or get by-arrangement credit for professional development courses or for participation in professional conferences.

## 5.6 Incomplete Grades

From time to time, students may need to take an Incomplete (I) grade in a course where unforeseen circumstances preclude the student from completing essential work in a timely manner. **Students do not have a right to receive or demand an Incomplete grade.** The option of assigning an Incomplete grade is at the discretion of the instructor when the following conditions are met:

- **Required satisfactory course completion/participation.** The quality of work is satisfactory, but some essential work remains. In addition, the student must have successfully completed most of the course work at the time the student requests the Incomplete, with a minimum grade up to that point of a B- for a graduate course.
- **Reasonable justification for the request.** Reasons for assigning the Incomplete must be acceptable to the instructor. A student does not have the right to demand an Incomplete. The circumstances should be unforeseen or beyond the control of the student. The instructor is entitled to request appropriate medical or other documentation to validate the student's request.
- **Incomplete grade is not a substitute for a poor grade.** The Incomplete grade is not meant to create the opportunity for special or additional work for a student to raise a poor grade, or for the opportunity to take the course over by sitting in on the course in a later term without registering or paying for it.
- **Written agreement.** A written or electronic agreement will be endorsed by both the instructor and student. The document will specify a) the remaining work to be completed, b) the highest grade which may be awarded upon submission of remaining items, and c) the date which the missing work is due. The latter may not exceed one year from the end of the term of enrollment for the given course. A template [Incomplete Contract](#) is available from the [Office of the Registrar](#).
- **Resolving the Incomplete.** Instructors may not encourage students to "sit in" an entire future course in order to resolve the Incomplete grade. If the student needs to retake the entire course, they should be given the grade presently earned, and must formally register for the future class they will be attending. If the missed portion of the course is no longer available, instructors may offer an alternate assignment. Grading weight of the alternate assignment should not exceed the original assignment. Students are fully responsible for monitoring all due dates.

**Students have one calendar year to resolve an Incomplete;** e.g. an incomplete taken in Fall 2022 will need to be resolved by the grading deadline in Fall 2023. After that point, the Incomplete is frozen on the student's transcript, and will not impact the student's GPA. With approval of the instructor and MURP Program Director students may petition the Graduate Council (using the [Graduate Petition](#) on the Graduate School website) for a longer deadline, but only in the case of extenuating circumstances.

## 5.7 Satisfactory Academic Progress

The Graduate School has standards for graduate students, including that all students maintain a 3.0 GPA. TSUSP follows their procedures; see: [Portland State University – Graduate School](#).

The PSU Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships requires that all graduate students receiving financial aid must be monitored for "Satisfactory Academic Progress" (SAP) in order to remain eligible for financial aid. The university evaluates:

- 1) Course completion rate;
- 2) Cumulative GPA;
- 3) Maximum Enrollment Limit;
- 4) Graduate Level Enrollment;
- 5) Multiple Withdrawals; and

6) Multiple Terms without Passing Grades.

Programs may establish additional criteria for determining SAP. MURP students may be determined to be in violation of SAP for any of the following:

- 1) Failure to maintain continuous enrollment (**section 5.1 above**);
- 2) Multiple unresolved Incomplete grades;
- 3) Completion of unrelated graduate-level coursework; and
- 4) Failure to complete annual advising requirements (**section 3.2**).

Students determined to be failing to meet the MURP SAP standard will receive a written warning from the MURP Program Director, which will outline specific conditions for the student to meet, and a timeframe for meeting them, in order to return to satisfactory standing. If the student fails to meet the conditions, they may be subject to immediate removal from the program. Students may appeal the program's decision to the PSU Graduate School.

## 5.8 Student Feedback including Complaints

If you have a critique or concern (or kudos!) about a course or activity, please try to discuss the matter with the instructor or organizer directly.

You can provide anonymous feedback to instructors on the course evaluation survey at the end of the term; instructors use this information to revise their courses. They are also viewed by the School Director, and the Faculty Evaluation Committee sees summaries of course evaluations during performance reviews.

If that does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction, you may contact the MURP Program Director and/or TSUSP School Director.

If the School Director cannot address the problem, you may contact the Associate Dean of the College of Urban and Public Affairs, currently Laura Hickman, [lhickman@pdx.edu](mailto:lhickman@pdx.edu).

The Office for Global Diversity and Inclusion (GDI) is the University gateway for reporting all forms of bias, harassment, sexual violence, and retaliation: [Equity and Compliance](#).

