



Master of Public Policy

Program Handbook 2025-2026

*Mark O. Hatfield School of Government
College of Urban and Public Affairs*



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The Master of Public Policy MPP Program Handbook is available online. Forms and other online resources referenced in this handbook can be linked from the electronic version.

Program Contact Information

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Website

<https://www.pdx.edu/academics/programs/graduate/public-policy>

OVERVIEW

A public policy constitutes an act of public authority. Across multiple issue areas, both governments and non-governmental actors endowed with this authority make choices that shape people's lives. The field of public policy studies attracts individuals with a passion for understanding and improving them. It is both a unique field of policy studies as well as an interdisciplinary field that brings in insights from political science, public administration, economics, sociology, law, management, and the natural and applied sciences.

Public policy studies is one of the fastest-growing fields in graduate education. The rising complexity and interconnectedness of public policy issue areas has created demands for highly-skilled individuals who can analyze and resolve policy challenges. Public policy professionals work in a range of occupations in the private sector, trade associations, non-profit groups, government, and inter-governmental organizations.

The Master of Public Policy (MPP) program of Portland State University is offered through the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government. It is a 2-year program for full-time students or a 3-4 year program for part-time students. Approved and launched in 2015, the program is intended not only to deliver a cutting-edge education for public policy professionals but more generally to improve public policy capacity in the community.

The MPP draws on courses, faculty, and strengths at Portland State University, bridging the foundational strengths of the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government with the specialized policy strengths of other units in areas such as energy and environment, international development, public finance, technology/innovation, health policy, urban planning, and economic development.

The PSU MPP is unique among programs in the country in having a unique track devoted to Policy Advocacy and Leadership, with an emphasis on citizen participation, civic capacity, advocacy approaches, public leadership and collaborative communities. The policy analysis track reflects analytical requirements of many such programs in the country.

The MPP is intended for graduate students primarily interested in professional education for careers in public policy. The core courses are taught by faculty from the Department of Political Science and the Department

of Public Administration. The programmatic focus is

to educate public policy generalists who can operate in a variety of policy contexts, while offering students the opportunity to explore a specific policy domain as well.

ADMISSIONS

Criteria for Admission

The Masters of Public Policy program is designed as a 2-year full-time degree (longer if part-time) that prepares ambitious change leaders for a professional career in public policy. Ideal candidates will have a demonstrated interest in public policy issues and a clearly articulated set of professional goals.

The program requires candidates with at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college who achieved a minimum 3.0 GPA in undergraduate coursework or a minimum 3.1 GPA in graduate coursework. Students are expected to complete a college-level statistics course prior to or at the beginning of their enrollment and to have a functional knowledge of the workings of American government. Applicants should also review admissions criteria established by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Application for Admission

Masters students are admitted to begin in the Fall of each academic year. The application deadline is July 1st for the Fall term, though applications will be reviewed after that as well. Applications submitted by January 31st for the following Fall term will be given priority for admissions and funding.

Applicants submit a single application that consists of materials for the University's Office of Admissions and for the MPP Program. All of the materials are fully online.

Part I - Materials for the Admissions Office

University Application for Graduate Admission includes a \$65 non-refundable application fee (please do not send cash)

One transcript from each post-secondary institution
Measles Vaccine Form.

Official language test scores if the applicant does not speak English as a native language or has not received a graduate or undergraduate degree in an English-speaking territory. Test date may not exceed two years from planned date of admission unless student has been resident in the U.S. since then.

Part II - Materials for the MPP Program

MPP Application Form

500 to 1,000-word Statement of Intent (The statement

should address: 1. Professional goals; 2. Planned field of specialization. Please see list of specializations; 3. Desired employment sector; 4. How the MPP furthers your professional goals).

Three recommendation letters from individuals familiar with the applicant's academic and/or professional capabilities sent directly to the Hatfield school

A copy, official or unofficial, of transcripts for all post-secondary institutions attended

A current résumé or curriculum vitae

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT EXCELLENCE

Students enrolled in the MPP program are expected to meet the highest standards of honesty, diligence, fairness, integrity, and professionalism in all of their program activities. These standards are in addition to those required by the PSU Student Code of Conduct.

Competencies

the MPP aims to help students acquire several universal core competencies, namely:

- 1) to lead and manage in public policy**
- 2) to participate in and contribute to the policy process**
- 3) to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions**
- 4) to articulate and apply a public service perspective**
- 5) to apply education through experiential and interactive exercises with practitioners**
- 6) to develop professional career development capacities in areas like communication, networking, teamwork, and public presentation and leadership**

In addition, the PSU MPP has several mission-specific competencies that relate to the particularities of public policy education and to the context of the degree program, namely:

- 7) to apply methods and theories of policy analysis to public policy problems**
- 8) to apply ethical frameworks to public policy problems**
- 9) to develop the capacity to understand and act within particular public policy processes as an effective advocate of public values**
- 10) to effectively write, present, and in other ways communicate policy-relevant information**
- 11) to plan effectively for a career in public policy that will develop over time to attain the career goals**
- 12) to be able to integrate and use general public policy knowledge with the particularities of a specific policy domain or domains**

Learning Approach

The MPP is a campus-centered professional degree under the supervision of qualified faculty that emphasizes interpersonal interaction, hands-on collaborative work, discursive learning, socialization into the norms and aspirations of the profession, and observations by faculty of student progress.

