

Master of Public Administration

Policy Handbook

For the Incoming Class of Fall 2007

Program Description

The master of public administration at the University of Oregon is a rigorous two-year program for people interested in training for careers addressing the critical social, economic, and environmental issues of our times. The curriculum is designed to provide a combination of academic theory, analytic skills, and real world applications so that students become effective and creative leaders in public service. The program is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.

A central focus of the program is to prepare students to become evidence-based policy makers, analysts, and managers. Evidence-based policy making is a concept that has been gaining widespread acceptance in the policy community, both in the U.S. and abroad. It is based on the idea that the formulation of policy and its implementation should be based on evidence of effectiveness. Fostering evidence-based policy making requires a closer connection between research and practice. On the one hand, it requires that researchers ask policy relevant questions and conduct meaningful and timely analyses that can support the policy process. On the other hand, it requires that policy makers, managers, and leaders think critically about research and integrate appropriate evidence in the implementation and formulation of policy and practice. The faculty strives to support evidence-based policy making through our teaching, research, and community outreach activities.

Recent UO graduates work as advisors, policy analysts and strategic planners in all levels of government, in Oregon, throughout the US and around the globe. Their work addresses the full range of social, economic, environmental and development issues of the day, from improving health care access, increasing government efficiency and responsiveness, to creating new governmental structures in developing democracies. Alumni also work in a broad range of nonprofit organizations, for instance, as executive staff in social service, arts, and environmental organizations, and in for-profit companies serving the public sector.

The State of Oregon is an exciting place to study public administration. As a “laboratory of democracy” it has a long and distinguished record of policy innovation. Most recently, Oregon has been on the forefront of innovations in land use, health care, and environmental policy. Oregon is also a beautiful place to live and be a graduate student. The University of Oregon is located in the Willamette Valley, with easy access to snow-capped mountains and scenic coastlines.

The 72 credit program prepares students to become effective and creative leaders in the public and nonprofit sectors. The curriculum provides students with a combination of substantive knowledge, analytic skills, and professional experience that prepares students for careers as evidence-based policymakers, analysts, or managers. The program is comprised of four components: 1) core courses, 2) an area of concentration, 3) a supervised internship in a public agency or nonprofit, and 4) a final synthesizing research project.

Core Courses

The seven core courses provide students with the theoretical foundation and analytic skills to be effective leaders in the public or nonprofit sector.

PPPM 618, Introduction to Public Service (Fall) 4 credits
The context of professional public services includes the history and theoretical foundation for public policy and management in the government and nonprofit sectors.

PPPM 628, Public Sector Economy (Fall) 4 credits
Reasons for governmental intervention and analysis of revenue sources available to governments. Introduces economic framework commonly used in public service decision-making.

PPPM 656, Quantitative Methods in Planning and Public Policy (Fall) 5 credits
Develop skills in using quantitative analysis to evaluate policies and programs. Emphasizes selecting appropriate analysis procedures, interpreting results appropriately, and writing clearly about findings.

PPPM 620, Applied Methods in Planning, Policy and Management (Winter) 4 credits
Overview of the basic methods of research design in planning and public policy. Emphasizes the development of appropriate research questions, reviewing academic literature, measurement, data collection, types of data sets, causality, and the design of research projects. (Prerequisite: PPPM 656 for 08-09 academic year)

PPPM 629, Public Budget Administration (Winter) 4 credits
Resource allocation through the budget process. Includes analysis of budget system reforms and applied budget-making exercises.

PPPM 636, Public Policy Analysis (Winter) 4 credits
Understanding the rationale for and impact of public policy interventions. Developing systematic methods for analyzing policy design, adoption and assessment. (Prerequisite: PPPM 628 for 08-09 academic year)

PPPM 633, Public Management (Spring) 4 credits
Principles, issues, and practices in public management. Emphasizes the theory and practice designed to improve the performance of public service organizations.

Core Course Policies

- All core classes must be taken for a letter grade.
- If a student has taken a core course prior to entering the program, a more advanced course in that area or a complementary course approved by the instructor and the MPA director may be substituted. The course substitution form is available on the Departmental [website](#).
 - For students who graduated from the PPPM undergraduate program, the policy on taking PPPM 656 and 620 are as follows: if an “A” (plus or minus) was earned in the undergraduate version of the course, a higher level or complementary course should be taken instead of the MPA core course. If a “B” (plus or minus) was earned in the undergraduate course, the student has the option of taking a higher level or complementary course- or taking the MPA core course. Finally for grades below a B-, the MPA core course should be taken.
- Students must take 5 of the 7 core courses in the department.

