

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, MPA

Program Director: Todd Ely, PhD

Introduction

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree provides graduate professional education for students interested in public service leadership positions and careers with public and nonprofit agencies and organizations. The program serves students new to public service as well as those already in the field who are interested in furthering their careers.

To learn more about our renowned faculty, please view their bios (<https://publicaffairs.ucdenver.edu/people/faculty/>) on the School of Public Affairs website.

The School of Public Affairs offers three distinct ways to complete the MPA:

- Accelerated MPA
- Executive MPA
- Traditional MPA

Students pursuing the executive and traditional options may also choose to designate a concentration within one of the optional focus areas or complete the MPA without a specified concentration. Students in the accelerated format are not able to choose a concentration due to the cohort nature of the program and sequencing of classes.

Program Delivery

- Courses are offered on campus, online, and in remote and hybrid formats. The Accelerated MPA is offered in a cohort model, typically on campus.

Program Requirements

1. Students must successfully complete at least 36 credit hours of approved coursework for the Traditional and Accelerated MPA formats. Students must successfully complete at least 30 credit hours of approved coursework for the Executive MPA format.
2. Students in the Traditional and Accelerated MPA formats who have not had at least one year of professional work experience in the public or nonprofit sectors must complete an internship through an additional three-semester-hour course, bringing their total semester-hour requirements to 39.
3. Students must maintain at least a 3.00 cumulative GPA in this program.
4. Students must earn at least a B- in all core coursework and at least a C in all elective coursework to be accepted for graduate credit towards the degree.
5. No more than six credit hours of Independent Study may be applied toward the degree.
6. This program must be completed within six years.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Courses		
All MPA students (with the exception of those in the Executive MPA option) must complete the following seven core courses or approved equivalents:		

PUAD 5001	Introduction to Public Administration and Public Service	3
PUAD 5002	Organizational Management and Behavior	3
PUAD 5003	Research and Analytic Methods	3
PUAD 5004	Economics and Public Finance ¹	3
or PUAD 5503	Public Budgeting and Finance	
PUAD 5005	The Policy Process and Democracy	3
PUAD 5006	Public Service Leadership and Ethics	3
PUAD 5008	Evidence-Based Decision-Making	3
Required Elective Courses		12
Select four elective courses from a pre-approved list and/or with approval from the program director.		
Internship		3
PUAD 6910	Internship ²	
Capstone		3
Select one of the following:		
PUAD 5361	MPA Capstone Seminar (during the final semester)	
PUAD 6950	Master's Thesis ³	
Total Hours		39

¹ Students in the Local Government Concentration must select PUAD 5503 Public Budgeting and Finance. Students in the Public Policy Administration concentration must select PUAD 5004 Economics and Public Finance.

² Internship: Students who have limited experience (generally defined as less than one year of experience) in public, nonprofit or relevant private-sector service must enroll in PUAD 6910 Internship. The decision to require PUAD 6910 Internship for a particular student is made by the faculty admissions committee or the student's faculty advisor upon the student's acceptance to the MPA program. A minimum of 300 hours of supervised work and study is required to earn the 3.00 credit hours for this course. The internship requirement raises the total credit hours needed to earn the MPA degree from 36 to 39.

³ Taken for three or six credits with approval by and in consultation with the program director prior to enrolling in the course.

MPA Options

In addition to the traditional MPA program, students may consider the accelerated and executive options.

Accelerated MPA

The Accelerated MPA (AMPA) is a fast-paced, full-time option that brings academically superior students together with a dedicated research and teaching faculty in the midst of the vibrant downtown Denver environment. The students in the cohort enjoy a unique experience as they go through all classes in the MPA together, fostering a community of scholar-practitioners.

The AMPA option enables students to focus their energies on a concentrated program of study and earn a nationally accredited, 36-hour MPA in 12 months. All coursework is completed in-person as a cohort. The online option is not available for students in the AMPA program. Students in the AMPA program are not able to choose a concentration due to the cohort nature of the program and sequencing of classes.

Students are admitted to the program in cohorts of up to 20 participants. A new cohort starts each August. The cohort format helps to increase the opportunity to become acquainted with other graduate students and

increases the opportunities for interaction between program participants and faculty. It is preferred that applicants have some knowledge of economics, statistics, and political science prior to starting the program, although this is not required.

