



UNIVERSITY
OF OREGON

Master of Public Administration

Program Handbook

Faculty Program Director: Professor Grant Jacobsen

MPA Program Description

A central focus of the University of Oregon’s master of public administration (MPA) program is to prepare students to become evidence-based policy makers, analysts, and managers. Evidence based policy making is a concept that has gained 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. We further extend this concept to management, as managerial decisions benefit from an evidence-based approach as well.

Fostering evidence based decision 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 administrative practice. The MPA curriculum has been developed to train students in applied research and provide opportunities for real world applications. The faculty strives to support evidence based decision making through our research and community outreach activities, as well as our teaching.

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 Department of Planning, Public Policy & Management is a community that values inclusion. We are committed to equal opportunities for all faculty, staff and students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs and traditions. We are dedicated to an environment that is inclusive and fosters awareness, understanding, and respect for diversity. Please get involved in the department-wide Equity Initiative – everyone is welcome to help push PPPM to be a learning organization and an inclusive place for all students. If you ever feel excluded or threatened, please provide, at the very least, some anonymous feedback so that we can learn. Or talk to us -- contact your instructor and/or the MPA program director or PPPM department head. The University Bias Response Team is also a resource that can assist you. Find more information at their [website](#) or by phoning 541-346-2037.

MPA Curriculum

The 72 credit Master of Public Administration 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) a field of interest, 3) an internship and professional development training, and 4) synthesizing applied research and policy analysis projects.

MPA Core Courses

The eight core courses (33 credits) provide students with the theoretical foundation and analytic skills to be effective leaders in the public or nonprofit sector. **Although a two year schedule is presented below, part-time students will follow a modified plan that fits their needs.** Note that prerequisites require taking certain courses in sequence.

First Year, Fall term

PPPM 618, Public Sector Theory

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 623, Professional Development

1 credit

Students identify career goals and prepare professional materials for the internship and post-graduation. If you are working in a professional position currently and intend to continue in that position after graduation, you may waive PPPM 623 and replace the credit with an elective credit.

PPPM 628, Public Sector Economics

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

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.

First Year, Winter Term

PPPM 657, Research Methods in Public Policy and Management

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)

PPPM 636, Public Policy Analysis

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)

(Additional credits Winter term of the first year are usually elective course credits.)

First Year, Spring Term

PPPM 633, Public Management

4 credits

Principles, issues, and practices in public management. Emphasizes the theory and practice designed to improve the performance of public service organizations.

PPPM 684, Public and Nonprofit Financial Management

4 credits

Financial management decision and control processes in public agencies and nonprofit organizations. Financial resources (taxes, donations, grants) stewardship, expenditure systems, and capital project analysis.

(Additional credits Spring term of the first year are usually elective and/or internship credits.)

Second Year, Fall Term

PPPM 629, Public Budget Administration

4 credits

Resource allocation through the budget process. Includes analysis of budget system reforms and applied budget-making exercises (Prerequisite: PPPM 628).

(Additional credits – electives and/or internship credits.)

Core Course Policies

- All core classes must be taken for a letter grade.
- Students must earn a minimum grade of C- in each core course. In addition, students must earn an **average** GPA of 3.0 in the eight core courses. The GPA is computed as weighted average based on each course's credit hours.
- If a student has taken a core course (or its equivalent) prior to entering the MPA 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 are as follows: if grade of "A-" or higher was earned in the undergraduate version of the course (typically PPPM 413), a higher level or complementary course should be taken instead of the MPA core course. If a "B-" or higher 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.
- For students who graduated from the PPPM undergraduate program, successful completion of PPPM 415 does not entitle the student to a waiver of PPPM 636.