As an on-campus program, the MPP centers on the acquisition of the social and personal capabilities to understand, apply, and evaluate public policy in its natural social setting. This requires constant human interactions, debates, and disagreements.

In addition to this on-campus organization, the MPP is organized in order to leverage formal learning in courses with leveraged learning beyond the classroom. Leveraged learning includes several aspects.

- **Peer learning:** *The MPP is a degree program designed to address the needs of today's policy professionals. Students are carefully selected and nurtured in order to provide opportunities to learn from peers who bring a variety of competencies and experiences to the program.*
- **Community learning:** *Through professional development and ongoing practitioner seminars, students are given the opportunity to learn from the practice of public policy in the community and to develop professional networks.*
- **Applied learning:** *Through both the summative policy project, internships, and participation in policy competitions and/or policy studies academic conferences, students are given the opportunity to address advocacy or analysis-based policy challenges, receive feedback, and devise informed solutions.*

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

The MPP program is a cross-unit program of the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government. As such, it draws widely upon both the academic units as well as the centers and institutes of the School. The program is led by a MPP Faculty Committee comprised of the MPP director, the chairs of Public Administration and Political Science, and additional faculty members.

ADVISING

Students are to be assigned faculty advisors at the end of the third quarter of their first year in the program. During the first year, students are expected to meet faculty members and solidify policy interests that can help ensure advisor assignments are commensurate with student goals. The MPP Director will serve as advisor to all incoming students until the appointment of their regular faculty advisors.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

The Master of Public Policy is designed as a two-year, full time master's program of 54 credits. **In order to graduate from the program, students must obtain a minimum of 54 credits.** Coursework is made up of a first-year core curriculum in policy leadership, analysis, and process (30 – 33 credits), and then a second-year curriculum composed of policy tracks (9 credits), policy specializations (10 credits), a summative project (3 credits), and a course that emphasizes diversity in public policy (3 – 4 credits). The inclusion of both a traditional Policy Analysis track as well as a separate Policy Advocacy and Leadership track makes the Portland State University MPP an innovative program in the field. The MPP core courses draw from courses offered by programs in Political Science, Public Administration, and Public Affairs and Politics.

Year 1: Core Coursework, 9 courses (30-33 credits)

Cohort courses, 3 courses (11 credits)

Cohort courses provide students with foundational knowledge necessary for further policy studies. Course topics include an introduction to public policy, the ethical dimensions of public policy, and a survey of American political institutions. These courses are required for all students.

Methods courses, 3 courses (12 credits)

Methods courses provide an introduction to data analysis and the methodology of public policy studies. Course topics include applied statistical analysis and other quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques relevant to the study of public policy. These courses are required for all students.

Elective courses, 3 courses (9 – 11 credits)

Students select electives from a carefully cultivated menu of courses chosen to provide training in policy analysis, advocacy, and leadership. Course

topics include the process and dimensions of public policymaking, including the stages of policy, the role of political interests and institutions, the role of advocacy, leadership, coalition-building, and strategy, economic dimensions of public policy, the politics and policy of inequality, policy tools, and comparative perspectives on public policy.

Year 2: Track, Specialization, Professional, and Project Courses

Policy Analysis Track (9 credits minimum)

Policy analysts create and communicate information that is useful for the policy process. This track covers the analysis of policy problems including problem structuring, forecasting, prescription, monitoring and evaluation. Methods and techniques are relevant to these forms of analysis and to their communication.

OR

Policy Advocacy/ Leadership Track (9 credits minimum)

Policy leaders must direct policy analysis, identify policy opportunities, formulate strategies, build networks, and lead policy proposals through the policy process. Covers communication, legal reasoning, network-building, policy arguments, problem solving, political feasibility assessments, and public values.

Policy Specializations (10 credits minimum)

Students craft a policy specialization in the second year of their studies and take a minimum of 10 credits of coursework in that area. Ideally, specializations will align with the student's summative policy project. The intention is to engage students in in-depth learning about particular issue areas. Emphasis is placed on developing policy-domain specific knowledge as well as professional networking and experiential application opportunities.

PAP 509 Summative Policy Project (3)

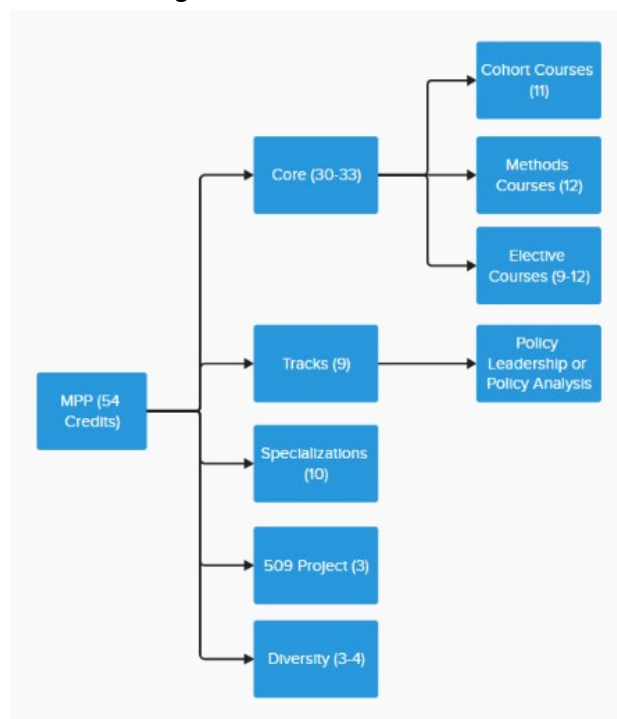
Students will work with a faculty member to complete a summative project, which could take one of several forms depending on the needs and interests of the student. In all cases, the project is intended as an integrative experience in which the student links their MPP work to their professional goals. The summative project could be, for instance: (1) a research-oriented report that tackles a question of policy analysis or public policy theory; or (2) a client report prepared

upon completion of a short internship.