## 6 MURP STUDENT LIFE

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### 6.1 Student Governance

MURP students play an important role in the governance of the Toulon School of Urban Studies and Planning in conjunction with University policies. MURP students are involved in school governance through participation on three committees.

- First, two students serve on the **MURP Executive Committee**. This committee has primary responsibility for the MURP degree, including formulating and changing the MURP curriculum. Exec Committee student reps are responsible for gathering student input on a regular basis through surveys, town halls, etc.
- Second, one student serves as the **Representative to the Faculty**. This person attends monthly faculty meetings and is intended to serve as a liaison to the faculty and to communicate faculty actions/deliberations to the MURP student body. This includes participating in discussions on curriculum changes, resolutions and other faculty decision-making.
- At least one MURP student regularly serves on the **Belonging, Dignity and Justice (BDJ) Committee**. The BDI committee coordinates and undertakes activities to make TSUSP and its academic programs more diverse, equitable and inclusive. These activities may relate to, but are not limited to: student recruitment and admissions procedures, curriculum design and content, and student climate.
- Finally, several students serve on the **MURP Admissions Committee**. This role is more ad hoc with the number of needed students being determined by the volume of applications. We encourage students to volunteer for this assignment. Recruitment of volunteers is done through announcements on the student list serve as well as through Planning Club.

Nominations and elections for Executive Committee, Representative to the Faculty, and BDJ Representative take place in the spring term. MURP students may also serve on ad hoc School committees (such as the Commencement planning committee) College- and University-wide committees where student representation is sought.

While not a governance issue, the MURP Director also typically solicits MURP students for other tasks throughout the year. One such task is MURP Ambassadors, who assist with recruiting efforts, like reaching out to prospective students. This is a stipended position.

### 6.2 University and School Resources

Portland State University has a lot of resources for you to access, from the Writing Center to cultural and resource centers to health and wellness services like Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) and resources like the gym and free food market and food pantry. We note many of these on the MURP specific webpages, and encourage you to browse PSU websites more generally.



## 7 FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

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Graduate study is a substantial investment of time and money. Financial aid is available for full-time graduate students (those taking at least nine credit hours per term). This aid is of four broad types: (1) graduate assistantships; (2) teaching and hourly grading opportunities; (3) loans and work study available through the University's Financial Aid office, and (4) grants and scholarships through PSU and outside entities.

The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) offers in-state tuition to PSU students in Urban Studies graduate programs who are residents of AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, ND, SD, UT, WA, and WY. Application for WRGP tuition rates must be made through the Graduate School prior to the taking classes. If you have questions about this, contact the [Graduate School](#).

### 7.1 Graduate Assistantships

**Graduate assistantships (GAs)** are campus employment positions where students are hired to perform instructional, research, or administrative duties. The goal of any assistantship is to provide a service to the University and to aid the student in the successful completion of their graduate degree by providing employment related to their academic program and professional goals. In return, GAs receive a monthly stipend, based on a specified full-time equivalent (FTE) number of hours, and tuition waiver for their services (e.g., a 0.30 FTE GRA position is equivalent to 12 hours per week). To be eligible for a GA appointment, a graduate student must be enrolled as a full-time (9 credits or more), degree-seeking student in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress towards a degree.

**Graduate research assistantships (GRAs)** are GAs that provide research support to faculty members or research center staff, generally on projects that are funded by external sponsors. All GRAs will also automatically be registered for assistantship-related Practicum or Research credits each term (IST 501A/601A or IST 509A/609A.) These credits cannot apply toward any degree, do not generate tuition charges, and cannot count toward the 9-credit enrollment requirement (but we want you to know about them, nonetheless). **Graduate administrative assistantships (GAAs)** provide administrative support to campus units or departments, while **graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs)** provide instructional support.

There is no centralized system for obtaining GA positions. Timing for GA postings depends entirely upon the project and funding source. Students interested in GRA positions are encouraged to talk with faculty doing work in their field of interest and look for announcements on Handshake and e-mail lists. However, MURP students should be aware that balancing a GA, coursework, and other responsibilities can be difficult. Students should not expect to hold a GA *and* internship at the same time they are taking a full load of courses. Students with GAs may work a total 0.49 FTE on campus in any given pay period, including hourly positions.

Hourly appointments are generally shorter-term in duration and typically do not offer tuition benefits. Unlike GA positions, which pay a fixed stipend, hourly positions are paid based on actual hours worked, and wage levels for these positions vary.

