Public Administration: Graduate Student Guide

2015-2016
Master’s Program in Public Administration: Graduate Student Guide 2015-2016

The City College of New York’s Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership

June 2015
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Welcome

On behalf of the faculty and staff of the Master’s in Public Administration (MPA) Program at the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership, welcome to graduate study at the City College of New York.

This handbook is designed to provide you with information you will need as a student in the MPA program. It will also direct you to places where you can find more help and information.

The handbook outlines the policies, procedures, regulations, and requirements of the program, which awards an MPA degree. Detailed information regarding the general policies of the City College of New York can be found at:


The website for the MPA Program is:

http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/psm

The handbook also provides an overview of the resources available to students such as advisement, internships, stipends and academic support.

The faculty and staff of the MPA program are eager to support you during your graduate school career. Please don’t hesitate to let us know how we can help you.

Best wishes on the continuation of your education.

Sincerely,

Mark Musell, Director
Mission
The master’s degree program in public administration prepares students, including many from groups traditionally underrepresented in public service, for management jobs in government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Consistent with the mission of the Colin Powell School, this program focuses on fostering solutions that further equality, prosperity, stability, and peace for the whole people—in Harlem, in New York, and around the globe. Our program:

• provides a rigorous curriculum that integrates service, leadership training, and mentoring, ensuring that students engage with real-world challenges and develop the capacity, drive, and public spirit to serve as responsible leaders and stewards of the common good;

• maintains and supports a faculty dedicated to the highest standards of research and to the university’s democratic and public obligations, including the responsibility to disseminate research in usable forms to concerned audiences, particularly to those striving to redress injustice or disparity;

• serves as a forum for experts, policymakers, community leaders, and others dealing with the major challenges of our time in ways that dismantle traditional barriers between the academic world, proximate communities, and the broader public.

Course Requirements
Students must complete 45 credits of course work to receive a master’s degree in public administration. Students can find course descriptions under “about the program” at:

http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/psm

Course requirements consist of both core and elective courses. Each course is worth 3 credits.

Core Courses (39 credits)
• Strategic Management
• Public Budgeting and Finance
• American Governance and Public Administration
• Economics for Public Policy
• Quantitative Methods
• Advanced Quantitative Methods
• Public Policy
• Leadership in Public Service
• Communication in Public Service
• Internship
• Capstone
• Human Resources Management
• Program and Policy Evaluation

**Electives (6 credits)**
Students use electives to shape their educational experience to reflect career goals and policy interests.

**MPA Internship Requirement**
The MPA program requires students with limited professional experience to complete a 400-hour summer internship in a government agency or nonprofit organization. Interns earn $3,000 for their internship service and 3 credits towards their degree after they submit a paper on their internship experience. (The stipend applies only to unpaid internships.)

Students may serve in New York City or in Washington DC. Interns going to Washington, DC also receive free housing. Students are expected to complete their internship during the summer after their first full academic year.

The program provides a range of support to students seeking to fulfill their internship requirement. Among other things, staff members help students locate internship positions, offer advice on resumes and cover letters, and help students prepare for interviews.

Students with substantial professional experience may request an internship waiver from the MPA program’s director. Those granted approval must substitute an elective for the internship requirement. You can get a waiver form from the MPA office in Shepard Hall room 1.

**Capstone**
Capstone is the culminating experience of the MPA program. The course involves working with fellow students, faculty, and public officials to develop solutions to real-world problems. The thesis alternative is for students who plan on pursuing a PhD. Students who wish to complete a thesis in lieu of a practicum must obtain approval from the MPA director.

**Transferring Credits**
- Students entering the program may transfer credits of coursework from another school, pending approval from the program’s director.
- Students entering from another CCNY graduate program may transfer no more than 12 credits with approval.
- Students already in the MPA program may take courses at other CUNY schools. Those credits, however, may not include courses equivalent to core courses within the program. Students wishing to take electives outside CCNY must get prior approval from the director.
Speakers and Workshops

Each year, the program offers a series of speakers, workshops, and lectures designed to offer students first-hand insight from leading figures in public policy and affairs. The program also offers workshops in project management, team building, research methods and other skills students need for success in the program and their careers. Students will receive schedules of key events at the start of each semester.

Workload and Length of Program

Full-time status in the program requires a minimum of three courses for the first two or three semesters (not including summer). Four courses is the standard course load in most semesters. Any deviation from the standard schedule requires approval of the Director.

Typically, a student will complete the program in two full academic years, with the summer of the first year spent completing the internship requirement. Students must give priority to completing core courses early in the program. A student’s schedule for the two-year program may look like the sample below:

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<th>Semester 1, Fall</th>
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<td>Quantitative Methods</td>
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Financial Assistance

MPA students may qualify for financial assistance in the form of tuition reimbursements and stipends. The MPA program also makes available a small number of paid semester internships (not to be confused with the for-credit summer internships). The continuation of assistance is based on academic performance and on funding. All awards of financial assistance are subject to change.
Criteria for Providing Assistance
Decisions about the amount and nature of financial aid are based on five criteria: academic performance, achievements outside academia, commitment to public service, enrollment status (full- or part-time) and financial need.