Diversity

Students must satisfactorily complete one course the primary focus of which is diversity in public policy and policymaking. There is a menu of pre-approved courses, though students may select courses not on the list with the approval of their faculty advisor. This course may overlap with courses selected in the degree track and policy specialization, though students must ensure that they attain a minimum of 54 credits overall in order to be eligible for graduation.

Curriculum Diagram



MPP COURSEWORK

Students planning to attend full-time should plan on taking their Core Coursework in the first year of the program; the remaining coursework, including: Track, Specialization, and Diversity courses, and Summative

Policy Project, should be completed in the second year.

Courses are offered M-F. Evening slots are most common, though some courses may be offered in the daytime. Students should plan ahead by referring to the online course planner. ***Students must ensure that they obtain at least 54 credits in order to graduate.***

Core Coursework (30-33 credits)

Cohort Courses (required for all students)

- PAP 511 Introduction to Public Policy (3)
- PS 533 Ethics and Public Policy (4)
- PS 520 Seminar on American Political Institutions (4)

Methods Courses (required for all students)

- PA 551 Qualitative Methods for Public and Nonprofit Managers (4)
- PA 552 Quantitative Methods for Public and Nonprofit Managers (4)
- PS 591 Testing Theories in Pol. Sci. (4)

Elective Courses (select three)

- PA 538 Advocacy and Political Participation by Nonprofit Orgs (3)
- PA 554 Policy Analysis Research (3)
- PA 579 Policy Tools in Policy Design (3)
- PS 515 Comparative Public Policy (4)
- PS 576 Politics of Inequality in the United States (4)

**Occasionally course substitutions are necessary for core courses. In these instances, the MPP director will communicate directly with students to alert them of the changes.*

Track, Specialization, and Diversity Courses (24 – 28 credits)

Students may choose any combination of courses to fulfill the 9 credit minimum (each) requirements for tracks and specializations.

Track Courses (9 credits)

Students must select either the Policy Leadership Track or the Policy Analysis Track. Track courses may come from a variety of policy related fields, both within and outside the Hatfield School of Government. All Track courses should be taken in consultation with students' faculty advisors.

Policy Specialization Courses (10 credits)

Policy specialization courses address specific policy domains. There is a wide breadth of expertise and courses across campus. Students will be expected, in consultation with their advisors, to select a set of courses that cover the areas they are likely to pursue professionally.

Examples of relevant policy areas might include: ● ***Criminal Justice Policy***
● ***U.S. Foreign Policy***

- **Democracy, Elections, and Institutions**
- **National and International Security**
- **Immigration**
- **Native Governance**
- **Development and Democracy Aid**
- **Energy Policy**
- **Environment and Sustainability**
- **Education**
- **Women and Gender**
- **Health, Medicine, and Pharmaceuticals**
- **Social Policy**
- **Housing Policy**
- **Food Policy**
- **Economic, Fiscal, Budgetary, or Trade Policy**

Diversity Course (3-4 credits)

Course options to fulfill the diversity course requirement include, but are not limited to the following:

PA 549 Cross-cultural Communication in the Public Sector (3)
 PA 593 Civil Rights in Public Service (3)
 PS 518 Contemporary Protest in America (4)
 PS 523 Civil Liberties (4)
 PS 524 Law, Politics, and Society (4)
 PS 525 Women and the Law (4)
 PS 571 Gender & Politics: A Comparative Perspective (4)
 PS 576 Politics of Inequality in the United States (4)

PAP 509 Summative Policy Project (3 credits)

The Summative Policy Project is the highlight and summation of the MPP program. It is an opportunity for MPP students to begin the transition to professional life by engaging in a capstone project that engages the skills and competencies that the program delivers in the setting of a client organization.

Students work with the PAP 509 faculty coordinator starting in Spring quarter of the first year to begin formulating and organizing their summative policy project. In general, there are two main approaches. One, more common for students in the policy analysis track, is to identify an organization and a policy issue that form the basis of an in-depth policy analysis that makes a significant contribution to the mission of the client organization. Students are expected to work with the client organization and their advisor to set agreed aims and content, a set of deliverables, and a timeline for completion and communication of the resulting work product.

The other approach to the summative policy project, more common for students in the policy leadership track, is to be embedded in an organization for a brief period for the purposes of both contributing to and learning from the organization in the area of policy leadership and advocacy. In this case, students work with the organization and their advisor to agree on the set of activities and a “lessons learned and applied” project summary that the student will draft following completion of the embed.

