



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Public Administration MPA Graduate Program Handbook

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Public Administration MPA

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

Introduction

School of Public Administration Graduate Student Orientation

The School of Public Administration (SPA) hosts a graduate student orientation at the beginning of the fall and spring semester. The orientation focuses on subjects that are specific to your program and your career as a graduate student in the College of Community Innovation and Education. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the orientation as it supports successful transition into the master-level program and student success. Students receive an email notice of the date and time of the orientation shortly before the semester begins. The SPA Graduate Student Orientation is open to both new and continuing master students.

The School of Public Administration's Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree program prepares students for employment or career advancement as public administrators. Our intention is to produce graduates equipped with the public management skills and analytical techniques needed for successful careers in government and closely related business fields. The MPA was accredited in 1998 and reaccredited in 2005 and again in 2012 by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). The UCF MPA program is nationally ranked by the U.S. News and World Report

Course of Study

The Master of Public Administration MPA program consists of 42 credit hours. Each student completes a core of nine courses (27 credit hours), an advanced curriculum of four electives (12 credit hours), and a capstone experience equivalent to one course (3 credit hours). Courses and credit hours used for undergraduate degrees cannot also be counted toward the MPA degree, except for Senior Scholar students who, with the permission of the MPA program director, may use up to 9 credit hours of graduate course work that was used in their undergraduate degree program as credit in the MPA program. However no undergraduate-level courses will be accepted in the MPA program.

Courses

MPA courses are offered at the UCF Orlando main campus in Orlando in the evenings or online.

Course Sequencing

The School of Public Administration recommends that students complete PAD 6053 and PAD 6700 within the first 12 hours of the MPA program. PAD 6053 provides an introduction and overview of the Public Administration discipline. PAD 6700 is a prerequisite to four other core courses, focuses on research methods and provides a useful foundation for other public administration courses.

Research methods and analytical techniques consist of two courses: PAD 6700 (Research Methods for Public Administration) and PAD 6701 (Analytical Techniques for Public Administration). If possible, these courses should be taken in consecutive semesters.

PAD 6062 is the MPA Capstone course. It is designed to build upon the content of all of the core courses that the student will have completed. Students must complete all MPA core courses before taking the MPA Capstone course.

The School strives to offer all MPA core courses every fall and spring but this is not guaranteed. Summer course offerings are extremely limited.

Remedial Plan to Improve Writing Skills

The School of Public Administration has developed policy addressing those students who are identified as having weak or insufficient writing skills which will prevent them from being effective in the workplace. The policy is outlined below:

The goal of this policy is to ensure that graduates of the School of Public Administration Graduate Programs have acquired sufficient writing skills to become effective participants in the public and nonprofit workplace. This policy builds upon assistance already available to our students, including that offered by the UCF University Writing Center as well as feedback provided by individual's faculty to completed writing assignments. It is also designed to insist that a student receive formal education that is specifically designed to improve writing skills.

- A faculty member concludes that writing skills for a specific student are below acceptable standards for graduate students in the School of Public Administration.
- The faculty member meets with the student to discuss potential strategies to improve his/her writing skills.
- If appropriate, the faculty member notifies the Graduate Program Coordinator in writing that a remedial plan to improve the student's writing skills should be implemented. Supporting documentation, including examples of completed writing assignments that reflect inadequate writing skills, will be provided.
- The Graduate Program Coordinator shall decide if the student should complete a remedial plan to improve his or her writing skills.
- If the coordinator supports the faculty member's request, the Coordinator and the student shall create and agree to a remedial plan that will include completion of the Graduate Writing online module and quiz. The remedial plan may include enrolling in PAD 3733 Professional administrative Writing in the Public Sector in the immediately following semester.
- Any core class for which the student has received a grade of less than a "B" because of below acceptable writing skills will not be retaken until the remedial plan has been satisfactorily completed.
- Implementation of the remedial plan may include reversion [administrative removal] from a course in which the student is already enrolled.

This plan will be published in the Handbooks for all School of Public Administration graduate programs.

Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program.

Timeline for Completion

Plan of Study (POS) and Course Load

The MPA program must be completed within seven years from the semester the first course toward the MPA is completed. If courses toward the MPA are taken prior to being accepted into the MPA program, the seven-year timeline starts from the earlier date.

Students wanting a Graduate Certificate must apply and be accepted to the certificate program, and must file an Intent to Graduate for the certificate in the semester that the final course toward the certificate is taken.

The Plan of Study (POS) is a listing of courses agreed to by the student and the School of Public Administration specifying the courses the student must satisfactorily complete in order to fulfill the degree requirements for the MPA and be eligible for graduation. **The POS must be defined during a student's first semester of enrollment.** Students must submit a Plan of Study to their respected Academic Services Coordinator in the School of Public Administration by the end of their first semester in the program. Failure to complete this critical step will result in a hold being placed on the student's academic records. A hold prevents the student from registering in future semesters. Once created, the Plan of Study may not be altered solely due to poor academic performance and the student must maintain satisfactory progress as defined above in all courses in the Plan of Study.