The AMPA option is priced at a flat rate, regardless of in-state or out-of-state student status, providing out-of-state students with substantial savings. Students interested in pursuing the AMPA option should designate this as their desired program on their admissions application.

Executive MPA

The Executive MPA program is designed for senior-level professionals in the nonprofit and public sectors. The Executive MPA requires a minimum of 30 credit hours to complete the degree. Professional experience counts for two courses, leaving 10 courses to complete, as opposed to the 12 courses of the Accelerated or Traditional MPA options.

Initial Leadership Experience (3 credit hours)

All students will enroll in the Rocky Mountain Leadership Program (3 credit hours), which is a six-day seminar typically held in Breckenridge. The RMLP brings together public and non-profit professionals from across the country to collaborate on current management issues while honing leadership skills.

Coursework

Required courses (15 credit hours)

Students will take two core MPA courses in sections open only to those in the Executive MPA program. These courses are held in a hybrid format, which combines a one-week intensive session (typically on the Denver campus) with additional online instruction.

- PUAD 5001 Introduction to Public Administration and Public Service (3 credit hours)
- PUAD 5002 Organizational Management and Behavior (3 credit hours)

Students take three additional MPA core course (9 credits) with students in the traditional MPA Program. The additional core courses to be taken shall be determined by the student, in consultation with their student advisor and/or the Executive MPA Faculty Advisor. These courses may be offered in formats including online, weekend intensive, or through the traditional campus-based setting. Additional core course sections open only to those in the Executive MPA program may also be offered.

Electives (9 credit hours)

In consultation with an advisor, students select three elective courses with students in the traditional MPA Program that best meet their professional goals. These courses may be offered in formats including online, weekend intensive, or through the traditional campus-based setting.

Capstone or Thesis (3 - 6 credit hours)

Students elect to take either PUAD 5361 MPA Capstone Seminar (3 credit hours) or PUAD 6950 Master's Thesis (3 - 6 credit hours) during their final semester with Program Director approval.

Optional Concentrations

Students in the traditional MPA program may select one of the concentrations below or complete the MPA without a specified concentration. In rare cases, Executive MPA students may complete a concentration. It will require careful planning with an advisor and may require additional credit hours. All students completing a concentration take their electives in the area of their concentration, complete the

advanced seminar project in the area of their concentration, and are advised by faculty from the concentration.

All MPA concentrations require a total of 12 credits hours of concentrated elective coursework and may either be taken as part of the MPA program or as a stand-alone Graduate Certificate.

Disasters, Hazards and Emergency Management Concentration

The concentration in Disasters, Hazards, and Emergency Management (DHEM) provides advanced education in the management of emergencies, hazards, disasters, and community resilience. DHEM is designed for students who work or will work in the field of natural and man-made hazards, community resilience, and emergency management. The DHEM concentration requires a total of 12 credit hours.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Courses		
CRJU 5720	Public Policies for Hazards and Disasters	3
Select at least one of the following core courses. The remaining courses may be taken as elective credits:		3
CRJU 5650	Public Service in Emergency Management and Homeland Security	
CRJU 5655	Principles of Emergency Management	
URPL 6645	Disaster/ClimateChangePlanning	
Required Elective Courses		6
Select two additional elective courses from the list below or select unlisted courses that have been approved in advance by the program director to reach 12 credits:		
CRJU/PUAD 5644	Environmental and Hazards Law	
PUAD 5130	Collaboration Across Sectors	
PUAD 5271	Managing Conflict and Change	
PUAD 5320	Public Policy Analysis	
PUAD 5350	Program Evaluation	
PUAD 5440	Negotiation and Conflict Resolution	
PUAD 5631	Seminar in Environmental Politics and Policy	
PUAD 5632	Seminar in Environmental Management	
GEOG 5080	Introduction to GIS	
GEOG 5710	Disasters, Climate Change, and Health	
Total Hours		12

Education Policy Concentration

The concentration in Education Policy provides students with an understanding of how K-12 education is governed, financed and regulated in the United States. Students will become familiar with the interaction between federal, state, and local policies and with the context in which education policy is formulated and implemented. The Education Policy concentration requires a total of 12 credit hours.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Courses		
PUAD 5200	Education Policy	3
PUAD 5210	Education Finance	3
Elective Courses		6

Select two additional elective courses from the list below or select unlisted courses that have been approved in advance by the program director.