Internships

With the support of MPP faculty, students may identify potential internships that would advance their learning goals as electives in either their policy track or concentration. Students identify a faculty member who will oversee the learning contract and deliverables and enroll in the internship using the By Arrangement form. Guidelines for internships are attached as Appendix III.

PAP 504: INTERN: (name of org.) (3 – 4 credits)

Summary of Required Courses*

Cohort Courses

PAP 511 Introduction to Public Policy 3 PS 533 Ethics and Public Policy 4 PS 520 Seminar on American Political Institutions 4

Methods Core Courses

PA 551 Qualitative Methods for Public and Nonprofit Managers 4 PA 552 Quantitative Methods for Public and Nonprofit Managers 4 PS 591 Testing Theories in Political Science 4

Elective Core Courses

Choose three of the following courses:

PA 538 Advocacy and Political Participation by Nonprofit Organizations 3

or

PAP 512 Introduction to Policy Advocacy 3 PA 554 Policy Analysis Research 3 PA 579 Policy Tools in Policy Design 3 PS 515 Comparative Public Policy 4 PS 576 Politics of Inequality in the United States 4 USP 615 Economic Analysis of Public Policy 4

Policy Advocacy/Leadership or Policy Analysis Track Electives (9 credits minimum)

To be chosen in consultation with advisor

Policy Specializations (9 credits minimum)

To be chosen in consultation with advisor

Summative Policy Project

PAP 509 Public Policy Project (3 - 6 credits)

Diversity Course (3 - 4 credits)

To be chosen in consultation with advisor

**Students must complete at least 54 credits in total*

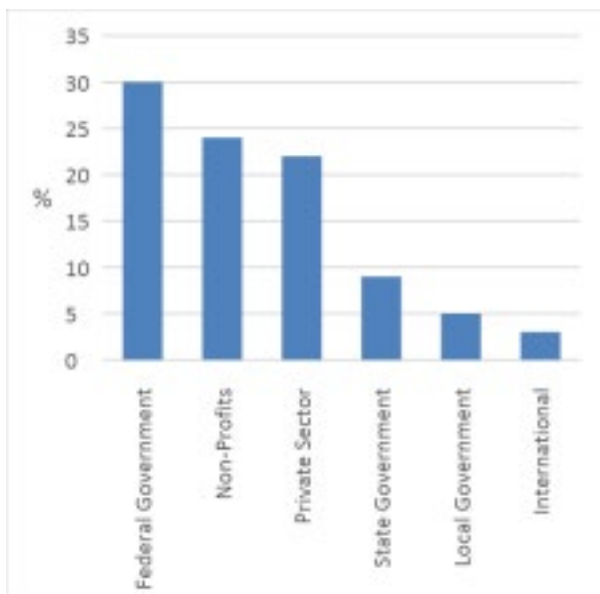
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Networking

The urban setting of the PSU MPP affords students with many opportunities to form important network relationships with public policy professionals. Those networks remain the core of professional development. In 2015, the state of Oregon's Government Ethics Commission [recorded](#) almost \$36 million in public policy advocacy spending by 1083 different organizations. Many of these are located in the Portland region. In addition, Portland regularly hosts major policy debates and forums through organizations such as the World Affairs Council of Oregon and the City Club of Portland.

Career Tracks for MPP students

According to NASPAA, graduates of MPP programs find careers in many different workplaces, but they are particularly driven to work in the public and nonprofit sectors. Data submitted by NASPAA-accredited programs demonstrates that about half of all MPP graduates were working in government six months after graduation (see chart). Of those, there is a fairly even split between the federal, state, and local levels. Of those new grads working in the private sector, 64% were conducting research or consulting.



This nationwide picture may not be an ideal reflection of the market for MPP graduates from PSU. It is expected that non-profit organizations and state and local governments will be larger sources of career opportunities. A good starting point for careers in public policy is the organization-based website <http://publicservicecareers.org>

Policy Competitions

Regional, national, and international policy competitions for public policy students such as Puzzled by Policy, National Invitational Public Policy Challenge, and Policy Solutions Challenge USA provide students with a way to develop professional skills and networks.

Assoc. for Public Policy Analysis and Management The foremost national association for public policy professionals is APPAM (www.appam.org) which offers discounted student membership. A person can remain a student member for five years if they are enrolled at an accredited university in a program of public policy or public affairs. A student membership includes a subscription to JPAM, the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Internal and External Scholarships

There are several scholarships, fellowships, and other awards administered through the Office of Graduate Studies and available on the [scholarship and awards website](#). The most important of these internally is the [PSU Laurels Graduate Tuition Remission Program](#), which provides 1 year of tuition remission for graduate students based on both merit and need. One important external scholarship is the [Oregon University System Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund \(Sylff\) Graduate Fellowships for International Research](#).

The identification of external funding sources can involve more effort but often comes with significant professional and financial rewards. Several large research institutions provide constantly updated information on graduate funding in public affairs.

In-State Tuition Program

Students from certain Western states may apply to the Office of Graduate Studies for in-state (resident) tuition under the Western Regional Graduate Program of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education provided they are in good academic standing in the program. Qualifying states are: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Graduate Assistantships

While the MPP program itself provides only a limited number of partial graduate awards, there is a large "internal market" of student research and teaching assistantships, and administrative opportunities at PSU.