Area of Concentration

Students develop a substantive area of expertise by taking a minimum of 24 credits of course work in a concentration area. There are five concentration areas that students may choose from: policy, public management, nonprofit management, planning, or environmental policy. The courses that are appropriate for each concentration area are detailed on the departmental [website](#).

Students may alternatively develop their own concentration in consultation with a faculty advisor. Recent graduates have created customized concentrations in labor issues, health policy, and international development.

Concentration Policies

- Concentration courses may be taken either for a grade or pass/fail. A “B-“ or better is required of graduate students to pass a pass/fail course.
- There are many courses outside of the department that are relevant to public administration. See the listing of classes for each concentration for a listing of the routinely offered classes in other departments. In addition, it is useful to look at the websites of specific departments to see what new classes are offered. Course evaluation information is available electronically [here](#).
- In addition to being able to take classes in other departments, UO students may take classes at any school in the Oregon University System through the Joint-Campus Program. Information and forms are available at the [Office of the Registrar](#).
- Students can additionally develop an independent reading class with a faculty member in an area of mutual interest. If a faculty member agrees to a reading class, the form to complete is available on the departmental [website](#). Return the signed form to Linda Dent, and then you can register for the class. Please note that the default number of credits is 1, so you must change the credits on DuckWeb, and if needed, the grading option.
- There is no requirement for how many concentration credits must be taken within the department.

Internships

Internships are an integral component of the curriculum. Internships offer students opportunities to explore and clarify career goals, apply academic learning, enhance and learn new skills, gain experience, and network with professionals. With assistance from the Internship Director, students identify a suitable internship and develop individualized learning goals. In collaboration with the internship site supervisor, students outline substantive tasks and responsibilities that support their learning goals. Students who achieve their learning goals acquire a set of transferable skills and “real world” experience that prepares them for professional positions, fellowships, or further academic study.

Students have completed a wide range of internships through the Internship Program. Examples include the highly selective **Oregon Performance Internship**, the competitive **United Nations Internship Programme**, and **IE3 Global Internships**. Students have also interned with the Oregon Governor’s Office, Senator Ron Wyden’s Office, the City of Portland, Oregon Department of Human Services, and at Holt International Children’s Services. Students are required to enroll in 10 pass/fail credits of internship. Students typically complete their internship during the summer between their first and second year. For more information on the Internship Program see the Departmental [website](#).

Internship Policies

- A maximum of 12 internship credits may be taken.
- If a student has five or more years of related professional experience, the internship requirement may be waived. In lieu of the internship, 10 credits of elective courses can be taken.
- Community Planning Workshop (CPW) can be taken to fulfill internship credit. However, students are strongly recommended to complete an internship in addition to CPW.
- Students who have been in the RARE program may use their 9 RARE credits towards the internship requirement.

Applied Research Project

The program requires students to conduct original empirical research related to the fields of public policy, nonprofit management, or public management. The research project is the culmination of the MPA curriculum. It requires students to become expert in a substantive area and put to use newly acquired research and analytical skills. For graduation, students must defend their research in front of a faculty committee, present their work in a departmental poster session, and submit a professional quality 20-page research report.

Students often conduct their studies to answer questions raised during their internship. Others work on projects related to a faculty member’s research or a topic of personal interest. The following two award winning research projects were presented in a professional meeting and submitted for publication respectively:

[“The Impact of Neighborhood Characteristics on Physical Activity and Rates of Obesity among Child Medicaid Recipients”](#) by Lori Quillen, 2007

[“Redistributive Effect of U.S. Taxes and Public Transfers, 1994-2004”](#) by Ki-Nam Kim, 2006

The Student Research Colloquium (PPPM 690) provides students with structure for identifying a viable research question, conducting a literature review, and developing a methodology. Students take 1 credit of colloquium in the spring of their first year and 2 credits in the fall of their second year. Students work very closely throughout the whole research process with a faculty advisor and one or two additional committee members.

During the second year, students must enroll in 6 credits of PPPM 609 Terminal Project while completing their research. Occasionally, students will opt for their research project to be a thesis rather than a terminal project. This requires 3 additional credits, for a minimum 9 credits of PPPM 503 Thesis, and for students to adhere to the Graduate School thesis requirements. Typically, this would be appropriate for students interested in entering a Ph.D. program in public policy after completing their MPA degree. For detailed information about the applied research project, see the Departmental [website](#).

- Each year, the MPA faculty selects the top student research project to receive the Frazier Award for Outstanding Research. The award is given at the spring PPPM commencement ceremony and includes a \$100 check.

