



## URBA2MC - Introduction

### Introduction

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## URBA2MC - Teaching profile

### Learning outcomes

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The objective of the Advanced Master's course in Urban and Regional Planning is to offer holders of a standard second cycle degree an advanced second cycle program opening on to the disciplines concerned with the organisation of space as the basis for the processes of social, economic and cultural development. It will trace a path through the current issues and the skills needed in urban planning and management, and will be supported by critical questioning of the concepts of development and the relation between societies and their environment.

This program rests on the postulate that a global and interdisciplinary approach is more than ever needed. More than simply acquiring a cerebral mastery of the theories and models produced by the various disciplines, students will need to display their capacity to work in interdisciplinary teams. The experience and the complementarities of each will be put to the service of a group understanding of problems, the design of technologically and culturally appropriate plans, and the methodological imagination of the group which is necessary to arrive at creative solutions. For the urban and regional planners, for instance, it is a question of better integrating the social and environmental dimensions into the management of space and to pose the global question about regional planning ; and for the

The workshops will be prepared and led by a pedagogical team of four or five teachers. A coordinator will be charged with stimulating interaction between the teachers during the preparation to ensure the coherence of the sessions, to organise the participation of the external contributors, and to coordinate the evaluation which will be made of the basis of individual and group work.

A detailed workshop program will be announced at the beginning of the year or semester under the auspices of the degree committee and respecting the course descriptions listed below.

Interdisciplinary seminar on urban and regional planning (5 credits)

The interdisciplinary seminar on urban and regional planning will comprise three types of activities:

- A cycle of lectures and debates organised in partnership with ISURU (Institut supérieur d'Urbanisme et de Rénovation Urbaine) and the AULNE association (association des urbanistes de Louvain-la-Neuve), under the auspices of l'APERAU (Association pour la Promotion de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche en Aménagement et Urbanisme).

- One or two study trips, which normally form part of a partnership or exchange with students of similar European programs (Amsterdam 2003, Strasbourg 2004, Lausanne 2005, Naples 2006, Barcelona 2007)

- An assignment synthesising and critically analysing lecture notes or the students' personal notes of their study trips.

As for the workshops, a detailed workshop program will be announced at the beginning of the year or semester under the auspices of the degree committee and respecting the course descriptions listed below.

Placement and thesis (15 credits)

The program includes the writing and defence of a thesis demonstrating the students' capacity to master, by means of a piece of autonomous scientific work, an analysis and proposal which contribute to the resolution of a concrete problem of regional development.

The thesis will be based on a professional placement of at least 300 hours in public administration, an urban planning agency, an NGO or a private association, developing a project in the field of regional planning. This placement may be done in Belgium or abroad and students are free to propose their own plans. The placement is generally done in the second semester, but it is also possible to do it afterwards. Students working professionally in this field can, in parallel with the Advanced Master's, have their work recognised as their placement, with the approval of the degree committee. The placement will be under the direction of one of the teachers of the program and chosen by the student to be his/her thesis supervisor. This is governed by an agreement between the student, his/her supervisor and a placement supervisor in the host institution. The process of group assessment of the placement and thesis will involve three weeks during the year, which will correspond to the availabilities of the students :

- Seminar 1 November. Selection of the various placement projects and thesis topics. Drawing up of a placement agreement.
- Seminar 2 December. Exchange with the representatives of the organisations associated with the placement program. Drawing up of a plan defining the objective, method and structure of the placement report and the thesis.
- Seminar 3 April. Exchange of experiences of the placements, relating them to the thesis

The individual course of the placement and the thesis is monitored by the assignments supervisor, in concert with the student and the placement supervisor. The placement will conclude with a placement report which may form an integral part of the thesis or be added as an appendix. When students consider they have completed the assignment, they will first report to the supervisor who will decide if the combined "Placement and thesis" is acceptable as regards content and form. If the supervisor's advice is positive, the work will be given to two external readers, one of whom will be the person who supervised the placement in the host institution or a representative. There will be an oral public defence of the thesis before a board chaired by the president or secretary of the degree committee and consisting of the supervisor and the two readers. The thesis will be accompanied by an abstract which will be published in the bulletin of the program. The oral defences traditionally take place on the last Monday and Tuesday of the examination sessions.