For instance, MPP students may be able to serve in GTA positions as [University Studies Mentors](#) in the university's freshman and sophomore inquiry classes. They may also be able to find short contracts with institutions and research organizations within the university, such as the [National Policy Consensus Center](#), or serve as GRAs for a faculty member or research institution in the University

RULES AND PROCEDURES

Most of the rules and procedures to be followed during each stage of the MPP program are mandated by OGS and are detailed in the University's [Annual Bulletin](#), under "Graduate Studies". These, along with the rules and procedures specific to the MPP, are summarized here.

Documenting and Monitoring Progress

Several forms are used to document and monitor the student's progress in completing degree requirements. All forms are available online. The Program Checklist (reprinted at the end of this handbook) provides a checklist of key tasks that must be completed as the student moves through the program.

The key document for planning and approving student progress is the MPP Program of Study, which allows the student, advisors, faculty, and the MPP director to keep track of the student's progress through the coursework phase of the program. The POS should be updated and approved by the student's faculty advisor on a regular basis. Students should ensure that their faculty advisor approves all proposed courses *before* taking them.*

*Approval is not required for first-year courses included in the core curriculum.

The Office of Graduate Studies tracks student progress using the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS). Once all coursework requirements are complete, students should work with the program administrator to ensure that the approved Program of Study is reflected in the student's DARS report.

Transfer Credits

Transfer credits are defined as credits taken at any institution other than PSU at any time. All master's students are required to earn a minimum two-thirds of the credits applied to the degree at PSU. Therefore, a maximum of 18 transfer credits can be applied to the MPP program, subject to the approval of the MPP director. In practice, the number of feasible transfer

credits will likely be less than this.

All transfer credits must be graduate level. Among the requirements are that they must be letter graded B- or higher and no older than seven years.

Within the MPP, transfer courses may be used to fulfill track or field specialization course requirements only. Students wishing to transfer in courses should consult with their advisor or the MPP director in order to document the courses and how they represent adequate fulfillment of MPP program requirements. Transfer credits should closely and strongly fit with the student's program of study.

Graduate/Undergraduate Courses

Students in the MPP program are strongly advised to use no more than 12 credits of courses offered simultaneously at the 400- and 500-level in support of their degree programs. These courses must be an integral part of the student's program, and courses with the same content must not be available on a purely graduate basis.

Concurrent (Dual) Graduate Programs

A graduate student may work concurrently toward the completion of the requirements for two PSU graduate programs (master's or doctoral degrees or certificates). These dual programs allow for an overlap of the credits required. The credits to be accepted for both programs must be approved by the departments involved and may not exceed one-third of the required credits. If the two programs have different total credit requirements, the one-third limit is determined by the smaller total credit requirement. Students must be separately admitted to both programs, although the university application does not need to be completed for the second program. Enrollment in a second program is accomplished using the GO-19 form.

Students working toward dual degree programs must be admitted to the second degree program no later than the term prior to the term in which the student graduates from the first degree program. Overlapping credits used in dual master's degrees must be approved by the student's departments and the Office of Graduate Studies with a Dual Degree Form (GO-14) before the student graduates from the first master's degree program. Students are limited to one use of the dual master's degree allowance at PSU.

Academic Load

Full-time enrollment for graduate students is 9-16 credits. Graduate students must seek approval of registration in excess of 16 credits via the Overload Approval form and must obtain the approval from

the MPP director.

Time to Completion

While the normal full-time enrollment time to completion is 2 years at 3 courses per quarter, students may take less or more time than this to complete the program. Students who transfer in the maximum of 18 credits and who enroll in more than the normal 3 courses per quarter for full-time students could complete the program earlier. Part-time students who take fewer than the recommended 2 courses per quarter may take longer depending on their needs. All students must graduate within 7 years of enrollment in the program.

Failure to Meet Degree Requirements

Academic Probation

An admitted graduate student is placed on probation if the student's cumulative graduate GPA at PSU, based on the completion of 9 or more letter-graded graduate credits after admission to the graduate level at PSU, falls below 3.00.

While on academic probation a student will not be permitted to graduate, to be admitted to a new or different graduate certificate or degree program, to receive or continue to hold a graduate assistantship, or to register for more than a total of 9 credit hours in any term. A student is removed from academic probation if the student's cumulative graduate GPA is brought up to 3.00 or higher within the next 9 letter-graded graduate credits after beginning probation status.

The student will be disqualified from the program if they fail to remove probation or if they are placed on probation a second time.

Course Grades

Students also have to comply with MPP standards with respect to course grades. These standards hold that a C+ or below grade in a core course will not be approved for credit. The student must repeat this core course. To count toward the fulfillment of MPP track or field specialization course requirements, courses in which the student received a grade of C+, C, or C- must be approved by the MPP director.

Academic Performance

The grounds for dismissal from the MPP program include failure to complete any of the formal program requirements and those in the PSU Bulletin. Students

are also expected to comply with the PSU Student Code of Conduct.

In addition, OGS maintains that "departments can be expected to have additional degree requirements beyond those listed" in the PSU Bulletin. The Bulletin notes that students who "do not make satisfactory progress toward the degree (as determined by the department) may have admission to the degree program cancelled."

