



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D C

School of Public Affairs

**Department of Public
Administration and Policy**

Graduate Handbook



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DISCLAIMER: The final word on policies and procedures is the official American University catalog and the University’s policies. In many instances, the language in this handbook has been taken from those sources as well as the University’s website.

OVERVIEW

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) requires 39 credit hours of approved graduate work for students entering the program with a bachelor's degree. 12 credit hours are electives that can comprise an area of concentration. Required core courses comprise 27 credit hours, including a Public Administration Capstone class. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 in all coursework is required to remain in good standing and to earn the degree. Full-time status is considered to be 9 credit hours per semester. International students are expected to complete the degree within two years, including one summer.

The Capstone tests students' abilities to integrate and synthesize MPA coursework and apply it to significant public management challenges. The course requires students to apply curriculum content, critical thinking, research, and writing skills through a substantial management analysis group project. The Capstone is taken in the final semester of study and is offered in fall and spring semesters only.

Master of Public Policy (MPP)

The Master of Public Policy (MPP) requires 39 credit hours of approved graduate work for students entering the program with a bachelor's degree. Required core courses comprise 30 credit hours, with an additional 9 hours in an area of concentration. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 in all coursework is required to remain in good standing and to earn the degree. Full-time status is considered to be 9 credit hours per semester. International students are expected to complete the degree within two years, including one summer.

The Practicum exposes students to the institutional, legal, and ethical dimensions of policy analysis in organizational settings. It tests critical thinking, research, and writing skills using a client-based policy analysis project. The Practicum, taken in the final semester of study, is offered in fall and spring semesters only.

STEM-Designated Master of Public Policy – Advanced Policy Analytics (STEM-MPP)

The STEM-designated MPP degree requires 39 credit hours of approved graduate work, including 33 credit hours of core courses and 6 credit hours in STEM-focused electives. This program prepares graduates to meet the growing demand for professionals skilled in big data management and quantitative policy assessment. Coursework emphasizes advanced quantitative methods, program evaluation, project management, and cost-benefit analysis.

The STEM designation allows F-1 and J-1 students to qualify for a 24-month extension of their Optional Practical Training (OPT), providing up to three years of U.S. work authorization without requiring employer sponsorship. Please note that F-1 and J-1 students must be admitted to and enter into the STEM-MPP program in their first semester, and they are not permitted to transfer into the program once they begin coursework.

Internship Requirement

Students in the MPA, MPP, and STEM-MPP programs without an extensive professional background in public affairs participate in either a for-credit or non-credit internship relevant to this field. If you are taking the internship for credit, it will be part of your concentration for MPA and MPP, and it will count as an elective for STEM-MPP. Please keep a record of all internships and job positions that you have applied to, along with details on relevant dates, progress, and outcome. A spreadsheet template for this can be found on the MPA/MPP Student Central Canvas site. As it takes time and effort to land an internship, you should begin pursuing internships no later than your second semester of study in your program. Your advisor can help you with the internship approval and registration process. If you pursue a non-credit internship, you will be required to complete a survey on your experience. If you have relevant work experience upon entering your program, it may be possible to have the internship requirement waived. Check with your advisor if you think you qualify. In many cases, part- or full-time jobs obtained during your program that have demonstrated relevance to public affairs will also satisfy the internship requirement.

MPA vs. MPP: Key Differences and Focus Areas

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program emphasizes leadership, organizational management, and public sector decision-making, while the Master of Public Policy (MPP) program focuses on evidence-based approaches, data analysis, and research methodologies to address policy challenges. For example, the Social Policy focus area in the MPA program and the Social Policy concentration in the MPP program may cover similar topics and share courses or faculty, but each approaches the subject from its program's distinct perspective.

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)

Degree Requirements (39 Credits)

Core Requirements (9 credits):

PUAD-612: Introduction to Public Administration and the Policy Process (3)

PUAD-616: Legal Basis of Public Administration (3)

PUAD-684: Organizational Analysis (3)

Quantitative Methods (3 credits):

Complete one course (3 credit hours) from the following:

PUAD-605: Quantitative Methods for Public Managers (3)

PUAD-601: Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis I (3) *

* Only for students taking Policy Analysis Concentration.

Note: Students may test out of PUAD-605 or substitute this course with approval. See information under Waiver for QUANT/ECON Requirement.

Economic Analysis (3 credits):

Complete one course (3 credit hours) from the following:

PUAD-630: Public Managerial Economics (3)

PUAD-670: Economics for Policy Analysis (3) *

* Only for students taking Policy Analysis Concentration.

Note: Students may test out of PUAD-630 or substitute this course with approval. See information under Waiver for QUANT/ECON Requirement.