#### Accessible to adults

The advanced master's is a one year full time daytime program organised in two blocks of 15 weeks, of 2 to 3 days of activities per week, in order to allow students to carry on working at the same time as their training. It can even be spread over two academic years.

In the same spirit, candidates with a job in the field can have this work recognised as their placement, with the approval of the degree committee. Finally it should be noted that the lecture cycle organised in the framework of the interdisciplinary seminar URBA/ISURU/AULNE takes place in the evening and is also seen as an activity of continuing education.

## Teaching method

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The pedagogical approach of the program has been devised according to three main principles :

### A pedagogy of interdisciplinarity

The program opens students to the main theoretical angles of approach to the problems and practice of regional development. The group activities stimulate openness and interdisciplinary encounters. In the practical work, the need to communicate influences the formulation of syntheses revealing the complementarity of approaches.

### A pedagogy of project work

The program stresses the development of knowledge, interpersonal skills and the knowhow necessary to manage the processes of regional change in a complex decisional context. It is about being able to anticipate social evolutions and propose scenarios to which a global regional strategy can be related and on which specific operations can be founded : the (re)development of sites, the development of transport networks, design of new neighbourhoods etc.

### A pedagogy based on concrete regional experiences

The program devotes much space to the critical analysis of experiences, in particular those of the participants. It is also based on the field work where real problems are encountered, and is directed as a team with the participation of the teachers concerned, its objective being to arrive at collective proposals for intervening which can be submitted to public debate.

## Evaluation

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***The evaluation methods comply with the regulations concerning studies and exams. More detailed explanation of the modalities specific to each learning unit are available on their description sheets under the heading "Learning outcomes evaluation method".***

The theoretical interdisciplinary courses

Evaluation procedures determined by each teacher (see course descriptions)

The workshops

Intermediate evaluation midway in the form of a group presentation before the workshop teachers. Final evaluation on the basis of a public defence of the results of the group work by a board consisting of the teachers and an external person.

The interdisciplinary seminar

Individual written work. Report and critical analysis of the lectures.

The placement and thesis

The placement ends with a report, which may form an integral part of the thesis or constitute an appendix. There will be an oral defence of the before a board chaired by the president or secretary of the degree committee and consisting of the supervisor and two readers (see also General presentation of the programme: the placement and the thesis)

## Mobility and/or Internationalisation outlook

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The interdisciplinary seminar forms a special basis for cooperation and international exchanges by means of :

- the annual lecture cycle URBA/SURU/AULNE, participation in the APERAU network, and on the other hand
- the annual study trip which normally gives rise to exchanges with the European university students enrolled in similar programs (Amsterdam 2003, Strasbourg 2004, Lausanne 2005, Naples 2006).

Interuniversity cooperation

The following scientific partnerships with URBA also contribute to the internationalisation of the program : EPFL à Lausanne (post-graduate « Projets territoriaux et mutations spatiales »)/Université de la Sapienza à Rome / Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Paysages à Versailles, /Ecole d'architecture Ville et Territoire à Marnes la Vallée / Institut d'Urbanisme de Paris/ UMSS à Cochabamba (Bolivie) / Université catholique du Chili / etc. These exchanges give rise to exchanges between teachers and, increasingly, between students on their placements.

Networks associated with the placement program

Experience has shown that the placement program also constitutes a useful means of opening up the program to the outside world and greatly contributes to its appeal among the students. In this perspective, the advanced master's can call on the networks of organisations which have hosted the students doing their placements from the former specialised diploma in urban and regional development.

Last year, certain students did their placements in development projects abroad. The partner countries are the following : Bolivia (3), Cambodia (1), Chile (1), China (1), Equador (1), Spain (1), France (1), Mexico (1),Kenya (1).

In September 2006 the network of organisations associated with the program by means of placements comprises the following :  
AGORA s.a. (Bruxelles) / Aménagement scc (Bruxelles) / ARIES Group scc (Bruxelles) / Atelier Group Teams (Bruxelles) / AUSIA sprl



