

**Ministry of Education**

**Identified Competency Focus Areas and Core Courses for Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions’ Exit Examination**

**Program: - Urban and Regional Planning** **in BSc.**

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# Introduction

The Ministry of Education is planning to start exit exams for selected undergraduate programs as of the 2022/23 (2015 E.C.) academic year. The Ministry envisages that the implementation of the exit exam will likely increase the quality education and fill the skill gaps between the demand of the industry and competencies of the graduates.

One of the undergraduate programs selected for the conduct of the exit exam is the ‘Urban and Regional Planning program’ given in a number of universities across the country. A total of 60 courses are offered in this five year program which are intended to enable the urban and regional planner to acquire knowledge in multi-disciplinary subjects with major focus on core and subordinate courses. As shown in the Table below, this has been ensured in the program curriculum structure. The core and subordinate courses account for about 68.6% of the total ECTS of the program. While the rest 32.4 % of ECTS are goes to freshman and general skill courses.

The selection process of the required courses has taken into account this program curriculum structure, the learning outcomes and the graduate profile. The maximum number of courses to be selected for the exit exams in accordance with the recommendation of the MOE and global and country wide experiences was set to be a maximum of 15 courses.

The exit exam is expected to ensure that students at completion of the program have achieved the expected learning outcomes stated in the program curriculum and briefly discussed in section three. Moreover, it will create awareness and serve as benchmark both for students and instructors about the key focus and administration of the exit exam in the years to follow.

# Expected Graduate Profile

Urban and regional planning is a profession that deals with the social, economic, political and environmental dynamics of a defined spatial entity in the process of defining the orderly organization of activities in space and time. His/her expertise is the planning of the city and its region at large. The planner produces plans (land use, land development, revitalization, urban improvement and the like), programs and strategies for the urban and regional development, protection and management of the urban region. The planner analyses why, how and with what consequences societies intervene, shape, organize and change natural and built environments, in order to secure an agreed range of social, economic and environmental objectives. At the end of the program, the prospective urban and regional planner is able to

* Prepare different urban plans such as city structure/master plan, small town basic plan, local development plan (LDP);
* Prepare various urban development plans such as economic development plan, social development plan, environmental development plan, transportation plan, physical infrastructure development plan;.
* Prepare different designs such as architectural design, urban design, landscape design, road design, park and recreational site design;
* Develop regional development strategies;
* Conduct urban development studies;
* Coordinate urban development projects;
* Do graphics design with different design and graphics software;
* Conduct urban analysis with Geographic Information System (GIS);
* Conduct urban researches; and
* Teach in higher education institutions

# Competency and Learning Outcomes

The urban and regional planner is a profession that deals with change and planning the future. Together with key actors of the local and regional society, economy and culture and on the basis of federal and regional laws, the planner produces a variety of future plans at the different spatial scales ranging from local to regional and interregional. He/she moderates the processes of implementing these plans. The professional practice of planners is based on the study of the natural and built environment and of the historic transformations with regard to the environmental context.

The Exit exam for the undergraduate Urban and Regional Planning program will focus on the major required competencies of graduates as stated in the program curriculum. Students are expected at the end of the program to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for the effective practice of planning, including problem-solving skills, research skills, written, graphical, and oral skills, computational skills, collaboration and working in teams, meeting professional standards, forecasting and scenarios development, adoption and implementation of plans and working with diverse stakeholders. Accordingly, four main competences of urban and regional planners are:

* Professional
* Methodological
* Social and
* Personal competence

The above competency areas are translated into analytical, communication, decision-making, leadership, software, and project management skills. Therefore, these four competences can be translated into the following categories of skills and the respective learning outcomes:

* ***Knowledge Skills***: Mastery of the theoretical and practical background of Urban and regional Planning including purpose and meaning of planning, planning theory, planning law, human Settlements and history of planning.
* ***Analytical skills:*** Urban and regional planners analyze information and data from a variety of sources, spatial surveys, censuses, physical and impact studies. They use statistical techniques and technologies such as SPSS, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Auto CAD in their analyses to determine the significance of the data.
* ***Communication skills:*** Urban and regional planners must be able to communicate clearly and effectively because they interact with colleagues and stakeholders, prepare research reports, conduct public presentations, moderate and meet with a wide variety of audiences, including public officials, interest groups, and community members.
* ***Decision-making skills:*** Urban and regional planners must weigh all possible planning options and combine analysis, creativity, and realism to choose the appropriate action or plan for approval by local governments and municipalities.
* ***Leadership skills:*** Urban and regional planners must be able to manage urban and regional planning projects, which may include overseeing tasks and planning assignments.
* **Software skills**: Urban and Regional Planners must be skilled on design software’s such as AutoCAD, GIS, illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, and the like.
* ***Project Management skills***: Managing resources (personnel, financial and IT). Before work commence, it is vital to identify a team with the right mix of skills and realistically estimate the time frame and budget required to get the job done. Moreover, planners must be in a position to propose the financial requirements for the implementation of the plan including both the costs and sources of finance for the duration of the project.

# Courses to be Included in the Exit Exam

The selection of courses for the exit exam was guided by the recommendations of the MOE and global experiences. Accordingly, the maximum courses to be included for the exit exams were set to Fifteen: namely; knowledge based (Seven courses), Skill based (Six Courses) and Aptitude (Two Course).

The courses selected for the exit exam are listed in the Table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Competency Areas** | **List of Courses** |
|  | Knowledge Based  | 1. Introduction and History of Urban Planning
 |
| 1. Theory and Approaches of Urban and Regional Planning
 |
| 1. Methods and Principles in Urban Planning
 |
| 1. Integrated Land use and Transportation Planning
 |
| 1. Urban and its Region Integrated Development
 |
| 1. Housing and facilities development
 |
| 1. Urban Governance and Management
 |
|  | Skill Based  | 1. Basic Architectural Design II
 |
| 1. Urban Project (Urban Design)
 |
| 1. Integrated Urban Project V (Town Planning)
 |
| 1. Sketching, Drafting & Descriptive Geometry II
 |
| 1. Auto-CAD
 |
| 1. GIS
 |
|  | Aptitude  | 1. Mathematics for Natural Science
2. Communicative English language Skills
 |

# Conclusion

The implementation process of the exit exam for urban and regional planning in 2022/23 academic year should be initiated early and be developed through feedbacks from other universities offering the program as well as professional associations. Students joining the urban and regional planning program and the prospective graduating students should be informed early about the decision to implement the exit exam in the 2022/23 academic year.

Once the consensus is reached on the courses selected for the exam, then the next step is on how to administer the exit exam. Decision must be met on the content of the exit exams for each of the selected courses, timing and duration of the exam and setting up of a central body to monitor the administration of the exam. Respective universities should have a platform for arriving at a common decision on the content and duration of the exit exam.

Care must be taken when to conduct the exit exam so that overlapping with the period of the final exams of the regular program is avoided.

It is recommendable to consider the first year of implementation of the exit exam as a pilot year from which lessons can be drawn for possible improvements on coverage of courses, contents and focus of the exit exam and its administration.