Public Budgeting and Finance (3 credits):

Complete one course (3 credit hours) from the following:

PUAD-633: Budgeting and Financial Management (3) *

PUAD-631: Financing Government Services (3)

* Most MPA students will select PUAD-633.

Public Management Electives (6 credits):

Complete two courses (6 credit hours) from the following:

PUAD-609: Topics in Public Management (3) *

PUAD-615: Public-Private Partnerships (3)

PUAD-617: Project Management (3)

PUAD-650: Leadership in a Changing Workplace (3)

PUAD-665: Managing Human Capital Assets (3)

PUAD-681: Managing Nonprofit Organizations (3)

PUAD-685: Topics in Policy Analysis and Management*

PUAD-696: Selected Topics: Non-Recurring*

* Approved topic.

Capstone (3 credits):

PUAD-610: Public Administration Capstone (3)

Concentration Requirements (12 credits):

Students must complete four courses (12 credit hours) in electives, which can be chosen from the following courses to form an optional area of concentration. Areas include:

- Nonprofit Management
- Global Governance and Management
- Public Management
 - Human Resources Management Focus

- State and Local Management
- Public Financial Management
- Policy Analysis
- Public Policy
 - Social Policy Focus
 - Education Policy Focus
 - Health Policy Focus
 - Environmental Policy Focus
- Applied Politics
- Race, Policy, and Administration
- Cyber Policy and Management

Note: Students may create special areas of concentration with the approval of their academic advisor.

Details on concentrations, including suggested courses, can be found in the Concentration Booklet on the MPA program website and on the MPA/MPP Student Central Canvas site.

MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY (MPP)

Degree Requirements (39 Credits)

Core Requirements (21 credits):

PUAD-601: Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis I (3)
PUAD-602: Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis II (3)
PUAD-603: Policy Process (3)
PUAD-606: Foundations of Policy Analysis (3)
PUAD-631: Financing Government Services (3)
PUAD-670: Economics for Policy Analysis (3)
PUAD-684: Organizational Analysis (3)

Note: Students may test out of PUAD-601 and PUAD-670 or substitute these courses with approval. See information under Waiver for QUANT/ECON Requirement.

Applied Policy Analysis (3 credits):

Complete one course (3 credit hours) from the following:

PUAD-604: Public Program Evaluation (3)
PUAD-671: Cost Benefit Analysis (3)
PUAD-672: Advanced Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis (3)

Legal, Organizational, and Ethical Context (3 credits):

Complete one course (3 credit hours) from the following:

PUAD-616: Legal Basis of Public Administration (3)
PUAD-617: Project Management (3)
PUAD-619: Ethical Issues in Public Policy (3)
PUAD-650: Leadership in a Changing Workplace (3)

Policy Practicum (3 credits):

PUAD-688: Policy Practicum (3)

Concentration Requirements (9 credits):

Students must complete three courses (9 credit hours) in electives, which can be chosen from the following courses to form an optional area of concentration. Areas include:

- Social Policy
- Health Policy
- Education Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Public Financial Management
- Global Governance and Management
- Nonprofit Policy, Management, and Leadership
- Public Management
- Advanced Policy Analysis
- Criminal Justice Policy
- Race, Policy, and Administration
- Cyber Policy and Management

Note: Students may create special areas of concentration with the approval of their academic advisor.

Details on concentrations, including suggested courses, can be found in the Concentration Booklet on the MPP program website and on the MPA/MPP Student Central Canvas site.

STEM-DESIGNATED MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY – ADVANCED POLICY ANALYTICS (STEM-MPP)

Degree Requirements (39 Credits)

Core Requirements (33 credits):

PUAD-601: Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis I (3)
PUAD-602: Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis II (3)
PUAD-603: Policy Process (3)
PUAD-604: Public Program Evaluation (3)
PUAD-606: Foundations of Policy Analysis (3)
PUAD-617: Project Management (3)
PUAD-631: Financing Government Services (3)
PUAD-670: Economics for Policy Analysis (3)
PUAD-671: Cost Benefit Analysis (3)
PUAD-672: Advanced Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis (3)
PUAD-688: Policy Practicum (3)

Note: Students may test out of PUAD-601 and PUAD-670 or substitute these courses with approval. See information under Waiver for QUANT/ECON Requirement.