## 7.2 Teaching Opportunities

TSUSP faculty regularly hire MURP students on an hourly basis as graders to help out with undergraduate courses. Student graders do not attend class (they are not GTAs in that sense), but they do work with faculty to grade papers and exams. Graders generally work a defined number of hours per term. If you are interested in serving as a grader, please contact the TSUSP Office Coordinator [askusp@pdx.edu], who will relate this on to interested faculty.

GTA opportunities are highly limited within TSUSP, but MURP students may apply for [University Studies Graduate Mentorship](#) positions. University Studies is PSU's general education program, and Graduate Mentors serve as GTAs for undergraduates in "Sophomore Inquiry" (SINQ) classes. Mentors receive a stipend and tuition waiver, and are expected to work approximately 15-20 hours per week. The deadline to apply for this program is in **mid-January**.

## 7.3 Loans and Work Study

### 7.3.1 Federal Loans

MURP students are eligible for several categories of federally-sponsored student loans. **Direct Loans** are available to Portland State University graduate students through the cooperation of the University and the U.S. Department of Education. Both interest-subsidized and unsubsidized loans are available. Repayment begins six months after the student drops *below half-time* status, or leaves the University. The federal government pays interest on the subsidized loans while the student is in school. Unsubsidized loan eligibility is based on the difference between the student's cost of attendance and the financial aid awarded. Interest accrues while the student is still enrolled; the federal government *does not* make interest payments. More information, including information about annual maximum loan amounts, is available at the [Financial Aid office](#) in Student Finance.

The **Perkins Loan** program is available to graduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need. This is a long term, low-interest rate loan directly from the university for which repayment commences nine months after the student is no longer enrolled on at least a half-time basis.

To be eligible for federally-sponsored loans, a student must complete the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA): [FAFSA details](#).

### 7.3.2 Work Study

Graduate students are eligible for Federal Work Study Funds. Federal Work Study is a need-based program in which the Federal government pays from 70-90% of student wages and the institution or agency pays the remainder. This program assists students who demonstrate a need for part-time employment to pursue a college education. Sources of work include metropolitan non-profit agencies and/or campus employment. For other student employment opportunities contact the [University Career Center](#).

## 7.4 Grants and Scholarships

Students are strongly encouraged to pursue grants and scholarships to offset the cost of their education. There are a number of scholarships available to graduate students at PSU, and several that are specifically for graduate students within CUPA, TSUSP and the MURP program.

### 7.4.1 PSU Graduate Scholarships

PSU maintains a central scholarship and award database which includes search capabilities, information on awards, and access to online application forms. The database is available at the PSU [Student Finance](#) site. Applications are available through the Scholarship Database unless otherwise noted. The application deadline for University Graduate Scholarships is **February 1**.

### 7.4.2 CUPA/TSUSP Scholarships

Similarly, the College and the School maintain a list of over a dozen scholarships that are specifically targeted toward graduate students in CUPA and TSUSP. The application deadline for CUPA scholarships is also **February 1**.

See [Financial Resources at TSUSP](#).

### 7.4.3 Non-PSU Scholarships

In addition, MURP students have been successful in applying for scholarships that are sponsored by organizations outside of PSU.

- [Women in Transportation Society – Portland chapter](#)
- Eisenhower Transportation Fellowships: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpp/ddetfp.htm>
- American Planning Association: <https://www.planning.org/scholarships/apa/>

The Graduate School maintains a full list of [non-PSU scholarships and awards](#).

The timing of these scholarships varies greatly.

## 8 ACADEMIC HONESTY, INTEGRITY AND ETHICS

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All students have the responsibility to themselves, their fellow students and the faculty to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity as outlined in the [PSU Student Code of Conduct](#).

The University assumes that students are honest, that all course work and examinations represent their own work, and that all documents supporting their admission and graduation are accurate and complete. Academic honesty is a requirement for all graduate activities, and any violation is grounds for disciplinary sanctions as provided by the [University Student Conduct Code](#). Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- **Cheating in examinations and course assignments:** the willful use, or provision to others, of unauthorized material in written or oral examinations, or in course assignments.
- **Plagiarism:** the appropriation of language, ideas, or products of another author or artist and representation of them as one's original work; failure to provide proper identification of source data; use of purchased or borrowed papers in graduate courses without complete identification of the source.
- **Selling or offering to sell course assignment materials:** knowing, or under circumstances when a reasonable person has reason to know, that all or a substantial part of the material is intended to be submitted by another person in fulfillment of a course requirement.