At the graduate level, nine credit hours is considered full time in the spring and fall, and six is considered full time during the summer terms. The average course load is two courses or six credits per semester, allowing students to complete their degree in two to three years. Graduate courses are more rigorous and demanding than undergraduate courses. Students will be doing more reading, researching, and writing, and the quality of work is held to a higher standards. Students should not overload themselves. The School of Public Administration recommends that students start slower, if possible, and then add more courses in a subsequent semester if schedules and study habits allow it.

Advising

The School of Public Administration is committed to providing the support that our students need to ensure a successful journey to completion of their degrees. To that end, you may request to meet with your graduate adviser or the Academic Services Coordinator at any time.

You may contact your program adviser by mail or by phone at 407-823-2604. The SPA Advising office is located in the College of Health and Public Affairs, building II, room 241.

It is the student's responsibility to keep abreast of all program requirements needed for graduation. Program regulations will not be waived because a student pleads ignorance or claims the adviser failed to keep them informed. Please review the "General University Policies" as well as the "General Graduate Policies" in the UCF Graduate Catalog (ucf.catalog.acalog.com/index.php?catoid=4).

In addition to the academic advising and student support provided by the School of Public Administration, the College of Community Innovation and Education also provides the Graduate Affairs Office. Their purpose is to provide support specifically to graduate students and graduate programs in the college. The Graduate Office is available to answer student questions and provide assistance with many of the processes involved in the

university system. They can provide information about the application, registration, graduation and appeals processes in addition to many other requirements and policies affecting graduate students.

Office location: ED 115
Phone: 407-823-5369

To schedule an appointment or contact them: cciegrad@ucf.edu

Website: ccie.ucf.edu/academics/student-affairs/

Graduate Research

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to (1) support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) develop the intellectual property stemming from research, and (3) disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. Students are responsible for being informed of rules, regulations and policies pertaining to research. Below are some general policies and resources.

Research Policies and Ethics Information: UCF's Office of Research & Commercialization ensures the UCF community complies with local, state and federal regulations that relate to research. For polices including required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting research involving human subjects (e.g., surveys), animal research, conflict of interest and general responsible conduct of research, please see their website: research.ucf.edu/ > Compliance.

UCF's Patent and Invention Policy: In most cases, UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student as inventor will according to this policy share in the proceeds of the invention. Please see the current UCF Graduate Catalog for details: ucf.catalog.acalog.com/index.php?catoid=4 > Policies > General Graduate Policies.

Public Administration School Research

Public Administration Faculty Research Experts focus on local governmental and nonprofit organizations, publishing in the top journals of our field such as the Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Administration and Society, and Public Administration Review (PAR). Based on their research and education, our faculty members have expertise in budgeting and finance, civic engagement and citizenship, emergency management, nonprofit organization management, organizational management, program evaluation and performance measurement, and urban and regional planning. For additional information, please visit research.ucf.edu/.

The Center for Public and Nonprofit Management (CPNM) at the University of Central Florida is a recognized academic center that utilizes collaborative partnerships between faculty members, students and community members to improve the understanding and practice of public and nonprofit management through research, teaching, and service. They serve the public and nonprofit sectors' research, education, and service needs in the Central Florida community and beyond. The CPNM operates solely on funding external to the State University System. For additional information, please visit cohpa.ucf.edu/cpnm/.

Financial Support

Financial Support provided to master's students by the university is limited to fellowships, graduate assistantships, tuition support and health insurance. Federally funded financial aid in the form of student loan programs may be available for graduate students based on eligibility. Students interested in federally funded financial aid information, should check the UCF Office of Student Financial Assistance website at <https://finaid.ucf.edu/>

The College of Community Innovation and Education is allocated a limited number of university-funded fellowships that are awarded on an academically competitive basis to the highest qualified graduate students in the college. Generally, these fellowships are awarded annually during February to April to newly admitted students for the upcoming academic year (Fall/Spring).

In addition to the academic-based fellowships for incoming students, the Graduate Presentation Fellowship provides funding for current master's, specialist, and doctoral students to deliver research papers or participate in comparable creative activities at a professional meeting. Students must be the primary author and presenter. To review the award requirements and apply online, see graduate.ucf.edu/funding/.

Graduate Student Associations

Graduate Student Association (GSA)

GSA is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/. For individual department or graduate program organizations, please visit the SPA website at cohpa.ucf.edu/publicadmin/.