The MPP director, in consultation with faculty, will judge whether students are making adequate progress or otherwise performing satisfactorily to remain in the program. These additional grounds for dismissal could include any number of factors, including:

- *Failure to provide evidence of continual progress*
- *Failure to meet the standards of the profession that the student will be entering*
- *Failure to meet standards of honesty, diligence, fairness, and integrity*
- *Failure to communicate in a timely manner with program advisors, course instructors, or the MPP director*
- *Failure to comply with faculty requests for action on course or program requirements*

Students deemed to be not progressing adequately or performing satisfactorily will be provided with a written notice from the MPP director and an opportunity to show improvement, where feasible. Should improvement be insufficient, the MPP director will provide a second written notice of planned dismissal, giving the student a final opportunity to respond. Should the matter remain unresolved, the MPP director will issue a notice of dismissal from the program.

Enrollment

Even when not engaged in coursework, students must enroll in at least one credit per term if university resources, including faculty time, are being used. Students who must disengage from the MPP program may apply for a leave of absence. A leave of absence, not longer than one year, is approved by the MPP director and filed with OGS. A request for a second leave must be approved by the director, the MPP Committee, and OGS. A student who is not on a leave of absence and has not enrolled for three consecutive terms (excluding summer) is required to submit a [Graduate Re-enrollment Request](#). Non-enrollment, even during an approved leave of absence, does not change the time limits on completion of degree requirements; the clock keeps ticking.

Appeals and Grievances

The exact procedure to be followed when a student wishes to contest a decision or the behavior of an MPP instructor, advisor, or administrator will depend on the circumstance and the nature of the grievance. As a general practice, it is usually best to try to resolve the issue with the individual whose decision or behavior the student finds objectionable and then, if the outcome is not satisfactory, to move up the program's leadership hierarchy. For such matters, the MPP administrative hierarchy is as follows: advisor, MPP director (who may take the issue to the MPP Committee), Director of the School of Government, Dean of the College of Urban and Public Affairs (who may delegate the issue to the Associate Dean), Dean of Graduate Studies.

OGS oversees all graduate programs at PSU and provides mechanisms to ensure that the MPP program is in compliance with the rules and regulations pertaining to graduate studies at the University. Those rules and regulations are subject to policies recommended by the Graduate Council and approved by the University Senate. Students may [petition the Graduate Council](#) to waive a university rule or degree requirement. Graduate petitions are used under extenuating circumstances and not as a remedy for poor planning or advising.

A student whose grievance concerns possibly discriminatory behavior on the part of PAP faculty, staff, or anyone else at PSU may also turn to the University's [Office of Equity and Compliance](#). Grievance procedures appropriate for these and other situations are detailed in the PSU [Bulletin](#).

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF HYPER-LINKS

College of Urban and Public Affairs

www.pdx.edu/cupa

Mark O. Hatfield School of Government

www.pdx.edu/hatfieldschool

Master of Public Policy Program

<https://www.pdx.edu/hatfield-school/master-public-policy-degree-requirements>

Center for Public Service

www.pdx.edu/cps

National Policy Consensus Center

<http://www.pdx.edu/npcc/>

University Application for Graduate Admission

<https://www.pdx.edu/graduate-admissions/apply>

Office of Graduate Studies

www.pdx.edu/ogs

OGS Scholarship and Awards

www.pdx.edu/ogs/scholarships-and-awards

List of Online Forms

www.pdx.edu/ogs/forms

Graduate Council Petition

<https://www.pdx.edu/ogs/petitions>

Pre-Admission and Transfer Credit

<https://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2025-2026/bulletin/graduate-school/enrollment/pre-admission-and-transfer-credit>

APPENDIX II: PROGRAM CHECKLIST

- ☐ *Review of first year course plan document with MPP Director (first year advisor for all MPP students)*
- ☐ *Core courses completed (end of first year)*
- ☐ *Second year faculty advisor selected (late Winter term first year)*
- ☐ *Development of personalized course plan with second year advisor (end of first / beginning of second year)*
- ☐ *Track, Elective and Specialization Courses completed (Winter term second year)*
- ☐ *Summative Policy Project completed (end of Spring term second year)*
- ☐ *Program of Study Form completed, Approved by Advisor, and submitted to MPP Program Staff*
- ☐ *Transfer Credits Requests Form (GO-21M) submitted to OGS (optional)*
- ☐ *Complete [Graduation Application](#)*
- ☐ *Professional Exit Interview completed (optional)*

APPENDIX III: PAP 504 INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES AND AGREEMENT FORM

Students may use internship credits in fulfillment of up to 4 of the 9 required Policy Track credits or up to 4 of the required 9 Policy Specialization credits in the MPP program.

Internships are professional placements where the student performs work tasks for a client organization or project. Internships are distinctive learning and professional development activities that differ in form and content from the PAP 509: Summative Policy Project in the MPP program. In internships, students provide weekly work commitments to the client organizations. In the Summative Policy Project, by contrast, the main deliverable to the client organization is not a weekly work commitment but a client-driven report (analytical or strategic). For internships, the main written deliverable is written for the MPP Internships Coordinator whereas for Summative Policy Projects the main written deliverable is written for the client organization.