MPA Fields of Interest

In consultation with a faculty advisor, students develop a substantive area of expertise by taking a minimum of 24 credits of coursework in a field of interest. Students may develop their own field (again, in consultation with the faculty advisor), or model their choice on one of the following 11 sample fields:

- public management
- nonprofit management *
- community and regional planning
- environmental policy
- education & labor policy
- health policy
- transportation policy
- economic development
- international development
- research methods
- general policy

Examples of the courses that are appropriate for each field of interest area are detailed on the department website. Students wanting to complete the nonprofit management field of interest, specifically, may complete the 24-credit [Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management](#) as their field of interest.

Field of Interest Elective Course Policies

- Elective courses may be taken either for a grade or pass/fail. A grade of "B-" or better is required of graduate students to pass a course under the pass/fail option.

- There are many courses outside of the department that are relevant to public administration. There is no limit on how many can be taken for your field of interest. See the listing of classes for each field 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 – courses change every year and every term. Course evaluation information for UO classes is available electronically [here](#).
- Finding courses in other departments ahead of time may seem daunting, because you don't know what term a course will be offered. Here is how to obtain an advance preview of other departments' draft class schedule: Go to <http://classes.uoregon.edu> and select the current term. In the URL at the top of the screen, change the last number to the next digit. If it says "02", change it to "03", for example. You'll see the courses planned (but still as drafts) for that next term.
- If you are unable to register for a course in another department (it might be closed to non-majors), email the instructor to inquire about taking it. If that instructor says no, there might be an important reason – you don't have the prerequisites, for example. If not, email your faculty advisor in PPPM to see if he or she might lend a hand in advocating on your behalf. Usually other faculty members accommodate our students out of professional courtesy, because so many external students from outside PPPM take PPPM courses.
- In addition to being able to take classes in other departments, UO students may take classes at any school in the Oregon University System (OSU, PSU) and transfer the credits to UO. Information is available at the [Office of the Registrar](#).
- Individual study projects are also possible for elective credits. For more details on individual study projects see the "Incorporating an Individual Study Project into the MPA or MNM"

Internships & Professional Development

There are two components of the MPA internship requirement. The first is enrollment in the PPPM 623 Professional Development (1 credit). Students begin the course during orientation week and continue through Fall term of their first year. Through this course students identify their career goals and develop a plan to prepare themselves to meet the goals. Students identify summer internship and post-graduation fellowship opportunities, and develop polished resume and cover letters.

The second component is completion of an internship. Internships offer students opportunities to explore and clarify career goals, apply academic learning, enhance and learn new skills, gain experience, and network with professionals. Unlike jobs, internships are supervised training experiences with the explicit intent of developing skills. Internships are highly recommended for all MPA students, and required for those with fewer than two years of relevant professional experience.

Students are required to enroll in 3 pass/fail credits of PPPM 604 Internship. In collaboration with the internship site supervisor and the Internship Director, students identify learning goals and outline specific tasks and responsibilities that support these goals. By achieving their learning goals, students acquire a set of transferable skills and real-world experiences that prepare them for professional positions, fellowships, or further academic study. Gaining relevant professional experience beyond the 3 credits is **highly** recommended. Students may do so either for credit or not for credit.

Students have completed a wide range of internships. Examples include the highly selective **Oregon**

Fellowships, the competitive **United Nations Internship Programme**, and **IE3 Global Internships**. Students have also interned with the Oregon Governor's Office, City of Portland Office of Sustainability, Oregon Department of Human Services, MercyCorps and many other local, national and international nonprofit organizations. For more information on the Internship Program see the departmental [website](#).

Internship Policies

- Three credits of internship is the equivalent of 90 hours in an internship placement.
- A maximum of 10 internship credits may be taken. Credits beyond the required 3 will count as field of interest elective credits.
- If a student has two or more years of related professional experience, the internship requirement may be waived. In lieu of the internship, 3 additional credits of elective courses should be taken (27 credit hours total).
- 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 3 RARE credits towards the internship requirement and 6 towards their field of interest credits.