Restricted Elective Requirements (6 credits):

Students must complete two courses (6 credit hours) in restricted electives (STEM focus required), which can be chosen from the following courses:

PUAD-685: Health Economics and Policy
PUAD-685: Education and the American Policy System
PUAD-685: Environmental Sustainability and Public Policy
PUAD-685: Public Policies for the Environment and Energy
JLC-683: Cyber Threats and Security
JLC-696: Cybercrime and Public Policy
DATA-612: Statistical Programming in R
DATA-613: Data Science
GOVT-618: Bayesian Statistics
CSC-604: Advanced Introduction to Coding
ENVS-654: Geographical Information Systems
ENVS-655: Environmental Geographic Information Systems
ENVS-685: Remote Sensing: Environmental Measurement from Satellites and Drones
ITEC-600: Programming Tools for Analytics: Python
ITEC-610: Applied Managerial Statistics
ITEC-620: Business Insights through Analytics
ITEC-621: Predictive Analytics
ITEC-660: Business Intelligence
ITEC-670: Database and Big Data
ITEC-724: Advanced Text Analytics with AI and Machine Learning

ACADEMICS

How to Register for Courses

Students should consult the academic calendar on the AU website regarding registration-related deadlines. Each semester, students are required to submit a registration request to their academic advisor for approval for the upcoming term. Useful websites include:

- [Preliminary Academic Calendars](#)
- [Registration Information](#)

REGISTRATION STEPS:

- 1) Review the schedule of classes for course offerings: [Schedule of Classes](#)
- 2) Set up your MYAU PORTAL (if you have not already done so): [Account and Access Information](#)
- 3) Go to Eagle Service: <https://eagleservice.american.edu/Student/Account/Login/>
- 4) Click on Student Planning.
- 5) Under “It’s Registration Time!”, click on “Click here to go to the Plan & Schedule page to register for classes.”
- 6) To view the upcoming semester, you may need to add it by clicking the [+] button under “Plan your Degree and Schedule your courses.” If courses are planned or registered, you will see them here.
- 7) Type Course code into search bar in the upper right-hand corner (for example, PUAD 684).
- 8) Choose which section you want and click “Add Section to Schedule.”
- 9) Click “Add Section.”
- 10) Return to “Plan and Schedule” page via “Student Planning” tab in upper left-hand corner.
- 11) Scroll through added sections on left-hand side and click “plan.” When your registration time arrives, you can select your courses and register. The “Register Now” button will be highlighted.
- 12) If the course has a waitlist, the “register” button will read “waitlist,” and you will click this to add yourself to the course waitlist.

Note: You will not be registered until you click “Register Now” in the Student Planning system, which you can’t do until your day and time to register.

TIPS ON REGISTERING:

- Once you have registered for a course in Student Planning, under the current semester, it will list the courses (e.g., PUAD-612-001: Introduction to Public Administration and the Policy Process) and show “Registered, but not started.”
- If it lists the course, but it does not say registered, you have only planned the course and still need to register.
- Most SPA courses are offered M-TH from 5:30-8:00pm. We also offer several in the late slot starting at 8:20pm and a few on weekends.
- When looking at course selections, any course listed as asynchronous is offered for our Master of Public Administration and Policy (MPAP) online program students only. This is an entirely separate degree program, with its own cadence and timeline; thus, generally, MPA/MPP/STEM-MPP students cannot enroll in these sections. You will want sections that say lecture or live online only.

CORRECT:

Lecture
Live Online Only

INCORRECT:

Online Programs 1st Session
Online Programs 2nd Session
Asynchronous Online Only

Examples:

PUAD-617-005 Project Management Runs from 8/26/2024 - 10/20/2024			
Seats ⓘ	Times	Locations	Instructors
6 / 20 / 0	8/26/2024 - 10/20/2024	Online Programs Session I Asynchronous Online Only	Newman, Nathan (Asynchronous Online Only) Baehler, Karen J. (Asynchronous Online Only)

PUAD-617-006 Project Management			
Seats ⓘ	Times	Locations	Instructors
8 / 25 / 0	Th 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM 8/26/2024 - 12/14/2024	No Space Needed OUROL Live Online Only	Darnall, Nicole (Live Online Only)

ASYNCRONOUS
ONLINE
only
open to
MPAP --
CAN NOT
enroll

This **LIVE**
ONLINE
section is
open to
you!

WAITLIST INFORMATION:

- If the course has a waitlist, the “register” button will read “waitlist”. You must click “waitlist” in order to be added to the waitlist. For more information, please visit: [How the Waitlist Works](#)
- If a course you would like to take is full, you can choose to add yourself to the waitlist for the course. Should space become available for you in the course, you will be notified via email and have about 24 hours to register for the course.
- It is important that you check your AU email daily when waitlisted.