PAP 504: Internship PAP 509: Summative Policy Project

-Time when completed	1 st or 2 nd year
-Client organization	Yes Yes
-Fixed hourly commitment	Yes No
-Required written deliverable to	MPP Internships Coordinator, Client Organization
-Learning focus	Lessons for track or specialization Application of knowledge for client needs
-Presentation of findings	No Yes

Internships are initiated by the student and/or their faculty advisor and are supervised by the MPP Internships Coordinator. Students use the By Arrangement Request form to enroll in the internship as “PAP 504: INTERN: (name of organization)” with the MPP Internships Coordinator.

- **Internships of 4 credits require 120 hours of work time over 10 weeks.**
- **Internships of 3 credits require 90 hours of work time over 10 weeks.**
- **Internships of 2 credits require 60 hours of work time over 10 weeks.**
- **Internships of 1 credit require 30 hours of work time over 10 weeks.**

Students proposing to complete an internship as part of their track or specialization courses must complete the following steps:

- At least 4 weeks before the quarter begins: Identify a potential internship. The internship must be substantively related to the learning and professional development objectives of the student in the MPP program. This is decided in collaboration with the student’s regular faculty advisor or the MPP Internships Coordinator.**
- At least 1 week before the quarter begins: Create, complete, and sign an “PAP 504: Internship Agreement Form” (see below) with the MPP Internships Coordinator that stipulates the required hours and expectations for the client organization and the deliverables and learning goals from the internship. The agreement is submitted to the MPP Program Director at signing and at completion.**
- No later than the end of week 10 of the quarter in which the internship is completed,**

complete the required hours and agreed deliverables.

iv. No later than the end of finals week of the quarter in which the internship is completed, have the client organization supervisor complete the MPP Internship Performance

Evaluation form

In general, students fulfill the written deliverables component of the internship by completing a written report for the MPP Internships Coordinator that integrates their internship experiences into applied learning for their policy track (leadership & advocacy or analysis) or policy specialization. The purpose of the written deliverable is to enhance and strengthen learning. Thus the internship agreement should specify the relevant competencies for the track/specialization, how the internship relates to them, and how the final written report will draw upon the internship to advance learning of these competencies.

Students who participate in this program are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a professional manner in their internship. This means that they arrive at their work site when scheduled, they dress appropriately, they follow directions, and they interact in a positive manner. The sponsoring organization is expected to assign the intern to a meaningful task. In general, this means that the student should perform some type of project, research, or administrative duty that can be tied to the MPP curriculum. The organization will provide supervision, observation, and evaluation of the student's performance. If requested by any of the parties involved, an organization representative will meet with the MPP Internships Coordinator over the direction and content of the internship or the student's performance. An organization representative will also complete a short evaluation of the student's work at the conclusion of the internship.

**Portland State University
Mark O. Hatfield School of Government
Master of Public Policy Program
PAP 504 Internship Agreement Form**

To be completed after the internship has been approved by the student's faculty advisor and the Internships Supervisor.

STUDENT INFORMATION:

Last name	First Name	M.I.	University ID #
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Name of Faculty Academic Advisor: _____

CLIENT ORGANIZATION:

Organization Name

Address	City	State	Zip Code
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Client Organization Representative Name and Title

Work Phone	Email address
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Internship Details

1. Anticipated quarter (s) for enrollment in internship: _____

2. Anticipated date of submission of internship report: _____

3. Number of credits: _____

Internship Details (on a separate sheet)

- 1. Describe your learning goals from PAP 504: Internship**
- 2. Describe the organization in which you will be interning**
- 3. Describe the internship activities that you will be performing, including weekly and total hour commitment, supervising staff, connection to organization mission, and connection to internship learning goals**
- 4. Mid-term assessment. Describe how you will provide mid-term evidence of internship performance to both your client organization and to the MPP Internships Supervisor.**
- 5. Final written report. Describe what you intend to deliver to the MPP Internships Supervisor as a learning product from your internship.**

REQUIRED SIGNATURES:

Student signature Date

Client organization representative signature Date

PAP 504 internships supervisor signature Date

APPENDIX IV: PAP 509 SUMMATIVE POLICY PROJECT GUIDELINES AND CONTRACT FORM
PS 509 SUMMATIVE POLICY PROJECT GUIDELINES/OVERVIEW
Updated September 2025

Overview: The PS 509: Summative Public Policy Project is a key component of the professional development requirements of the Master of Public Policy program. The project is intended to serve as an integrative experience in which the student links their course and cohort learning to their professional goals through completion of a client-based project. Students should begin exploring ideas for the 509 beginning in the Spring term of their first year in the program, and plan to have a project identified no later than the Winter term of their second year. Students generally register for 509 credits in the Winter and/or Spring terms of their second year.

Competencies: The following MPP program competencies are emphasized by the Summative Public Policy Project:

1. to apply education through experiential and interactive exercises with practitioners
2. to develop professional career development capacities in areas like communication, networking, client relations, teamwork, and public presentation and leadership
3. to apply methods and theories of policy analysis to public policy problems
4. to develop the capacity of awareness and understanding of particular public policy processes and to act as an effective advocate of public and client values
5. to ethically frame policy issues, to ethically conduct policy analysis and research, and to justly present analysis results, recommendations and advocacy
6. to support and strengthen public policy processes, public dialogue, and systems of democratic governance

Deliverables: In parallel with the two tracks of the MPP program, the project may take one of two types, although students may choose either type irrespective of which track they are in. One type, generally corresponding to the Policy Leadership & Advocacy track, involves organizational learning and the creation of a strategic policy change document that addresses some issue of policy change or organizational effectiveness of interest to the client. The other type, generally corresponding to the Policy Analysis track, involves completion of a policy analysis research report on a topic of interest to the client.