MPA Policy Analysis and Applied Research Projects

The MPA curriculum provides students two key opportunities to synthesize classroom learning and apply their analysis and research skills to current policy and management issues. At the start of the second year, students engage in a 48-hour policy project (1 credit, PPPM 637). This project is intended to simulate the real-world environment where analysts and managers are given short time frames to research a topic that they know little or nothing about. Over 48 hours, students, working in groups, will read relevant policy and research documents, write a memo detailing the evidence base and key issues, and give an oral presentation. The 48-hour project takes place the week before fall classes begin, and incoming first year students will have the opportunity to view the presentations as part of their orientation to the program. This component of the curriculum is a signature event and rite of passage each fall.

Students also enroll in a two-term terminal project sequence that serves as the synthesizing Capstone of the curriculum. Over the winter and spring terms of the second year of study (5 credits each for a total of 10 credits, PPPM 638 and PPPM 639), students work on real world or simulated projects that require conducting in-depth needs assessments, evaluations, cost-benefit analyses, or other applied research. A faculty member will work closely with student groups on these projects over the two terms. Past projects have included conducting a survey for a state commission to gauge attitudes among key stakeholders on potential policy change, an analysis of administrative data on how a past policy implementation impacted Oregonians, and an examination of three potential communities for a nonprofit's expansion.

Policy Analysis and Applied Research Policies

48-hour Project

- The 48-hour project (PPPM 637) must be taken as a graded course – the pass/fail option is not allowed.
- Students must earn a grade of “B-” to pass PPPM 637.

- The eight core courses must be completed prior to the 48-hour project. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the MPA program director.
- In rare cases of personal emergency that prevents a student from participating in the 48-hour policy project, a 48-hour individual policy paper may be substituted for the 48-hour project.
- Concurrent degree students must complete the 48-hour project.

Capstone

- Prior to participation in the Capstone, all core courses and at least 12 credits in field of interest elective classes must be completed. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the MPA program director.

Concurrent Degrees

MPA students may do concurrent degrees with any other graduate program on campus. We have official programs with the Law School and Business School, and many students have completed concurrent degrees with Economics, Conflict Resolution, Nonprofit Management, International Studies, Environmental Studies, Political Science, Arts Management, Geography, and Community and Regional Planning. Concurrent degrees with other departments are also possible.

Concurrent Policies

- Students interested in a concurrent degree program must apply and be admitted to both programs. Usually concurrent degrees decrease the time it takes to complete two separate degrees by at least a year.
- The Declaration of Concurrent Degrees form must be completed, printed, signed, and submitted to the Graduate School as soon as the student has been admitted to both programs, and no later than three terms prior to the term in which the student would complete either or both degrees. Forms are online at the [Graduate School website](#), and your faculty advisor can answer questions about the credit requirements.
- You must apply for graduation and submit the Concurrent Program Plan form to the Graduate School no later than Friday of Week 2 in the term of graduation (for either or both degrees).
- As with all MPA students, concurrent degree students must complete 72-graduate level credits. Note that, for concurrent students, the graduate school requires at least 45 credits to be completed that are specific to your “first” major and 30 credits to be completed that are specific to your “second” major. You cannot double count any courses in meeting these thresholds.
- The MPA program will accept the core courses of the other graduate degree as field of interest elective credits.
- Concurrent degree students can complete the internship requirement through another department.
- Concurrent degree students may substitute a required thesis in their other department in lieu of the MPA Capstone. In this case, the thesis topic must be related to public administration, public policy, or public management. The thesis topic must be approved by your advisor through a capstone-specific waiver form.
- Concurrent degrees are only possible within the UO (not with other universities).

MPA & MCRP Concurrent Degree Policies

- Students must take 3 credits of internship as well as the Community Planning Workshop to complete both the MPA and MCRP degrees.
- Students must complete the 48-hour policy project (PPPM 637).