PUAD 5110	Seminar in Nonprofit Management
PUAD 5120	Nonprofits and Public Policy
PUAD 5140	Nonprofit Financial Management
PUAD 5170	Strategic Management for Nonprofit and Public Managers
PUAD 5180	Social Entrepreneurship
PUAD 5310	Principles of Policy Design
PUAD 5230	Education Systems Leadership
PUAD 5320	Public Policy Analysis
PUAD 5350	Program Evaluation
PUAD 5460	Political Advocacy
PUAD 5625	Local Government Management
PUAD 5626	Local Government Politics and Policy
PUAD 5628	Social Problems and Policies

Total Hours 12

Emergency Management and Homeland Security Concentration

The concentration in Emergency Management and Homeland Security (EMHS) provides advanced education in the management of emergencies, hazards, disasters, and homeland security. The EMHS program is designed to meet the needs of students who wish to work, or are currently working, in the field of emergency management and homeland security. The EMHS concentration requires a total of 12 credit hours.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Courses		

CRJU 5650	Public Service in Emergency Management and Homeland Security	3
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Select at least one of the following: 3

CRJU 5655	Principles of Emergency Management	
CRJU 5720	Public Policies for Hazards and Disasters	
URPL 6645	Disaster/ClimateChangePlanning	

Required Elective Courses 6

Select two additional elective courses from the list below or select unlisted courses that have been approved in advance by the program director.

CRJU 5510	Contemporary Issues in Law Enforcement
CRJU/PUAD 5644	Environmental and Hazards Law
ENVS 6200	Risk Assessment
PUAD 5130	Collaboration Across Sectors
PUAD 5271	Managing Conflict and Change
PUAD 5320	Public Policy Analysis
PUAD 5350	Program Evaluation
PUAD 5440	Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
PUAD 5631	Seminar in Environmental Politics and Policy
PUAD 5632	Seminar in Environmental Management

Total Hours 12

Environmental Policy and Management Concentration

The concentration in Environmental Policy and Management provides an understanding of how our natural environment is governed and affected by relationships between various entities, including legislatures, administrative agencies, courts, government and more. The EPM concentration requires a total of 12 credit hours.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Courses		

Complete the following two courses:

PUAD 5631	Seminar in Environmental Politics and Policy	3
PUAD 5632	Seminar in Environmental Management	3

Required Elective Courses 6

Select two additional elective courses from the list below or select unlisted courses that have been approved in advance by the program director.

LDAR 5530	City Design Fundamentals
LDAR 6686	Special Topics: Landscape Architecture
PUAD 5410	Administrative Law
PUAD 5420	Law and Public Policy
PUAD 5628	Social Problems and Policies
PUAD 5644	Environmental and Hazards Law
PUAD 5650	Public Service in Emergency Management and Homeland Security
PUAD 5740	Sustainable Energy Policy
PUAD 6600	Special Topics: Public Administration (Environmental Justice and Crime)

Total Hours 12

Gender-Based Violence Concentration

The concentration in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) focuses on management and policies relevant to gender-based violence, as well as grass-roots social justice work and best practices in this emerging field. The concentration in GBV requires a total of 12 credit hours.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Courses		

PUAD 5910	Nature and Scope of Interpersonal Violence	3
PUAD 5920	The Psychology of Interpersonal Violence	3
PUAD 5930	Interpersonal Violence Law and Policy	3
PUAD 5940	Interpersonal Violence Leadership, Advocacy, and Social Change	3

Total Hours 12

Local Government Concentration

The concentration in Local Government prepares students to become well-versed in the forces that shape the agendas of the public sector, including those of municipalities, counties, special districts, regional authorities, and councils of government. Additionally, students gain an understanding of government management and policy making. The concentration in Local Government requires a total of 12 credit hours.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Courses		

PUAD 5503	Public Budgeting and Finance	3
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Select one of the following: 3

PUAD 5625	Local Government Management	
PUAD 5626	Local Government Politics and Policy	
PUAD 5628	Social Problems and Policies	
Required Elective Courses		6
Select two additional elective courses from a list that has been approved in advance by the program director.		
PUAD 5130	Collaboration Across Sectors	
PUAD 5170	Strategic Management for Nonprofit and Public Managers	
PUAD 5220	Human Resource Management	
PUAD 5250	Intergovernmental Management	
PUAD 5260	Managing for Social Equity	
PUAD 5271	Managing Conflict and Change	
PUAD 5380	Public Participation, Political Equity, and Government	
PUAD 5410	Administrative Law	
PUAD 5440	Negotiation and Conflict Resolution	
PUAD 5460	Political Advocacy	
PUAD 5502	Public Financial Management and Policy	
PUAD 5632	Seminar in Environmental Management	
PUAD 5650	Public Service in Emergency Management and Homeland Security	
Total Hours		12

