

Policy 6-215: Graduate Studies and Degrees, Master of Public Administration

I. Purpose and Scope

(Reserved)

II. Definitions

(Reserved)

III. Policy: Requirements for the Degree of Master of Public Administration

Course Requirements

The Master of Public Administration degree is offered by the Department of Political Science and administered by the Center for Public Affairs and Administration. The M.P.A. program requires 39 to 42 credit hours of classwork, divided as follows: 24 to 27 credit hours in the core courses and 15 credit hours in the area of concentration. A major research paper is required, as is an internship for students without appropriate administrative experience (three credit hours). With committee approval, a student may write a thesis (six credit hours) in lieu of a research paper and three credit hours in the area of concentration. Waiver of the internship is allowable upon student supervisory committee approval. Reasons for waivers must be based upon the student's prior or current related experience.

Student Advising

Initial advising is by the Program Manager. The resultant tentative program for the first phase of the student's study is reviewed by the M.P.A. Director. Before the end of 12 to 15 hours of course work, the student should have requested formation of a supervisory committee, representing two departments at the university, one of which must be Political Science. The committee approves the completion of the prerequisites, approves allowable waivers and substitutions to program

requirements, gives general guidance, approves the internship and evaluates the internship work, approves elective coursework in the area of concentration, administers the comprehensive examination, directs and approves the thesis or major research paper project, and administers the oral defense.

Time Limits

Work for the M.P.A. degree may be completed within two consecutive full-time calendar years. However, work toward the M.P.A. degree is acceptable if completed within four consecutive calendar years. Time extensions beyond this must be approved by the supervisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School.

Application for Candidacy

During their third semester of work for the degree, students should file with the chairperson of their supervisory committee an "Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Master's Degree." Applications must be approved by the student's supervisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School.

Examinations

A written or oral comprehensive examination (student's choice) and an oral defense of the major research paper or thesis are required. Both are administered by the supervisory committee. The comprehensive should be taken upon completion of the M.P.A. courses. The final oral defense should be completed as soon as feasible following the submission of the thesis or major research paper to the supervisory committee.

Language

There is no language requirement for the M.P.A. degree.

Research Paper or Thesis

Each candidate for the M.P.A. must complete an approved major research paper or a thesis (six credit hours). Normally, the research paper is an extension or expansion of a paper written for a course taken as part of the program. Further guidelines for the research paper are set by the student's supervisory committee. The thesis must be written in the student's area of concentration and will substitute for three hours of coursework in the area of concentration and the major research paper. The thesis is subject to the regulations of the Graduate School governing form and distribution.

Internship

Candidates for the M.P.A. degree are expected to complete a semester-long, full-time equivalent internship or its equivalent in a public administrative capacity. The purpose of the internship is to give students an opportunity to gain experience in their chosen fields, and to speed the transition from student to practitioner. The internship should provide a text of knowledge acquired during coursework; and it should expose the student to the variables of administration, including management style, the politics of organization, personnel problems, budget and financial issues, and interpersonal complexities in organized life. It should help the student learn from various opportunities, personal preferences for work environment, and professional expectations on the job. Finally, it should give the student experience in the formulation and analysis of public policy. Thus, the student should serve as an assistant to an administrative officer and have access to the policy-making process of the organization.

The supervisory committee must approve the internship placement. The internship is to be served within an agency of government, a government-related organization, or non-profit organization. Students who come to the M.P.A. program with significant previous related experience may petition the supervisory committee for a waiver of the internship requirement ("significant" is defined as at least one year full-time professional employment at a level comparable to internships normally administered through the Center for Public Policy and Administration for M.P.A. students).

IV. Rules, Procedures, Guidelines, Forms and other Related Resources

- A. Rules
- B. Procedures
- C. Guidelines
- D. Forms
- E. Other related resource materials

V. References

(Reserved)

VI. Contacts

Policy Owner:

Questions about this Policy and any related Rules, Procedures and Guidelines should be directed to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Policy Officers:

Only the Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Sr. Vice President for Health Sciences or their designees have the authority to grant exceptions to this policy.

VII. History

Approved: University Senate 6/2/86

Approved: Institutional Council 6/9/86

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