Maintaining Scholarships and Stipends
Every recipient must follow CUNY’s policy on Academic Integrity (Appendix B.3 of the Graduate Bulletin) in qualifying for and maintaining financial assistance. Eligibility will be subject to review for students who receive grades below a B, withdraw from courses, take repeated incompletes or fail to maintain full-time status. Students who fail to maintain professional standards of conduct may also lose financial support. In extreme cases, students will be expelled from the program.

Contracts
Each recipient must sign a contract obligating them to complete paid courses. Students unable to complete courses will be responsible for reimbursing the program tuition assistance and stipends. Students experiencing any hardship will be required to submit documentation and each case will be individually reviewed.

Tuition Assistance
Students may receive tuition assistance up to half the cost of in-state tuition. In the case of students with extraordinary accomplishments or career prominence, the program may provide full tuition.

Employed Students – Employed students (both full- and part-time) must provide the MPA program with a formal letter from their employer describing the tuition benefits available to them. Students who fail to submit letters in a timely fashion will be deregistered. (For CUNY employees, students will have to go to their respective departments to make the request.)

If a student receives employer-sponsored tuition assistance, then any financial award will be reduced by the amount the employer provides. In some cases, employers only reimburse students after the grade/s has/have been submitted at the end of the semester with proof of out-of-pocket expenses. Additionally some employers reimburse specific percentages based on the letter grade a student earns. Under those circumstances, it will be the student’s responsibility to pay for the course/s up front until tuition is reimbursed by their employer.

Status – Students must inform the program of any change in employment status.

Semester Internships
Second-year MPA students may earn $2,500 per semester in return for completing 15 week semester internships involving 15 to 20 hours of work per week. No credit is awarded. Students must work for a government agency or nonprofit organization. Under certain circumstances, students may work for faculty on research projects. Faculty
research internships must be approved by the MPA director or deputy director. MPA program staff guide students in finding internships, review resumes, and provide other assistance.

**Registration and Advising**

Staff and faculty are available at any time to advise students on course selection, career goals, and other matters. Courses for each semester are listed on page 5 of this guide. Students register for courses through the CUNY First system, except as noted below regarding some electives. CUNY First can be reached from the CCNY homepage (under “login”).

**Elective Courses**

Students may take electives from the MPA program or from any program in the CUNY system. **STUDENTS MUST GET APPROVAL FROM THE MPA PROGRAM DIRECTOR OR DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ELECTIVE COURSES TAKEN OUTSIDE THE MPA PROGRAM.** Students may request approval via email. Students must include descriptions of the courses they wish to take in the email request.

**MPA Electives**

Students need no special permission to register for electives offered directly from the MPA program. Students register through CUNY First.

**Taking Electives in Other CCNY Programs**

Students who wish to take courses in other City College programs must also get approval from the MPA program in advance. Students can ask for approval via email. They must send a course description and seek the approval of the home program director. (For example, you need the permission of the Director of International Relations to take a course in that program.) MPA program staff can make that request to the chair or department head on a student’s behalf. Students wishing our help should send us a student ID and the number of the course they wish to take.

Once students get permission to take a class, they register through CUNY First.

**Taking Electives at Other CUNY Colleges**

Students must send a description and get approval from MPA staff in advance. Once they get permission, they go to the CUNY portal and request an e-permit in order to register: https://epermit.cuny.edu/permitdb/cunypermit.nsf/homepage.

Please note: **WE DO NOT GIVE CREDIT FOR ONLINE COURSES.**

When e-registering for a course at another school, students will be asked for the equivalent MPA course. **INSTEAD, choose “I do not need an equivalent” and in the note box at the bottom of the page indicate that the course is an elective approved by the director and coded 99902.**
**Academic Standards**

Academic dishonesty in any form is prohibited at The City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failure, and expulsions.

**Grading System**

To remain in good academic standing, students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better. Students who have a GPA below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. Additionally, they will be at risk of losing financial assistance. Students who earn averages below 3.0 for two semesters are dismissed from the program.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person’s ideas, research or writing as your own and is taken very seriously. Paraphrasing or copying information from any source including the internet without acknowledging authorship in any form constitutes plagiarism. Students who plagiarize place their academic standing in jeopardy.

**University Regulations**

Please refer to the Appendix B of the Graduate Bulletin for Student’s Rights, Rules and Regulations. 

**Contact Us**

Faculty and staff are available to help make your graduate career a success. Natalia Trujillo can direct you to the person best able to assist you.

Shepard Hall, room one (212) 650-5095, ntrujillo@ccny.cuny.edu.