Pi Alpha Alpha (PAA)

Pi Alpha Alpha is the National Honor Society for Public Administration. The purpose of this society is to recognize academic excellence and promote ethical and responsible public service. PAA membership identifies those with the highest performance levels in educational programs preparing them for the public service careers. Membership is open to undergraduate and graduate students who have been nominated on the basis of their academic achievement.

ASPA and NFBPA

MPA students are eligible for discounted membership in the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). ASPA is the professional association for public administration. ASPA affords its members opportunities to participate in its annual and regional conferences, local chapters and national sections. The Central Florida Chapter of ASPA meets regularly featuring speakers from local and state government. The National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) also encourages MPA students to participate in its activities on behalf of minority professionals in the public sector, and sponsors a mentorship program.

ICMA

The International City and County Management Association (ICMA) is an association of professional city and county managers who manage the affairs of the public sector. ICMA offers a student membership that permits the student to attend the annual conference at a reduced registration fee.

OPA

The Organization for Public Administration (OPA) was founded in 2001 at the University of Central Florida for the purpose of enhancing the Public Administration student's learning experience by acquainting them with job opportunities, career options, networking, and knowledge of the field via special guests. In addition, OPA members provide services to the community, both locally and on campus, by organizing career fairs for the Public Administration students and participating in the county government's Adopt-A-Precinct project. OPA members also benefit from yearly trips across the country and site visits! It is the mission of OPA to provide developmental

and educational opportunities for its members and to promote student interest and involvement in Public Administration. Membership is open to any UCF graduate or undergraduate student.

AFP

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) represents more than 27,000 members in 180 chapters in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and China working to advance philanthropy through advocacy, research, education, and certification programs. UCF is seeking to become the third collegiate AFP chapter in the nation. Student members have an excellent opportunity to learn the processes involved in fundraising as well as establish a fundraising professionals' network.

To learn more about the department's student organizations, please visit cohpa.ucf.edu/publicadmin/.

Professional Development

Public Sector Internship Experience

Classroom learning is most effective when combined with work experience. All graduates of the MPA Program should have work experience in the public sector or the non-profit sector. An internship is not required for graduation but is highly recommended, especially for students without previous experience. Internships may be used as electives in the student's program. The Department will assist students with internship placement, but does not assume responsibility for placement. Early in the MPA program, students desiring an internship should meet with the Internship Coordinator, Dr. Vanessa Littleton (Vanessa.lopez-littleton@ucf.edu) to express their interest.

Teaching and Learning

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) promotes excellence in all levels of teaching at the University of Central Florida. They offer several programs for the professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants at UCF.

- **GTA Training** (mandatory for employment as a GTA)
This training provides information and resources for students who will be instructors in a two-day workshop. The seminars cover a variety of topics, including course development, learning theories, lecturing, and academic freedom. Those interested in additional training can also attend an optional training session that normally follows the mandatory training.
- **Preparing Tomorrow's Faculty Program**
- This certificate program (12-weeks) consists of group and individualized instruction by Faculty Center staff and experienced UCF professors. Textbooks and materials are provided.

For more information: fctl.ucf.edu/ > Events > GTA Programs or call 407-823-3544

Pathways to Success Workshops

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/.

Graduate Research Forum

The Graduate Research Forum will feature poster displays representing UCF's diverse colleges and disciplines. It is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition.

The College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Association invite all UCF students, community, and employers to attend the Graduate Research Forum. For more information, contact researchweek@ucf.edu.

Graduate Excellence Awards

Each year, the College of Graduate Studies offers graduate students who strive for academic and professional excellence the opportunity to be recognized for their work. For the nomination process and eligibility criteria, see the [College of Graduate Studies Graduate Awards](#).

Other

For information about the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) thesis and dissertation awards, see their website: csgs.org/ > Awards.

For grant-proposal writing resources: <http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/>

Job Search

UCF's Career Services department offers a wide range of programs and services designed to assist graduate students. These services include evaluation and exploration of career goals, preparation for the job search and job search resources. To learn more, visit their website at career.ucf.edu/.

In addition, the School of Public Administration supports employment searches.

*In the student's graduating semester, resumes are solicited and sent to advisory board members and community employers who have requested them.

*The SPA maintains a job opportunities website and posts notices of vacant positions as they are received. See it at cohpa.ucf.edu/publicadmin/job-opportunities/.

The Public Administration Internship Program provides students with work experiences that expose them to government and nonprofit organizations and their operations. For additional information, please visit cohpa.ucf.edu/publicadmin/internships/.

The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration offers information about general, US government, state and local government, nonprofit, and international job opportunities. You may visit naspaa.org/students/careers/joblinks.asp.

Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.

- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

Useful Links

- [Public Administration MPA](#)
- [College of Community Innovation and Education](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Computer Labs](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Learning Online](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Register for Classes](#)
- [School of Public Administration](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [UCF IT](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

Grad Faculty

Asterisk = has previous committee experience, which qualifies the person to serve as vice chair

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