

GRADUATE CENTER FOR PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment (GCPE) is a unique, interdisciplinary alliance of four graduate-level programs with shared values placed on urban sustainability and community participation, defined by the “triple bottom line” of environment, equity, and economy. Each of the four programs—City and Regional Planning, Historic Preservation, Sustainable Environmental Systems, and Urban Placemaking and Management—maintains its independence, degree, and depth of study. Yet students can move among the four programs, coming into the GCPE through one and taking electives in any of the other three, with the further option to follow set tracks for specialized or multifaceted studies.

GCPE also offers linkages to the undergraduate Construction Management program and the graduate programs in Facilities Management and Real Estate Practice, all available at the Pratt Manhattan campus. City and Regional Planning students can earn a joint Master of Science/Juris Doctor from Brooklyn Law School. Additional opportunities for all GCPE students are available through our close partnerships with the Pratt Center for Community Development, which works with community-based organizations, small businesses, and the public sector to develop innovative strategies toward an equitable and sustainable NYC, and the Spatial Analysis and Visualization Initiative (SAVI), a Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-centered initiative that provides students and faculty across disciplines access to GIS and visualization resources.

Impact

Studio coursework emphasizes teamwork and interdisciplinary, integrative thinking as an effective method of acquiring professional skills. The studio typically involves a real client and culminates in a multidisciplinary proposal that is evaluated by an array of distinguished professionals and community leaders. The studios emphasize hands-on work where the students can have an immediate impact on public policy and community action. Faculty are drawn from top practitioners in community development, government, private practice, and civic institutions. Students are prepared to lead in the fields of planning, preservation, placemaking, development, and environmental sustainability.

Students graduate with the technical know-how, collaborative experience, and critical-thinking skills necessary to pursue professional careers and to plan for just, sustainable, and culturally intact urban communities. Alumni play a broad range of leadership roles in private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

Internships and Partnerships

Through internships, partnerships, studios, and directed research, students have ample opportunity to work on real-world and real-time issues. Courses are taught in the evening (except for the Historic Preservation program’s courses, which are concentrated on two weekdays and evenings) in order to give students time during the day for internships and fellowships. Eighty percent of GCPE students take on an internship or fellowship, which deepens their educational experience and provides important networking opportunities.

GCPE’s practice-based interdisciplinary approach to urbanism is deepened through partnerships and close alliances with the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA), the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), the World Monuments Fund, Planners Network, the New York City Council, community boards, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and many other city agencies.

Global Practice

GCPE is responding to the challenges and promises of the increasing globalization of urban issues with courses that run partly or entirely abroad, allowing students to learn about global innovations and practices in place. For example, for the past two years, GCPE students have traveled to Havana, Cuba, to learn from planners, organizers, designers, and architects there and to work together with agencies, groups, and universities to forge recommendations for 21st-century neighborhoods that respect and reflect Cuban heritage.

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