Requirements for entering the programme

The programme is aimed at students who wish to acquire skills and research-based knowledge in urban planning. Students should have a bachelor in spatial planning, geography, architecture, local and regional development, civil engineering, environmental engineering, business administration.

Direct admission in the 2nd year is possible. The language of tuition is English. In order to facilitate the social and cultural integration of students, a course of French language is offered to all students. A basic requirement is the B2 level in English: Paper-based TOEFL score = 567, Internet-based TOEFL score = 87, TOEIC score = 785, IELTS = 5.0, Cambridge = FCE.

Since 2010, more than 150 students from over 50 countries on 5 continents have been admitted in the programme. 97% of them have graduated.

Qualifications of the staff members

The teaching team consists of a dozen professors, senior lecturers or researchers who are involved in international cooperation in research, education and expertise.

Christophe DEMAZIÈRE is professor in urban planning and runs the programme. He conducts research on metropolitan governance and on small and medium-sized towns. He is on the editorial board of European Planning Studies and a member of the Governing Council of the Global Planning Education Association Network.

Gülçin ERDI is a research fellow, working on the themes of spatial justice, urban mobilizations, right to the city and urban citizenship.

Mathilde GRALEPOIS is a senior lecturer in urban planning. She was recently involved in two European projects on climate change.

Abdellah HAMDOUCH is Professor of Urban Planning and Associate Editor of the Revue d’Economie Régionale et Urbaine.

Divya LEDUCQ is senior lecturer at the University of Tours. She has studied the growth of innovative clusters in India, spatial planning in Hanoi and the models of the sustainable city in Asia.

Vincent ROTGE, architect and geographer, is associate professor. His current research interests are urban waterfronts in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Jose SERRANO is Professor in urban planning. He has conducted research on the sustainable use of natural resources in peri-urban areas in France, Mexico, Netherlands and England.

Kamal SERRHINI is a senior lecturer who develops methods and tools to assess the vulnerability of territories to natural hazards.

Laura VERDELLI, architect and urban planner, is a senior lecturer. Her main research issues are related to heritage and enhancement of landscapes.

Karl M. WANTZEN is professor of ecology at the University of Tours. After working in Brazil and Germany, he heads the UNESCO Chair «River and Heritage».

Tuition fees

Tuition fees are decided each year by the board of the University of Tours. For the academic year 2020-2021, the tuition fees are 2,700 euros for the first year and 5,300 euros for the second year.
Purpose of the programme

The Master’s Planning and Sustainability is a 2 years programme in urban and regional planning. It is conducted by the Department of Planning and Environment of Polytech Tours (France). One of the most important schools of planning in the European context, this school is a founding member of several major planning education networks: the Association of European Planning Schools Association (AESOP), the French-speaking planning schools network (APERAU). The Master’s is part of the University Network Initiative launched by UN-Habitat while being in France the only international programme directed at research in the field of spatial planning. The Master’s Planning and Sustainability is accredited by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research for the period September 2018 - September 2023. It also enjoys the AESOP Quality Recognition for the period 2019-2025. The Master’s is supported by the laboratory Cities, Territories, Environment and Societies (University of Tours and CNRS) and especially its team ‘Action and Dynamics in Spatial Planning and Environment’. This team develops programmes that join the field of urban studies with research on the urban environment. Funded by the European Union, national agencies, or regional and local governments, these programmes develop methods and contribute to knowledge about planning for sustainable urban development in various contexts. Modules of the Master’s stem from transnational research conducted at the European scale and/or in countries such as Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam.

Knowledge, skills and career prospects

According to the United Nations, urban planning is a priority field for higher education to address effectively the environmental and social challenges facing cities: social fragmentation, loss of biodiversity, depletion of non-renewable energy resources and the increasing intensity of natural risks in a context of climate change. To address these issues, the Master’s equips students with knowledge and skills in sustainable urban development and with research methods relating to planning and urban development. The main elements of knowledge that students acquire are as follows:

• Contemporary theories and models of urban development: compact cities, polycentric regions, creative cities, new urbanism
• Urban governance, land-use management, urban informality and questions of social justice/equity/exclusion
• Spatialization of data through GIS.
• Integration of natural risks in urban development (prevention and management).

The programme makes possible to develop skills that will be useful in a management or research position:

• Ability to situate practical sustainable urban development questions within a scientific field
• Ability to conduct territorial diagnoses and to use quantitative and qualitative research methods
• Practice of an interdisciplinary approach to urban and regional planning
• International experience and capacity to contribute to collective work in a multicultural context

Typically, graduates become researchers by starting a PhD in spatial planning and urban development, or they turn to consultancy or management in public or private organizations that develop cities and regions. Job prospects are continually growing given the huge need to adapt urban development to the context of climate change.

Programme structure

The curriculum is organized in 4 semesters.

First year – Autumn semester

Group research project 1- the city (10 ECTS): students cooperate in a work group. They undertake an interdisciplinary diagnosis.

Theories and models of urban development (6 ECTS) provides an understanding of the notions of urbanization and deals with city-regions and metropolitan governance.

Urban challenges (6 ECTS) analyses the conditions producing urban forms. It examines current planning approaches such as smart growth and the right to the city.

Geomatics (4 ECTS) provides the skills that are necessary to define a GIS and its components.

French as a foreign language (4 ECTS) helps students to develop language tools necessary for academic, social and cultural integration.

Winter semester

Mobility to one of the partner universities (30ECTS): HafenCity, Hannover, Dortmund, Pecs, Dublin, Politecnico Milano, Tromsø, Wroclaw, Poland, Porto, Bratislava, Ravira i Virgili, KTH, Newcastle, Queen’s, University of the West of England.

Second year – Autumn semester

Group research project 2-Sustainable urban development (10 ECTS): students become experts in analysing a spatial situation from the perspective of sustainability and develop solutions.

Eco-city development models (6 ECTS) critically reflects on sustainable urban development ‘models’, such as new towns, green cities, smart cities, eco-cities.

Research methodology (3 ECTS) helps students to design a research strategy adapted to their topic.

Water and risks- an interdisciplinary approach (6 ECTS) is about the planning challenges of urban waterfront planning, biodiversity and urban development, and risks and vulnerability.

French as a foreign language (3 ECTS) helps students to develop language tools necessary for academic, social and cultural integration.

Job search techniques (2 ECTS) helps students to develop a professional project in a national or international context.

Winter semester

Research seminar (5 ECTS) trains students to producing an analysis grid and to propose research protocols.

Research internship (25 ECTS): with the help of a supervisor, students develop a research question in relation to existing work and they conduct a state of the art literature review, and also fieldwork. They write, submit and defend a Master thesis.