MPA & MNM Concurrent Degree Policies

- A concurrent MNM/Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree may be of interest to some students. The MNM and MPA curricula are closely related but still distinct. Pursuing both degrees can provide an extremely strong background for work in both the nonprofit and public sectors. Because of the close relationship between the MNM and the MPA, the curriculum for this concurrent degree combination is carefully prescribed. It is detailed in the Appendix in the last page of the MNM Policy Handbook.

Student Advising

- When students start the program, they are each assigned a faculty advisor. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor as needed throughout the year for answering questions related to program requirements, for advice on elective course selection, and to answer other curriculum matters.
- 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.
- Students are encouraged to discuss with their advisor how their plan of study aligns with their career goals. If so, students are encouraged to bring their Professional Development Plan (formed during PPPM 637: Professional Development) to corresponding meetings with their advisor.

Academic Standing

- Students have seven years to complete their MPA while maintaining continuous enrollment. Any credits taken earlier than seven years from graduation will expire and not be valid towards the MPA. Exceptions are made exclusively for military service and serious health conditions.
- Graduate students must convert a grade of Incomplete (“I”) into a passing grade within one calendar year of the term the course was taken. If there are extenuating circumstances, there is a process to petition the [Graduate School](#) for a removal of an incomplete that is longer lasting than one year.
- Grades below “C-” are not accepted for graduate credit but are computed in the grade point average (GPA). For pass/fail classes, a grade of pass must be equal to or better than a “B-.” A student may retake a class if a very low grade is earned.
- Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA and be continuously enrolled (not counting summer quarter) to be in good standing and to graduate from a PPPM graduate program. At the end of the first

year of classes (for full time students) or after completion of 36 credits (for part time students), a 3.0 cumulative GPA is required in order to continue in the graduate program. If in subsequent terms a student's cumulative GPA drops below a 3.0, he or she is given one term to raise the cumulative GPA to at least the 3.0 level.

- Failing five credits ("F" in a graded class or "N" in a pass/fail class) is grounds for expulsion from the program.

Fellowships

There are a number of prestigious policy and management-related fellowships that offer students one to two years of excellent training in the public sector. The Presidential Management Fellows Program is an entryway into federal employment in agencies as diverse as the EPA, AID, CDC and OMB. The Local Government Management Fellowship sponsored by the International City/County Management Association offers management-track fellowships in local governments throughout the U.S. There are also federal agency-specific fellowships as well as opportunities with state governments and policy institutes. Students interested in international fellowships are encouraged to identify opportunities during their first year of study. Applications are generally due in the fall of students' second year of study. For a list of fellowships and deadlines see the Internship Program [website](#).

PPPM Questions

Our staff are great resources when you have questions. Here is the breakdown of their student support responsibilities. Also, see the Frequently Asked Questions on the PPPM website at <http://pppm.uoregon.edu/current/faq>

Shaun Haskins

Business Operations Manager

541.346.2859, haskins@uoregon.edu

- Event & Field Trip Cost Estimates
- Student Hiring (Hourly)
- Faculty Issues

Receptionist

541.346.3635, pppm@uoregon.edu

- Faculty Office Hours
- Keys & Computer Lab Access
- General Questions/Directions
- Room/Equipment Reservations
- State Driver Clearance
- Motor Pool Reservations

Heather Currie

Administrative Program Assistant

541.346.6018, hac@uoregon.edu

- Student Records
- Grad School & University Requirements
- Department & Program Requirements
- Petitions/Waivers/Leaves of Absence
- Preauthorization to Add Class
- Graduation Clearance
- Course Scheduling
- GE Payroll

Tiffany Benefiel

Administrative Program Assistant

541.346.2685, benefiel@uoregon.edu

- Website Edits
- List Serv Management
- Event Coordination

Academic Calendar

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

Study Overseas

- Opportunities exist for students to incorporate graduate-level policy and public administration overseas study (often in English) into their MPA program. Plan ahead to determine how this experience can fit into your MPA degree program, and refer to the [UO Office of International Affairs](#) for more information. We recommend talking to a Study Abroad advisor, as the website may not list all of the opportunities available.