Allegations of violating any part of this policy that cannot be resolved within the College shall be submitted to the Associate Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. If the Associate Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School concludes there are grounds to believe the allegations are well founded, the matter shall be referred to the Graduate Council.

Following procedures established by the Graduate Council, the allegations and a student's response shall be considered. The decisions of the Graduate Council are final.

If a violation is established, the following academic actions may be taken:

- Denial or rescission of credit for the course in which the violation occurred.
- Academic probation for one calendar year, during which time the student cannot apply for advancement to candidacy, receive or continue to hold a graduate assistantship, or register for more than nine graduate credits in graded courses.
- Academic disqualification for one to three calendar years, during which time the student cannot register for any graduate courses at PSU and cannot apply any PSU course work completed during the disqualification to any graduate degree or certificate program. The student's admission to any graduate degree or certificate program will be canceled. The student must petition for readmission after the completion of the period of disqualification.
- Denial or rescission of the award of the graduate degree.

After final action by the Graduate Council all materials related to the violation are forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs to determine if violations of the Code of Student Conduct have occurred.

Students should read the [University Bulletin](#) for more information about academic honesty. In addition, the PSU Library has a wealth of information on plagiarism, citations, and other useful topics, such as: [Avoid Plagiarism](#) and [How to Cite Your Sources Research Guide](#).

Besides the PSU Student Code of Conduct, the Toulon School is pursuing a Code of Ethics, as a way to encourage us to live up to our values as a community. Stay tuned.

## 9 GRADUATION

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So, you're at the very end of this highly-informative handbook, and now you want to graduate? As that exciting day approaches, there are five steps to make everything go smoothly.

### 9.1 Get your DARS in order

Presumably you have been faithfully following the advice of your faculty adviser, completing your Degree Planning Forms, etc., and so this step should be an easy one. Late in the Winter term of the second year, once you have registered for Spring classes but prior to the start of the term, obtain a copy of your [DARS \(Degree Audit Reporting System\) report](#) through Banweb. Your catalog term should be the term of entry in the program (i.e., Fall 2023 for you). Your DARS report should indicate which program requirements have been completed and which ones remain outstanding. If you have waivers, substitutions or transfer credits that have not been submitted to DARS, this is when you should see them. If you have questions about your DARS, contact the Student Services Coordinator.

Part of this step is making sure you have enough credits. (This isn't horseshoes! Getting close doesn't count!) Students have actually failed to graduate on time because they mis-entered the credits for courses on their Degree Planning Forms. By checking this ahead of the graduation term, you have time to adjust and add credits if necessary.

### 9.2 Apply to Graduate

The most important step is to apply to graduate – you must do so **by the first Friday of the anticipated term of graduation**. You apply through Banweb under the "Student Services" tab, then Graduate Application and Diploma Orders. There is a required application fee per degree/graduate certificate as well as a service charge.

Students may graduate in any term during the academic year once their degree requirements have been met.

### 9.3 Take Care of Business

Between the time you apply and the time you graduate, you need to take care of any outstanding library fines, printing fees, unresolved incompletes, etc. before the grading deadline of the term in which you intend to graduate.

If you are unable to complete all the necessary degree requirements, the Graduate School allows students to carry forward their graduation to a future term (typically the next term, but it could be at maximum up to one year in advance). To request that an application for graduation be carried, students must contact the Graduate School in writing and provide an explanation for the graduation delay. If students do not graduate a second time, the application for graduation will be dropped; they will then need to reapply for graduation by the appropriate deadline (and will be assessed a new fee).

## **9.4 Celebrate!**

Typically our School hosts or collaborates with CUPA on a commencement ceremony or “hooding ceremony.” There also is a University-wide commencement ceremony for all degree recipients. The spring graduation ceremonies are open to students who have graduated in any term in the preceding academic year. Students who are within a few credits (less than 12) of graduating are generally allowed to “walk” at the CUPA hooding ceremony with their cohort.

Regardless, students can expect information by email in the spring term about the graduation ceremonies, including date/time/location and cap and gown rental and hood purchasing.

After graduation, you will be officially notified and receive your diploma within 2-3 weeks of the degree award.

## **9.5 Stay in touch!**

Keep us posted on your post-graduation accomplishments. We will be surveying you within 18 months of graduation to find out all the great things you’re doing. We also need to collect this information to report to the Planning Accreditation Board.

We hope you’ll be an active alum, by speaking at classes/events, hosting interns, hosting Workshop projects, and more.

Connect with us on LinkedIn, and on other social media.