SPA Analytics and Management Institute (SAMI) Courses

The SPA Analytics and Management Institute (SAMI) was created to further prepare SPA graduate students by sharing practical, cutting-edge skills to work in and lead multidisciplinary teams after graduation. Students can take three SAMI courses (credit or non-credit) and receive a Certificate in Analytics and Management. Credit versions of these courses can be applied to the MPA or MPP degree under a customized concentration. Students in the STEM-MPP program who are interested in SAMI courses for credit should contact their academic advisor before registering. For more information, please visit [SAMI Courses](#) or contact your academic advisor.

KEY POINTS:

- SAMI offers **zero-credit/non-credit** and **one-credit** classes.
 - **One-credit classes** are graded on an A-F scale, count toward your degree (with prior permission from your academic advisor), and are charged at the 1-credit graduate rate.
 - **Non-credit classes** are free, graded Pass/Fail, and do not count toward your degree.
- Courses and grades will appear on your transcript. **Important:** If you do not attend, you will receive a failing grade.
- You can **add or drop** a SAMI course any time before its start date, instead of the regular add/drop deadline for full-length semester courses. This applies to both zero-credit and one-credit classes.
- Completing **any combination of three SAMI courses** will earn you a **Certificate in Analytics and Management**.
 - To request your certificate, complete the [SAMI Certificate Request Form](#).
- All SAMI classes are held on the weekends.

How to Register for SAMI Courses

Register for a SAMI course through Eagle Service, just as you would for your other courses. When selecting SAMI courses, search under:

- SPA-085 for zero-credit sections (SPA-085-00X)
- SPA-685 for one-credit sections (SPA-685-00X)

Note: Sections listed as 900 level (SPA-085-90X) are for alumni only.

Waiver for Quant/Econ Requirement

(Applicable only for students with a Bachelor’s degree or equivalent from a U.S. institution)

Many students come into the MPA or MPP program with prior undergraduate or graduate coursework in quant and/or econ. In order not to duplicate work already covered, the following are ways that students can opt out of these courses:

- 1) Option to waive out of quant and/or econ (based on prior undergraduate coursework). If approved for a waiver, you will take additional elective courses to replace the waived credit. The total number of credits required for the degree remains the same.
- 2) Option to test out of quant and/or econ. If you pass the test, you will be granted a waiver as in 1) above.
- 3) Option for transfer credit for quant and/or econ based on graduate-level coursework. This will count as credit towards your degree, reducing the total number of AU credits required for completing your degree accordingly.

MPA COURSES ELIGIBLE FOR WAIVER:

- **PUAD-605: Quantitative Methods for Public Managers (3)**
 - To waive out of PUAD 605, students must have completed American University's STAT 202 Basic Statistics or STAT 203 Basic Statistics with Calculus, or equivalent at another university, with a grade of B+ or higher. Students should provide a syllabus and transcript to assist with the review. (Students who have completed a similar graduate-level course, outside of AU or at AU, should work with their academic advisor to transfer in the credit instead).
- **PUAD-630: Public Managerial Economics (3)**
 - To waive out of PUAD 630, students must have completed a course titled "Introduction to Economics", "Introduction to Microeconomics", or "Intermediate Microeconomics" with a grade of B+ or higher. In general, no syllabus will be required for this course, as the content is standard across institutions. However, the academic advisor and Program Director reserve the right to request a syllabus and transcript to assist with the review. No other courses will be considered for automatic waivers. (Students who have completed a similar graduate-level course should work with their academic advisor to transfer in the credit instead.)

MPP COURSES ELIGIBLE FOR WAIVER:

- **PUAD-601: Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis (3)**
 - To waive out of PUAD 601, students must have completed American University's STAT 202 Basic Statistics or STAT 203 Basic Statistics with Calculus, or equivalent at another university, with a grade of B+ or higher. Students should provide a syllabus and transcript to assist with the review. (Students who have completed a similar graduate-level course, outside of AU or at AU, should work with their academic advisor to transfer in the credit instead.)
- **PUAD-670: Economics for Policy Analysis (3)**
 - To waive out of PUAD 670, students must have completed a course titled "Intermediate Microeconomics" with a grade of B+ or higher. In general, no syllabus will be required for this course, as the content is standard across institutions. However, the academic advisor and Program Director reserve the right to request a syllabus and transcript to assist with the review. No other courses will be considered for automatic waivers. (Students who have completed a similar graduate-level course should work with their academic advisor to transfer in the credit instead.)

Test-Out Option/Waiver Exam

Students who do not qualify for an automatic waiver but who wish to otherwise attempt to waive out of a course can sit for a waiver exam. This online, multiple-choice exam will be administered three times per year: roughly 10 days prior to Orientation for Fall and Spring entry terms, and during the Summer upon request. Waiver exams will be provided for: PUAD 601, PUAD 605, PUAD 630, and PUAD 670.

