The attached document shows the description of the Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) degree as it currently appears in the University Graduate Bulletin with several modifications. Proposed deletions are noted within the right hand margin of the page and proposed additions appear as red underlined text within the body. The most significant and important modification is the proposed addition of a fifth cluster titled “Substantive Public Policy Areas” which appears on the second page. All of the areas of study described in this section are currently available to, and are routinely selected by, current MPA students. The purpose of the presently proposed modification is simply to reorganize the language describing the M.P.A. at the Graduate Bulletin level to better reflect the program. The remaining modifications (additions and deletions) represent proposed changes in the language describing the program only and do not in any way alter its structure or composition.
Master of Public Administration Program (M.P.A.)

The M.P.A. program provides college graduates with opportunities to prepare for greater career opportunities. It can also serve as an intermediate step towards studies at the doctoral level.

Program of Study

M.P.A. degree requirements include 11 semester-length (full) courses, 2 Professional Applications modules, and career experience. Full-time students without previous work experience should plan to commit four semesters to complete the program.

Each student must choose one or two areas of specialization from the clusters that are described below. Regardless of a student's area(s) of specialization, all students take six semester-length core courses: Pad 500 Institutional Foundations of Public Administration, Pad 501 Public and Nonprofit Financial Management, Pad 503 Principles of Public Economics, Pad 504 Data, Models and Decisions I, Pad 505 Data, Models, and Decisions II, Pad 506 Foundations of Public Management; and two Professional Application Modules: Pad 507, and Pad 508 (Professional Applications I, and II). A required course may be waived and substituted by an elective if the individual has an extensive academic background in the subject or a compelling case on another basis is made to the Department. For example, Pad 503 may be waived for those who specialized in undergraduate economics; or Pad 505 may be waived for those with significant backgrounds in statistics and data analysis.

Specializations consist of five courses from a single cluster or a combination of three courses from one cluster and two from another. Students design their program of study and develop a tentative degree program in consultation with an advisor. The tentative degree program specifies the courses to be taken within a student's area of specialization, how the career experience will be met, and the core courses.

Clusters

Policy Analysis and Information Systems: This area provides the student with basic skills in analyzing and reporting about policy and management questions including issues of how to manage information resources in the public and not-for-profit sectors. Courses deal with techniques and their applications to public policy and management issues. Topics covered by these courses include research methodology, statistics, decision methods, systems analysis, evaluation, bargaining and negotiation, operations research, cost-benefit analysis, and information resource management. In addition, students specializing in this area may design course sequences in specialized policy areas such as health, environmental management, or social services.

Politics, Policy and Institutions: This cluster is intended to help students understand the place and role of public institutions as they affect the policies and administration of the political systems of the United States and other countries. There is a wide range of possible specialization included in this cluster, providing opportunities for a student to focus on specific policy sectors, particular institutional settings, and both domestic and international settings. Students may draw on courses from other clusters, other departments and schools. They should discuss these possibilities with their advisors.
Public Economics and Finance: This cluster of courses provides students with a theoretical and practical understanding of the central concepts in public economics and finance. Students planning a career in budgeting, financial management, or taxation may choose to select all their courses from this cluster. Students planning a career in a particular institutional environment or programmatic area should consider taking additional courses in the Politics, Policy, and Institutions cluster. Students desiring skills in policy analysis or public management might combine courses in this cluster with those in the Policy Analysis and Information Systems or Public Management clusters.

Public Management: This cluster is designed to provide current and future managers with both a theoretical and practical understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective manager. This cluster provides a comprehensive approach to management in public and nonprofit organizations.

Substantive Public Policy Areas: This cluster provides students with analytic and quantitative skills to frame policy issues, deal with their institutional and political contexts, and bring about effective action directed at the formulation, approval, implementation and evaluation of policy. Students may select or design an individualized policy specialization in a substantive policy area such as crime, health, welfare, urban affairs, environmental, education, global affairs, or women and policy. Students may elect to complete a policy project or master's essay as part of the requirements for this cluster. In addition to the established fields, students may design other fields of study from appropriate graduate offerings in any department, college, or school of the University. Students who design their own field of study must obtain the approval of their advisor.

Career Experience Requirements

The career experience requirement may be met either by providing documentation of two years entry level professional administrative experience in the public or non-profit sectors, concurrent full-time employment in a public, nonprofit, or related organization, or by obtaining placement in internship(s) for the equivalent of two terms. Strong links with numerous state, local, federal, and non-profit agencies allow the Internship Program to offer the student a wide range of professional experience and the chance to sharpen administrative, policy making, communication, and research skills. Most internship positions are paid, part-time professional positions. Students thus supplement both their educational experience and their financial standing through participation in the Internship Program.

Capstone Experiences

The core capstone experience for the M.P.A. program includes successful completion of two integrative modules, Professional Applications I (two credits) and Professional Applications II (two credits). Professional Applications I emphasizes the early development of professional skills, the ability to work in teams, and an awareness of trade-offs in modern administration. The purpose of Professional Applications II is to help students develop a greater awareness of themselves as individuals and as professionals in public service. This course focuses on issues that students, as present and future public leaders and managers, will confront throughout their careers. In addition a credit bearing course associated with the career experience requirement, typically taken in the last semester of study, completes the capstone experience. The core capstone experience is designed to help students appreciate how the different elements of the core curriculum contribute to effective management.
Other Available Courses

Courses may be taken in the Schools of Business, Criminal Justice, Education, Public Health, Social Welfare and in the College of Computing and Information; the College of Arts and Sciences; and the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering. In addition, students taking courses in any specialization area may wish to explore an area of particular interest by taking an independent study with a faculty member.

Admissions

Applications for admission to the M.P.A. program are reviewed by a department committee. Students are expected to have at least minimal competence in mathematics and good writing skills. Incoming students are tested for competence in these areas and remedial courses are strongly encouraged for students without these skills.