Concurrent Degrees

The University of Oregon is very flexible in allowing students to develop concurrent degrees. No formal program between PPPM and the other UO program is required. Students need to be accepted into both programs and work out their academic schedule in conjunction with their faculty advisors. Students have recently combined the MPA with a master of community and regional planning, master of business administration (MBA), doctor of jurisprudence (JD), Ph.D. in educational leadership, master of international studies, and master of geography.

Concurrent Policies

- Students interested in a concurrent degree program must 1) apply to both programs, and 2) meet with faculty advisors in both programs to develop an academic plan. Usually concurrent degrees decrease the time it takes to complete two separate degrees by at least a year.
- An official concurrent degree program form must be completed, approved by both program directors and the graduate school. The form is online at the [Graduate School website](#), and Linda Dent can answer questions about the credit requirements.
- The MPA program will accept the core courses of the second graduate degree as concentration credits.

MPA & CRP Degree Policies

- Students must take 10 credits of internship as well as CPW (for the CRP degree).
- One thesis/terminal project can fulfill the requirements for both degrees.

MPA & Other Degrees

- Students completing concurrent graduate programs may be able to have their thesis/terminal project fulfill both degree requirements. This is determined on a case by case basis by an MPA faculty committee of two (which is different than the thesis/terminal project committee). All thesis/terminal project committees for MPA students must have at least one PPPM faculty member.

Student Advising

- When students start the program, they are each assigned a faculty advisor. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with their advisor in the first term of study and as needed throughout the year for answering questions related to program requirements, for advice on elective course selection, and to answer other curriculum matters.
- The faculty advisor need not be the same faculty member as the chair (or member) of a thesis/ terminal project committee.
- Students have the option of changing their academic advisor if another faculty member is a better fit. There is a form on the Departmental webpage to officially change advisors.
- In the fall of the second year, students are required to meet with their advisor for a mid-program review. The advisor reviews and discusses with the student what degree requirements must be fulfilled prior to graduation.

Academic Standing

- Grades below C- are not accepted for graduate credit but are computed in the GPA. For pass/fail classes, a grade of pass must be equal to or better than a B-.
- Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) to be in good standing in the MPA program. At the end of their first year, students are required to have a 3.0 GPA in order to continue in the program in the second year. A 3.0 GPA is also required for graduation from the MPA program.
- Failing five credits is grounds for expulsion from the program.
- Students have 7 years time to complete their MPA. Any credits taken more than 7 years earlier than graduation will expire and not be valid towards the MPA.

Fellowships

There are a number of policy-related fellowships that provide students with 1-2 years of excellent training in the public sector. These include the Presidential Management Fellowship, which is the entryway into federal employment in agencies as diverse as the EPA, AID, CDC and OMB, and The Local Government Management Fellowship. Applications are due in the fall of students' second year of study. For application information and deadlines see the Internship Program [website](#).

PPPM Questions

- Linda Dent and Zudegi Giordano are indispensable resources when you have questions about curriculum and departmental matters. Here is the breakdown of their responsibilities, so that you will know what type of questions to ask to whom.

Zudegi Giordano

Faculty/GTF Office Hours
Keys and Computer Lab Access
General Questions/Directions
Event/Room/Equipment Reservations
Workstudy Hiring, Ordering Supplies
Website & Listserves Manager
State car/van Reservations/Drivers Clearance
Events & Field Trip Cost Estimates

Linda Dent

Student Records
Faculty & GTF Payroll
Petitions/Waivers
Preauthorization to Add Classes
Classroom Scheduling
Clarity on Program Requirements
Admissions
Graduation Clearance

Academic Calendar

- The academic calendar, with add and drop deadlines, can be found on the Registrar's [website](#).

Graduate Research Fellowships

- In the spring of each academic year the department advertises its GTF positions for the following year. On occasion, additional departmental GTF positions will become available, and notices will be emailed and posted.
- Students have been very successful obtaining administrative GTF positions throughout the university. Current listings are available throughout the school year on the Graduate School's [webpage](#).

Transferring Credits

- Students may petition PPPM and the Graduate School to transfer up to 15 graduate credits from another graduate program if: 1) the credits are relevant to the MPA program, 2) they were taken within seven years of the date of MPA graduation, 3) they were not used towards a prior graduate degree, and 4) they were taken at an accredited university. The credit transfer form is available at the [Graduate School forms website](#). Please return the form to Linda Dent.
- Students should meet with their advisor to discuss how the credits will count towards the MPA degree, towards either the core or concentration.

Graduation

- Students must apply for their degree or certificate by the second Friday of the term; see the Graduate School's [website](#).