Graduate Teaching Fellowships

- In Winter or Spring, the department advertises its GTF positions for the following year. On occasion, additional departmental GTF positions will become available at other times of the year, 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; see Funding & Awards.

Transferring Credits

- Students may petition PPPM and the Graduate School to transfer up to 15 graduate credits from another graduate program if the credits are: 1) relevant to the MPA program, 2) taken within seven years of the date of MPA graduation, 3) not used towards a prior graduate degree, 4) taken at an accredited university, and 5) the grade earned was a "B" or higher (or a Pass in a Pass/Fail course). The Transfer of Graduate Credit form is available at the [Graduate School forms website](#); see current students, academic forms, masters students only. Please return the form to Nick Phillips for departmental signatures.
- Students should meet with their advisor to discuss how the credits will count towards the MPA degree (towards either the core or field of interest).

Graduation

- Students must apply for their degree or certificate by the second Friday of the term; see the Graduate School's [website](#). **The Graduate School requires that you be enrolled in at least 3 credits at UO (in any department) in the quarter in which you graduate.**

Incorporating an Individual Study Project into the MPA or MNM Program

We do not have an individual thesis/terminal project option for the MPA and MNM degrees because the professional skillsets required in the public and nonprofit sectors overwhelmingly favor the hands-on projects for actual organizations that students complete in the MPA Capstone and MNM Nonprofit Management Consultancy courses. Still, you might be drawn to a particular topic that is not already covered in an existing course on campus, so an individual project of a manageable scope – while not a thesis – may be preferred, given your particular career goals. Following are two routes by which a student might pursue an individual project.

Route 1: You are familiar with a PPPM faculty member who has an interesting research project and might use some help with it. In that case, express your interest in the topic to the faculty member. If they are interested in working with you, you can work together to design a project that is sensible for both the faculty member's research and for your skills and timing. You may or may not want to get academic credit for it.

Route 2 (rare): No faculty member in PPPM is doing research in your topic of interest. **Inquire among the faculty** (it helps to bring a 1-page summary with a list of readings that you'd like to do on your own). If you want academic credit for this work, you can ask a faculty member to supervise your independent research or readings course. It is up to the discretion of each faculty member whether they agree to supervise your project. Factors that will influence whether a faculty member agrees to oversee your project include the overlap of the topic with the faculty member's area of expertise, the faculty member's schedule, and the extent to which you can justify the project as an important part of your education (see more on this in "cautions" below).

Getting Elective Credit: If a faculty member has agreed to oversee your project, decide on an appropriate number of credits for your project and give it a short title. Fill out the PPPM department Independent Study Authorization Form and return the form to Zudegi, who will then lift the registration barrier, allowing you to register for X credits of PPPM 601 Research or PPPM 605 Readings and Conference in (your short title).

For an independent study course, the list of readings is up to you; you design the syllabus (which means you design the research project), with the faculty member's approval. Generally, a long paper is due at the end of the term. Faculty members will differ on the amount of supervision they will provide for an individual project. Some will want to meet frequently and others will not. Faculty will also differ on grading requirements.

Cautions:

1. There has to be a good epistemological reason why you are developing your own individual study project. It is not an option to get out of a scheduling difficulty.
2. The topic must be something not covered already in any course (any term) at UO.
3. Faculty are working very hard behind the scenes, do not have the capacity to supervise more than one or two individual projects, and may not be available to supervise your project.
4. An individual study project is never a replacement for the MPA Capstone or Nonprofit Management Consultancy courses.

The MPA and MNM faculty have discussed this and would like to close with this thought: Bear in mind that an individual study or research project is never as good as a class – a class pushes you in unexpected directions which can widen your experience, and the verbal exchange of ideas in a class format enhances understanding (more so than just reading on your own).