Other Degree Opportunities

Juris Doctor (JD) and Master of Public Administration (MPA) Dual Degree – The School of Public Affairs (SPA) and AU's Washington College of Law (WCL) jointly offer a JD/MPA dual degree program designed for students interested in examining the integral relationship of law to public administration and management. This unique combination of degrees is especially attractive for students intending to use their law degrees in the political, government, or nonprofit realms. The program provides a broad theoretical grounding in public administration and management, while also offering a practical education in the analysis and implementation of policy and law at all levels of government. The program is designed so that you can complete both degrees in as few as eight semesters, much more quickly than if you pursued them separately.

Juris Doctor (JD) and Master of Public Policy (MPP) Dual Degree – The Washington College of Law (WCL) and American University's School of Public Affairs (SPA) offer a JD/MPP dual degree program in law and public policy. This unique combination of degrees is especially attractive for students intending to use their law degrees in the political, government, or non-profit realms. The program provides a broad theoretical grounding in public analysis, program evaluation and successful policy implementation and provides

students with the necessary skills to creatively address the political, financial, organizational, legal, ethical, and constitutional challenges inherent in developing and delivering sound public policies. The program is designed such that both degrees can be completed in as few as eight semesters, for a total of 107 credit hours.

Dual Degree with MPA/MPP and Master of Theological Studies (MTS) with Wesley Theological Seminary – Wesley Theological Seminary (WTS) and American University's School of Public Affairs (SPA) offer dual degrees with our MPA or MPP degree and Wesley's MTS degree. Now more than ever, people who operate in the public sphere need to understand how faith, ethics, and religious ideals motivate and influence public life. Even as America becomes more "spiritual but not religious" and even agnostic, nearly every campaign speech, public-sector issue, and policy rationale touches on a religious or humanitarian ethic or principle. To be able to navigate this murky water at the intersection of faith and public life, leaders must understand the historical, legal, economic, administrative, ethical, and other foundations that have shaped our democracy and the forces that continue to influence it, for better and for worse. These unique degree options equip students to be a step ahead in their field, fluent both in the language of public life and of theology and ethics. The dual degrees require 69 to 75 credit hours in total, with 27 to 33 hours of coursework from SPA and the remainder from Wesley.

PhD in Public Administration & Policy – The PhD degree in Public Administration and Policy requires 36 credit hours of approved graduate work.

Students will be admitted into one of two tracks: public administration or public policy. A minimum grade point average of 3.20 in all coursework is required to remain in good standing and to earn the degree. Full-time status is considered to be nine credit hours per semester. Students are expected to complete the degree within four years for those entering with a master's degree and within five years for those entering with a bachelor's degree alone.

Students advance to PhD candidacy by successfully completing all required courses, passing the oral qualifier and two written comprehensive exams (one in each of their fields of study), and defending their dissertation proposals. To earn the degree, students must pass a final oral defense of the dissertation.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGPS) Rules and Regulations

The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies Graduate Student Rules and Regulations is a document which summarizes the body of Academic Rules and Regulations in place at American University for the conduct of graduate education in academic programs housed in Schools and Colleges other than the Washington College of Law.

Graduate students in the Washington College of Law are governed by the academic rules and regulations specific to the Washington College of Law, except in those instances when they are enrolled in a joint program between another unit at American University and the Washington College of Law. When enrolled in a joint program, students must satisfy the Academic Rules and Regulations that relate to both units in which their degree is housed. Students are expected to know and follow these regulations; ignorance of a regulation will not be accepted as an excuse for failure to act in accordance with it. Academic units and graduate programs may establish additional regulations for their students. Based on a compelling rationale, an exception to a specific graduate academic regulation may be granted. Students filing appeal requests should begin with a written request to their academic advisor. For more information, please visit: [Current Graduate Academic Regulations](#)

Registration

Summer, Fall, and Spring Registration

- Students should consult the academic calendar on the AU website regarding registration-related deadlines.
- Each semester, students must email a registration request to their academic advisor for approval before registering for classes.

Maintaining Matriculation – During a semester when a student is not enrolled in credit coursework but is utilizing the services of the university, the student may maintain enrolled status by registering for a Maintain Matriculation course. The tuition charge for a maintain matriculation course is \$150 and provides access to AU library, Career Center, AU Portal, and AU email.

Temporary Leave – Under special circumstances, students may be granted the status of temporary leave, which does not require a fee. However, no coursework may be in progress and no university resources or services may be used during this period. Consult your academic advisor for further information.

For General Temporary Leave, degree-seeking graduate students are allowed no more than two semesters of general temporary leave, either consecutive or non-consecutive, to remain enrolled in the same program.