In both cases, the project should develop recommendations for an organizational action for the client: how the client organization should pursue policy change or organizational effectiveness or what sort of substantive policy proposals they should advocate. The final project report is expected to be a professional, persuasive, and actionable report, roughly 20-40 double-spaced pages in length. The report is for the use of the client organization. A copy must also be provided to the PAP 509 faculty supervisor for evaluation and program records. However, with the client organization's approval, students may disseminate the report to a wider audience, including through publication.

Report Format: The precise format of the report will reflect the needs and expectations of the issue and the client organization. An outline for each project type might include the following elements:
Policy Analysis Research Report

1. Title Page: recipients, reason for report, date, student name, client organization
2. Executive Summary: key findings and recommendations
3. Introduction: issue identification, relevance, report purpose and client request, audience identification and organization sentences
4. Issue definition and construction under current law and policy
5. Summarize issue actors, dynamics and policy process context
6. Problem statement
7. Research strategy and methods overview
8. Research results and evidence,
9. Mutually exclusive alternative scenarios if necessary; comparison
10. Discussion: recommendations and observations
11. Conclusion
12. References (literature cited)
13. Appendix: Methodology Detail
14. Appendix: Analysis Results Detail

Policy Advocacy Action Report

1. Title Page: recipients, reason for report, date, student name, client organization
2. Executive Summary: key findings, action recommendations
3. Introduction: issue identification, relevance, report purpose and client request, audience identification and organization sentences
4. Issue Description and Status: facts, controversy/ conflict; complex relationships; status legislative, administrative or judicial
5. Issue Construction: law and policy basis, facts and technical background, science
6. Issue Construction Advocacy: Environment: summarize issue actors and advocates; advocate behavior; clients and social groups; actor and group perceptions/ social constructions; media; organizational implications
7. Policy Process: process status; theory and course content
8. Supporting analysis: methods and results
9. Proposed strategy and action pathway: action steps, timing,
10. Alternative action strategies/ scenarios if necessary
11. Discussion and evaluation of strategy or scenarios
12. Recommendations
13. Conclusion
14. References (literature cited)
15. Appendix: Analysis results, factual background, strategy development detail

Project Clients: Every project must have a client organization. Client organizations provide the opportunity for MPP students to complete learning studies that advance the shared interests of both sides. Client organizations can come from any sector: private sector businesses or consultancies; government departments and agencies; legislative, judicial, or executive staff offices at the local, state, or national levels; research institutes or organizations; advocacy groups and other types of non-profit organizations; or international institutions.

Client Responsibilities: Client organizations should be those willing to set high expectations for students to complete important policy change or policy analysis reports commensurate with 3 - 6 student credit hours (1 student credit hour equals approximately 30 work hours). The client organization representative should meet at an early stage with the student, preferably prior to enrolling in 509 credits, to negotiate and define the scope of the project, the specific deliverables (including interim deliverables), and timelines to completion. They should advise the student on access to organizational resources and data, both prior to the proposal's development and throughout the life-cycle of the project as needs dictate. They should arrange for student access to stakeholders who can provide information relevant to the project. They should also meet regularly with the student to ensure that the project is meeting expectations. They should acknowledge receipt of the final product, provide feedback on the student's performance as well as the utility of the project, and ideally also provide the student with an opportunity to present their work before executive staff, advisory boards, or other audiences.

Faculty Supervisor: The PS 509 faculty coordinator will oversee and supervise the projects on the university side. A key role of the faculty coordinator is to work with students to specify their learning and professional development goals for the project, to identify potential client organizations, to make contact with the find a suitable organization, to ensure that the proposed project does not conflict with any other university-based community learning projects with that organization, to ensure that the project remains consistent with program goals, to agree on and complete the project contract, and to serve as supervisor and evaluator for the project itself.

Completion Process: The workflow for the Summative Policy Project follows a sequential series of tasks, each of which must be completed before moving on to the next task. See the rest of this guide for details.

Portland State University
Mark O. Hatfield School of Government
Master of Public Policy Program
PAP 509 Summative Public Policy Project Contract Form

To be completed after the project has been approved by the MPP PS 509 Faculty Coordinator.

PROJECT TITLE: _____

STUDENT INFORMATION:

Last name First Name M.I. University ID #

Number of credit hours completed in the program to date: _____

Number of core course sequence courses completed to date (of 9): _____

Number of PS 509 credits to be taken for this project: _____

Name of MPP Faculty Academic Advisor: _____

CLIENT ORGANIZATION

Organization Name: _____

Address City State Zip

Client Organization Representative Name and Title

Client Representative Phone Number Client Representative Email Address

PROJECT DATES:

Anticipated quarter (s) for enrollment in project: _____

Anticipated date of submission of final report: _____

REQUIRED SIGNATURES:

Student signature

Date

Client organization representative signature

Date

PAP 509 faculty coordinator signature

Date



“Let Knowledge Serve”

Master of Public Policy

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