

**Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program  
Department of Geography, Planning, and Sustainability (GPS)  
Rowan University**

MURP committee members: Mahbubur Meenar, Ph.D. (Program Director), Kevin Keenan, Ph.D. (Department Chairperson), Megan Bucknum, Qian He, Ph.D., and Louis Thomas, Ph.D.

The following policies were adopted by the MURP committee on April 4, 2024. These policies will be revisited in Spring 2026.

- **Policy on elective courses**
- **Policy on independent studies**
- **Course substitution policy**

**Policy on Elective Courses**

This policy pertains to students matriculating in the MURP program as a new graduate student, not transfer students or Advanced Dual Degree (ADD) students. The MURP curriculum comprises nine (9) required courses totaling 31 credit hours. Additionally, students are required to complete five (5) elective courses equivalent to 15 credit hours. An approved list of elective courses, offered by either the GPS department or other departments, is accessible on the program's website:

<https://global.rowan.edu/programs/ms-in-urban-and-regional-planning.html>.

Students are permitted to enroll in one (1) elective course (3 credits) not included in the approved list. To do so, students must complete the "Request for Approval to Take an Elective Course Not Listed in the Program" form and submit it to the Program Director at least 30 days before the start of the registration period for the following semester. The MURP committee will review the form and communicate their decision to the student.

[Link to the form: Request for Approval to Take an Elective Course Not Listed in the Program](#)

**Policy on Independent Studies**

This policy pertains to students matriculating in the MURP program as a new graduate student, not transfer students or Advanced Dual Degree (ADD) students. Students are allowed to take one (1) Independent Study equivalent to 3 credit hours. The independent study must be initiated by a full-time faculty member within the GPS department. The faculty member intending to supervise an independent study should initiate contact with the department chairperson and MURP program Director to discuss the feasibility of offering an independent study for a specific semester. This process must commence at least 30 days before registration opens for the term in which the independent study is to occur. The faculty member is required to provide the following information:

- Faculty Advisor Name:
- Student Name:
- Independent Study Title:
- 1-Paragraph Description:
- Significance of the study in the Planning discipline:
- Outputs:
- Rationale (benefits accruing to the student from this study):

The department chairperson and MURP program director will evaluate the request, consider other electives being offered in that semester, and take into account students' academic and professional interests. The chairperson will communicate their decision to the faculty member rather than directly to the student.

Upon completion of the independent study, the student is required to submit the final deliverable (usually a paper or report) to the independent study advisor and the MURP Committee members. Depending on the significance of the topic and the quality of the work, the student may be invited to deliver a presentation in a class or at an event.

Because Independent Study is listed within the approved program electives, students may complete both an independent study and take an elective course not listed in the program, provided both requests successfully go through the processes explained above.

### **Special Policy for Transfer Students**

Students who have completed graduate credits elsewhere before being admitted to the MURP may apply to the MURP Program Director to have up to 12 credits transferred into the MURP. Students seeking to transfer credits must complete the form linked [here](#) and supply to the Program Director and the Department Chairperson all required documentation as noted on the form. Credit may be given for courses in which the content is directly connected to existing MURP courses. Transferred course credits count as substitutions for the existing curriculum, and thus students transferring the full 12 credits into the program from another university are not eligible to substitute any other courses for elective or core requirements. However, if a transfer student receives less than 12 sh of transfer credit, they may utilize the policy on elective courses and independent study credits. A transfer student is not permitted to complete all 15 sh of electives via a combination of transfer credit, course substitution, and/or independent study. All transfer students must take at least one elective course from the list of approved departmental electives.

### **Course Substitution Policy for**

- Advanced Dual Degree (ADD) students
- Students who completed their undergraduate degree in the GPS Department and are returning for the MURP Program

Undergraduate students who are admitted to the ADD program, or students who return to the GPS Department after completing their undergraduate degree in the Department, may have taken content at the undergraduate level that is duplicated at the graduate level. In this circumstance, the student and advisor will determine a plan to avoid duplication of content at an initial advising meeting.

NOTE: While in some instances the same topical areas may be offered at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the depth, breadth, and rigor of engagement are greater at the graduate level. Undergraduate and graduate courses, despite representing similar content areas or having similar names, are not equivalent even if cross-listed.

### **Policy:**

The student, alongside the undergraduate advisor and the graduate program director will review the student's academic record and propose a course of study for their accelerated dual degree completion. If the student has taken any of the undergraduate courses that are topically equivalent to any *core* courses in the graduate program

(which all students must take, such as GEOG 31660 “Fundamentals of GIS”), the advisor and the student will identify appropriate substitutions from courses offered within the Department of Geography, Planning, & Sustainability. The student will receive a written list of substitutions for the core courses. Students may elect to take the course for which content is duplicated if they so choose; there is nothing prohibiting that choice. Students should consider their preferred timeline and course availability when choosing a possible course substitution. The ADD program is sometimes referred to as a 4+1 program. However, students will complete the MS in 1 additional year only if they take 15 hours during the fall and spring semesters in the graduate program, and at least 1 summer course.

Students are expected to select *elective* courses that do not duplicate undergraduate content, and substitutions will not be provided for electives.

If a student has taken GEOG 16260 Fundamentals of GIS (4 sh) while an undergraduate student and a 3 sh substitute is identified for the core graduate course GEOG 31660 Fundamentals of GIS (4 sh), the student will need to complete 1 additional sh to achieve the full 46 sh required of the MS degree. In this circumstance, students will take a 1 sh independent study under the guidance of a full-time faculty member in the Department of Geography, Planning, & Sustainability (note: this 1 sh independent study is exempted from the one 3 sh independent study course allowed in the MURP program). The 1 sh independent study may be academic, applied, or administrative as determined by the sponsoring faculty.