Students on a Visa – please note: Taking a temporary leave from AU is considered a break in your immigration status as you are not enrolled in a course of study. As a result, your F-1 status is terminated in SEVIS, and you are expected to depart the United States.

For more information, please visit: [Temporary Leave of Absence](#)

Full-Time and Part-Time Status – The University defines full-time graduate study as taking 9 credits per semester (fall and spring semesters). Part-time is defined as taking 5 credits each semester. The registrar has the authority and responsibility for certifying status, but your academic advisor can be very helpful as the regulations are complex. Full-time versus part-time status has important implications for loans, loan deferment, health insurance, merit awards, and other financial issues, so be sure to understand the details before changing status.

Grading

Grade Types – Grades are based on the A-F system. A grade of C- or lower does not count toward graduate credit.

Incomplete Grades – At the discretion of the course instructor, a temporary grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be given to a student who is passing a course but who, for extenuating reasons, is unable to complete the coursework during the semester. Arrangements for the grade of “I” must be made in writing prior to the final examination, and the “I” must be cleared by the end of the following semester. In rare cases, an IP (In Progress) grade may be assigned. Consult your academic advisor about this option.

Grievance Procedures

Academic grievances are addressed by means of a process articulated in the University’s “Academic Regulations.” For more information,

please visit: [Academic Grade Grievances Policy](#)

Independent Study

An Independent Study is a supervised course designed by the student in collaboration with a faculty member. With the approval of their Graduate Program Director and Academic Advisor, students making Satisfactory Academic Progress may register for an independent study. Through the independent study option, students are required to conduct preliminary research on potential study topics and seek project supervision from a faculty member. Students are responsible for finding a faculty supervisor. Some faculty members prefer to be consulted one semester prior to the semester you plan to register. Students will need to network with faculty to determine their availability and relevance to the research topic. A research question, preliminary outline, and bibliography must be approved by the student's faculty supervisor prior to registration. Students interested in developing an independent study course should contact their academic advisor regarding this process. Students will be permitted to pursue a maximum of **3 (three) Independent Study credit hours in the MPA or MPP program** to be applied toward their concentration credits. For more information, please visit: [Independent Study](#)

Consortium Study Opportunities

The Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area combines the resources of 13 academic institutions in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. SPA graduate students may take courses not offered at AU but available at one of the Consortium schools. Registration is done through AU's registrar, and tuition is the same as for any AU course. The academic advisor's approval is necessary prior to registration.

A partial list of Consortium schools includes:

- The Catholic University of America
- Corcoran College of Art + Design
- Gallaudet University
- George Mason University
- The George Washington University
- Georgetown University
- Howard University
- University of the District of Columbia
- University of Maryland

For more information, please visit: [Consortium Registration](#)

Applying to Graduate

- Students may contact their academic advisor with questions regarding degree completion.
- Students apply for graduation through their individual Eagle Service "Graduation" tab.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity stands at the heart of intellectual life. The academic community is bound by a fundamental trust that professors and students alike undertake and present their work honestly. As a community of the mind, we respect the work of others, paying our intellectual debts as we craft our own work.

The "Academic Integrity Code" of American University defines honorable conduct, outlines attendant rights and responsibilities, and describes procedures for handling allegations of academic misconduct.

American University views academic integrity as integral to its mission, treating it as far more than a disciplinary matter. All members of the University must join in educating students about the value of integrity and the ways in which intellectuals acknowledge their debts. In each course, faculty should remind students of the standards of integrity, and faculty may ask students to include with their submissions a signed statement pledging adherence to the Code in completing the assignment.

By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the

conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors.

To read the full academic integrity code, please visit: [Academic Integrity](#).

Appropriate Conduct in the Department

Students, faculty, and staff are expected to always conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner, both on campus and in their interactions with one another. This includes all electronic, online, and in-person communications and interactions. As a result of this policy, the expectation is that all faculty and staff should be referred to in a professional capacity (Dr. for those who have earned a PhD, Ms./Mrs./Mr. for those who identify as such, and Mx. or RP for gender neutral and nonbinary individuals) and not by their first names unless they specifically request otherwise. All email correspondence should be composed in a professional manner that includes a subject/title, a clear and concise request for information/assistance using appropriate language and identifying information by the sender. Messages and other interactions that are not composed or conducted in a manner that is consistent with appropriate conduct as outlined above and in the American University Graduate Academic Regulations and Student Conduct Code will be referred to the program directors and/or department chair to determine if additional disciplinary action is merited.

Please note it is customary in the Department of Public Administration and Policy for students to notify their professors via email if they must miss class.

