Doctor of Sustainable Urbanism

The Doctor of Sustainable Urbanism (DrSU) is a post-professional applied research degree intended to prepare professionals and advanced urban design students for careers in multidisciplinary, evidence-based sustainable urban design and planning practice and teaching. The program is based on a close working relationship between doctoral students and their faculty advisers, who work together to develop a detailed course of study that takes full advantage of the resources available at Washington University and through our collaborative partners from around the country and world.

This individualized program allows each doctoral student to pursue his or her particular research interest while ensuring the development of the necessary research competencies and broadening of the student’s knowledge in sustainable urbanism. Much of the program’s course work and independent reading and study is focused on preparing students for their two-part general examination. The nature of this preparation varies widely depending upon the candidate’s background and research interests. Overall, the exam is a platform for the student to demonstrate a broad knowledge of evidenced-based research methods and the multidisciplinary frameworks of sustainable urbanism, as well as the best practices for sustainable urbanism and the technical knowledge base and skills necessary for implementing sustainability at a multi-scalar level in the city.

Students learn a holistic and integrative methodological approach to sustainability thinking involving complex social, cultural, political, economic, and scientific issues as they are applied to a wide range of urban contexts and spatial patterns and conditions. Students use statistical and visual analytical tools, including quantitative and qualitative research methods, geographical information systems (GIS), and techniques to analyze data sets and construct holistic research models. They also learn to construct the research reports and performance measurement systems necessary to clearly demonstrate evidence of a more sustainable city. Leadership skills are developed to ensure students can engage an informed, involved citizenry in creative problem solving to achieve responsible individual and cooperative actions toward a society that is more sustainable and resilient. Finally, students are encouraged to develop their own refined ethical framework and set of values that shape sustainable cities, which at a minimum would include economic, social, and place equity; environmental and cultural justice; intergenerational equity; and management and stewardship of the urban environment.

Teaching is another important component of each doctoral student’s course of study. Students often are given substantial teaching responsibilities, particularly in the introductory courses offered by the urban design faculty. Recently students have served as teaching assistants and/or instructors in theory courses such as Metropolitan Development, Metropolitan Sustainability, Metropolitan Urbanism, Public Space and City Life, and Informal Cities, as well as a number of urban design studios, including the Global Urbanism Studio that has engaged cities such as Shanghai, Tokyo, Singapore, Mexico City, Johannesburg, and Dubai. Students also have the opportunity to work as research associates with faculty to enrich their academic experience and develop research project experience.

The DrSU degree prepares graduates for research-oriented positions in nonprofit organizations, community design and research centers, and government agencies, as well as faculty positions at colleges and universities focused on applied research in sustainability and urban design.

Website: http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/programs/drsu

Faculty

The core faculty for the Doctor of Sustainable Urbanism program draws from an accomplished set of educators throughout Washington University.

Program Chair
John Hoal
Professor and Chair of Urban Design
PhD, Washington University

Program Standing Committee
John Hoal (http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/portfolios/faculty/john_hoal)
Professor and Chair of Urban Design
PhD, Washington University

Seng Kuan (http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/portfolios/faculty/seng_kuan)
Assistant Professor
PhD, Harvard University

Eric Mumford (http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/portfolios/faculty/eric_mumford)
Rebecca and John Voyles Professor of Architecture
PhD, Princeton University

Linda C. Samuels (http://www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu/portfolios/linda_samuels)
Associate Professor
PhD, University of California, Los Angeles

Hongxi Yin (http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/directory/10636)
I-CARES Associate Professor
PhD, Carnegie Mellon University

Ex-Officio
Bruce Lindsey (http://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/portfolios/faculty/bruce_lindsey)
Dean, College of Architecture and Graduate School of
Architecture & Urban Design; E. Desmond Lee Professor for
Community Collaboration

Faculty for required and elective courses are drawn from
all departments within the university, representing the
interdisciplinary nature of the program.

Degree Requirements

Doctor of Sustainable Urbanism

To earn the Doctor of Sustainable Urbanism from the Sam
Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, a student must complete
72 credit units of graduate work over three years. Of the total
72 units, 48 units represent course work to be completed in
residence at Washington University, including required seminars
and courses and approved elective seminars and courses.
Thereafter, 24 units of thesis research and writing may be
completed at Washington University or off-site if approved by
the program chair. In order to graduate, students must maintain
satisfactory academic standing, pass Part One and Part Two
of the General Examination, and write, submit, and defend a
doctoral thesis in urban design.

Curricular Structure

The Doctor of Sustainable Urbanism consists of six academic
semesters (three academic years) of required study:

Year One
Semester One: (12 units)
1. Theories and Methods of Historical Research
2. Advanced Seminar in Urban Sustainability I
3. Elective: Directed Readings
4. Elective

Semester Two: (12 units)
1. Urban Morphology & Metabolism Research Methods
2. Advanced Seminar in Urban Sustainability
3. Elective
4. Elective

Year Two
Semester Three: (12 units)
1. Methods of Sustainable Urbanism Research
2. Independent Research in Urban Sustainability
3. Elective
4. Elective

Semester Four: (12 units)
1. Thesis Proposal Research
2. Independent Research in Urban Sustainability
3. Elective

4. Elective

General Examination Part One:
1. Tests knowledge acquired by the Doctor of Sustainable
Urbanism student regarding the student's field of study.
2. Generally an oral exam, but some written parts may be
required.

General Examination Part Two:
1. Discussion on the dissertation proposal. To be completed
before registering for fall classes.

Year Three
Semester Five: (12 units)
1. Thesis in Satisfaction of the Degree Doctor of Sustainable
Urbanism

Semester Six: (12 units)
1. Thesis in Satisfaction of the Degree Doctor of Sustainable
Urbanism

Courses

For a list of available courses, please refer to the Courses (http://
bulletin.wustl.edu/prior/2016-17/grad/architecture/#courses)
section of the Graduate School of Architecture & Urban Design
in this Bulletin.