Managing for Social Equity

The concentration in Managing for Social Equity prepares students with additional knowledge and skills for strengthening principles and practices that support equity, diversity, and inclusion within their organizations and as their organizations interact with the larger society. For public administrators, social equity has been defined as the active commitment to fair, just, and equitable distribution of public services, design and implementation of public policy, and management of all institutions serving the public. The Managing for Social Equity concentration requires a total of 12 credit hours.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Courses		
PUAD 5260	Managing for Social Equity	3
PUAD 5271	Managing Conflict and Change	3
Required Elective Courses		6
Select two elective courses from a list that has been approved in advance by the program director.		
PUAD 5010	Rocky Mountain Program	
PUAD 5030	Denver Community Leadership Forum	
PUAD 5170	Strategic Management for Nonprofit and Public Managers	
PUAD 5220	Human Resource Management	
PUAD 5310	Principles of Policy Design	
PUAD 5380	Public Participation, Political Equity, and Government	
PUAD 5440	Negotiation and Conflict Resolution	
PUAD 5628	Social Problems and Policies	
COMM 5240	Organizational Communication	
COMM 5270	Intercultural Communication	
ETST 5030	Race, Religion and Belonging in the United States	

ETST 5305	Women of Color Feminisms	
PSCI 5075	Gentrification and Social Equity	
PSCI 5085	Comparative Governance: Environment and Society	
Total Hours		12

Nonprofit Management Concentration

The concentration in Nonprofit Management prepares students to become innovative and critical thinkers in the areas of nonprofit organizational management and public policy, with a unique approach that bridges theoretical knowledge with real-world experience. As students prepare for their careers or advancement in their current positions, they gain insight into the interdependence between the nonprofit, public, and for-profit sectors. Graduates are able to span the boundaries of these three sectors to assess community needs, navigate the realm of public policy, and strategically and effectively manage organizations that ultimately benefit society. The Nonprofit Management concentration requires a total of 12 credit hours.

The School of Public Affairs' affiliation with the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance gives students the opportunity to earn the Certified Nonprofit Professional (<https://www.nonprofitleadershipalliance.org/>) (CNP) credential through completion of the Nonprofit Management concentration coursework, additional required extracurricular activities, and an examination. Contact cnpp@ucdenver.edu for more information about this credential.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Course		
PUAD 5110	Seminar in Nonprofit Management	3
Required Elective Courses		9
Select three elective courses from a list that has been approved in advance by the program director.		
PUAD 5115	Effective Grant Writing for Nonprofit and Public Sector Managers	
PUAD 5120	Nonprofits and Public Policy	
PUAD 5125	Civil Society and Nongovernmental Organizations	
PUAD 5140	Nonprofit Financial Management	
PUAD 5150	Fundraising & Financial Resource Development	
PUAD 5160	Nonprofit Boards and Executive Leadership	
PUAD 5170	Strategic Management for Nonprofit and Public Managers	
PUAD 5180	Social Entrepreneurship	
Total Hours		12

Public Policy Analysis Concentration

The concentration in Public Policy Analysis provides training in the tools and skills needed to assess the impact of public policies and programs, including policy analysis, cost-benefit analysis, program evaluation, multivariate regression, and other analytical techniques. The Public Policy Analysis concentration requires a total of 12 credit hours.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Course		
PUAD 5320	Public Policy Analysis	3
Required Elective Courses		9

Select three additional elective courses from the list below or select unlisted courses that have been approved in advance by the program director.

PUAD 5200	Education Policy
PUAD 5310	Principles of Policy Design
PUAD 5330	Intermediate Statistical Analysis
PUAD 5350	Program Evaluation
PUAD 5631	Seminar in Environmental Politics and Policy
PUAD 5720	Public Policies for Hazards and Disasters

While many MPA students have the option to take PUAD 5503 - Public Budgeting and Finance as a core course, students pursuing a concentration in Public Policy Analysis do not take this course as a core course. They must instead take PUAD 5004 - Economics and Public Finance to earn the concentration.

Total Hours	12
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