FINANCIAL AID

All domestic students must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be eligible for federal loans and federal work-study opportunities. In addition, a student may receive merit-based awards through the School of Public Affairs. No additional application is needed for the SPA merit-based awards.

Merit Awards

Merit-based graduate awards are given to students by the School of Public Affairs using traditional merit indicators such as GPA, test scores, strength of recommendation letters, and experience.

Both full-time and part-time students are eligible to receive merit-based assistance, which includes fellowships, assistantships, and study grants.

Loans and Financing Options

Federal Direct Stafford loans are federally supported, low-interest student loans with flexible repayment options. Subsidized loans are offered to students who are eligible on the basis of calculated need, while unsubsidized loans are available even for those who do not qualify for need-based financial aid.

The Federal Direct Graduate PLUS loan is part of a federal program and is available to eligible graduate students enrolled in a master's or PhD program. For more information, please visit: [Financial Aid](#)

Graduate Federal Work Study

All domestic students interested in federal work-study opportunities should so indicate on their FAFSA.

Once the FAFSA is released, the student may call the Financial Aid Office to check on individual eligibility. If eligible, the student may then apply for work-study positions. If the student did not indicate interest in work-study on the FAFSA, they must go to the Financial Aid Office to explore eligibility and position opportunities.

Outside Scholarships

For students interested in exploring scholarships outside of AU, please visit: [Merit Awards](#)

RESOURCES

SPA Resources

Canvas MPA/MPP Student Central is a great source of information. The MPA/MPP/STEM-MPP Student Central classroom located on Canvas holds important information including internship and job postings, and access to course syllabi. If you have questions about the Canvas MPA/MPP/STEM-MPP Student Central classroom, please contact your academic advisor for assistance.

This is a hub that is meant to be a "one-stop" location for information related to your student life in SPA. We have listed topics and information that we anticipate you will need during your time here as a student, including critical dates and deadlines, documents and forms, job listings, tutoring hours, syllabi and faculty hours, timely announcements that will be of interest to you, and much more. Please visit this site frequently and check the announcements. We also welcome any feedback you might have regarding any other information that you might like us to post on this site. To access Canvas, please visit: [Canvas](#)

Free Tutoring Available for Quantitative Methods and Economics

For more information, please refer to the tutoring schedule in Canvas MPA/MPP Student Central.

SPA currently offers tutoring for the following courses:

PUAD 601 - Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis I
PUAD 602 - Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis II
PUAD 605 - Quantitative Methods for Public Managers
PUAD 630 - Public Managerial Economics
PUAD 670 - Economics for Policy Analysis

The Public Purpose is a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal presenting the work of graduate students from SPA. Published annually, it is a great way to get started on a career in academia or to showcase exceptional research papers in the fields of public policy and public affairs. For more information, please visit: [Public Purpose](#)

The School of Public Affairs Graduate Student Council is SPA's graduate student government organization. Each year, its officers are elected to represent the graduate community and advocate on behalf of the student constituency. Beyond its four-member executive committee (one from each SPA department and a parliamentarian), the Council includes the editor of The Public Purpose and chairs of four special committees. For more information, please visit: [Graduate Student Council](#)

Office of the Dean of Students (DOS)

The Office of the Dean of Students (DOS) supports student learning through programs and services that promote growth and development, communicate the values and standards of the AU community, empower students, and advocate for students' needs. After interacting with staff in the Office of the Dean of Students, individuals will:

- Gain awareness of on- and off-campus resources and how to access those resources
- Develop autonomy and self-advocacy skills
- Understand their behavior and its impact in the context of community

Key Services and Resources:

- **Care Network:** Submit a [Care Referral](#) if you or someone you know is in distress—DOS will reach out with support and resource connections.
- **Emergency Support:**
 - AU Police: (202) 885-2527 (24/7)
 - ProtoCall: (202) 885-7979 (24/7 confidential crisis line)
- **Reporting Options:** Care Referral, Equity & Title IX, Incident, Hazing, and Neighbor Reports
- **Academic Support:** Faculty notification letters for documented absences; guidance on academic concerns and leaves (start with your academic advisor)
- **Medical Leave:** Temporary medical leave available with supporting documentation
- **Restorative Practices:** Focus on repairing harm and promoting accountability through inclusive processes

For more information, please visit: [Office of the Dean of Students](#)

Academic and Technology Resources

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND ACCESS CENTER (ASAC)

ASAC counselors are available to discuss learning concerns and to identify and arrange appropriate support services. Students with learning disabilities who plan to request testing accommodations should meet with an ASAC counselor to discuss the documentation needed.

