

Department of Public Policy and Administration Master of Public Administration (MPA)



The program and services of the Department of Public Policy and Administration reflect the nature of the discipline of public administration, a mixture of theory and practice. The Department offers a professional graduate degree in public administration—Master of Public Administration (MPA)—and is involved in a wide range of consulting services for the public sector through the Center for Public Policy and Administration. Recent research projects include: the Idaho Public Policy Survey, the Idaho Legislative Manual, tax increment financing analysis, a study on municipal revenue generating practices, a small communities outreach project for environmental issues, and the Idaho County Officials Handbook. Training programs include the Mountain West Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute and the Certified Public Manager Program.

The Master of Public Administration Degree

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) is the most widely recognized educational degree that enhances management skill in public service. Boise State University's MPA is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), and is designed to prepare individuals for positions of leadership in public service. The program provides the theoretical and practical dimensions of public management necessary to assist students who are seeking careers, and professionals who want to enhance their existing careers. Administrators and other staff members in all levels of government and nonprofit organizations take advantage of the general administrative and policy analysis skills offered in the MPA curriculum.

MPA graduates serve in all levels of government in a variety of administrative, research, and policy positions for such diverse agencies as: City of Boise, U.S. Forest Service, Boise State University, Idaho Department of Commerce, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Ada County Department of Development Services, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Ada County Highway District, Idaho Department of Labor, Idaho Attorney General's Office, Idaho Human Rights Commission, Boise City Police, St. Alphonsus Hospital, Idaho Tax Commission, Legislative Budget Office, City of Myrtle Beach SC, and the Bureau of Land Management.

MPA Degree Requirements

Requirements for an MPA degree include the completion of 39 semester hours of approved graduate course work. This includes 21 hours of public administration core courses and 18 hours of elective graduate study. The program also requires students without public sector experience to take an additional six credits of internship. They are expected to complete a semester's (half-time) supervised internship in an administrative or policy analysis capacity. Internships are waived for those students with appropriate public sector employment experience. Enrollment in any MPA course is open to those who have been admitted to the program or have received the instructor's permission.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must present a Graduate Record Examination (verbal and quantitative) minimum combined score of 1000 and an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 in order to obtain regular admission. In addition, three letters of recommendation, transcripts from all previous academic institutions, and a comprehensive career goals statement are required for admission. Women and minorities are especially encouraged to apply to our program. Boise State University and the Department of Public Policy and Administration are strong advocates of equal opportunity and diversity.

Curriculum Requirements

Core Courses. Core courses are intended to insure that each student acquires a broad range of policy analysis and management skills necessary for the changing public service working environment. These courses are based upon the core component requirements established by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. All students must take the following seven courses; they are repeated on an annual cycle.

PUBADM 500 Administration in the Public Sector
PUBADM 501 Public Policy Process
PUBADM 502 Organizational Theory
PUBADM 503 Research Methods in Public Administration
PUBADM 504 Public Budgeting and Financial Administration
PUBADM 505 Public Personnel Administration
PUBADM 600 Assessment

Areas of Emphasis. In addition to the core requirements, students must specialize in a selected area of public administration, completing 18 credits of elective courses (selected in consultation with the student's academic advisor). The electives may include a six-credit research project. Students may study in one of three tracks: (1) general public administration, (2) natural resource and environmental policy and administration, or (3) state and local government policy and administration. The general emphasis allows students to construct their own specialty that serves their academic interests and career objectives. Elective courses typically taken by MPA students are:

PUBADM 520 Community and Regional Planning
PUBADM 530 Administrative Law and Regulation
PUBADM 532 Grant Writing
PUBADM 540 Contemporary Issues in Natural Resource & Environmental Policy & Administration
PUBADM 541 Environmental and Regulatory Policy and Administration
PUBADM 542 Science, Democracy and the Environment
PUBADM 543 Public Land and Resource Policy and Administration
PUBADM 550 The Executive and the Administrative Process
PUBADM 560 State and Local Government Policy and Administration
PUBADM 570 Public Management Skills and Techniques
PUBADM 571 Ethics in the Public Sector
PUBADM 596 Directed Research

Selected topics courses are offered on an irregular basis. Graduate courses from other disciplines may also be used as electives toward the MPA degree with approval of a student's academic advisor and the Department Chair.

Directed Research

Students may choose to include a six-credit directed research project in their 18 credits of electives. This advanced tutorial is a study in a specialized area according to the students' needs and interests. The student conducts research, discusses the subject matter and procedures with a designated professor, and prepares a paper covering the subject.

Internship

The internship provides the pre-service student with an opportunity to link academic experiences with professional practice. It can also be a valuable start to a professional career. Internships are served in local, state, or national offices or in appropriate governmental affairs departments, or in not-for-profit organizations. Six hours of academic credit are required. Internships are taken close to the end of the student's course work.

Financial Aid

The Department offers graduate assistantships with competitive stipends and fee waivers during the academic year. Students may also qualify for loans through the Financial Aid Office. Scholarships and research assistantships are also available.

Additional Information

Questions and inquiries about the Department should be addressed to:

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