The ASAC also offers workshops on a variety of reading and study skills topics. For more information, please visit: [Academic Support and Access Center](#)

DISABILITY SUPPORT

ASAC is also responsible for ensuring that persons with temporary or permanent disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in – and enjoy the benefits of – the university’s programs, services, and activities. In addition, ASAC provides consultation and in-service training for faculty, staff, and students, with the overall goal of ensuring a campus environment that is welcoming to individuals with disabilities. For more information, please visit ASAC’s website in the link above.

WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center has a staff of counselors that evaluate students' writing products, identify areas for improvement, and offer tips and strategies. Any student enrolled in a course at AU is eligible to use the Writing Center. Priority is given to students with learning disabilities, international students, and non-native speakers of English. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please visit: [Writing Center](#)

COMPUTER LABS

The SPA Computer Lab offers students more than 30 computers with all major statistical software packages available for student use. For more information, please visit: [Campus Computing Facilities](#)

- It is located in the Sub-Terrace of Kerwin Hall (phone is x3866).
- The computers are equipped with statistical software for research methods.

Other computer labs are available on campus as well. For more information, please visit: [Computer Labs](#)

Career Center

We recommend beginning your relationship with the Career Center early—ideally by visiting in person—to familiarize yourself with key resources that support your professional development. This document outlines next steps and best practices for making the most of these services.

Whether you're exploring career options, launching a job search, or preparing for interviews, AU offers a wide range of tools to support your career journey.

SPA students are welcome to meet with any career advisor, but SPA has a designated advisor: Robert (Rob) SanGeorge. You can schedule an appointment with Rob—or any other advisor—through the Handshake platform, by emailing, or by calling the AU Career Center front desk. For more information, please visit: [Career Center](#)

CAREER CENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Phone:** (202) 885-1804
- **Email:** careercenter@american.edu
- **Business Hours:** Monday–Friday
 - 10:00 AM–12:00 PM and
 - 1:00 PM–4:00 PM

Office of Information Technology (OIT)

The Office of Information Technology provides support for all AU students, faculty, and staff using university technology services. For more information, please visit: [OIT Website](#)

OIT HELP DESK

The OIT Help Desk is dedicated to assisting with IT issues or questions related to AU services. Support is available to all members of the AU community, including prospective and current students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and campus visitors.

OIT HELP DESK CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please visit: [How to Reach OIT and Contact Details](#)

- **Phone:** (202) 885-2550
- **Email:** helpdesk@american.edu
- **Submit a Ticket:** Report an issue online
- **Chat Support:** Available weekdays, 10:00 AM–4:00 PM
- **In-Person Support:** Schedule an appointment or visit the Technology Support Desk in the Library, weekdays 9:00 AM–5:00 PM
- **Help Desk Hours:**
 - **Weekdays (Fall & Spring):** 8:00 AM–8:00 PM
 - **Best Time to Call:** Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM–5:00 PM (most staff available)
 - **Emergency Support:** Available 24/7, 365 days a year

OIT TRAINING WORKSHOPS

[Register here](#) for any of the free technical training workshops sponsored by the Office of Information Technology. There are a variety of training options, including virtual instructor-led, on-demand Web-based training, and custom training options. For more information, please visit: [OIT Technical Training Workshops](#)

TECHNOLOGY TIPS FOR WORKING REMOTELY

For more information, please visit: [Tools and Tips for a Successful Remote Work Experience](#)

This page offers a collection of technology tools and resources to assist in preparing for a successful remote work or telecommuting experience. Whether you are working remotely by choice or necessity, our goal is to help you stay connected and productive from any location, just as you would on campus.

Useful websites include:

- [Readying Your Remote Workspace \(Preview\)](#)
- [Resources to Remain Productive](#)
- [Virtual Meetings](#)
- [Support Resources](#)
- [Tools for Accessing Restricted Business Applications](#)
- [Important Resources & Advice](#)

AU-SUPPORTED SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS

The Office of Information Technology supports a wide variety of software applications. The applications listed below have been licensed for use by the AU community. For more information, please visit: [Software Applications](#)

Useful websites include:

- [EagleBucks Printing:](#) AU's campus-wide pay-for-printing system, used in computer labs, libraries, and residence halls
- [Remote Desktop Applications:](#) A suite of applications normally only accessible in computer labs. Students do not need to have the applications installed but are still able to use them.

Center for Student Belonging (CSB)

The Center for Student Belonging (CSB) serves as a principal leader, resource, and support in fostering a campus environment where students feel a profound sense of belonging, connection, and the ability to thrive. Through education, outreach, and advocacy, CSB creates opportunities for students to grow at AU and beyond. For more information, please visit: [Center for Student Belonging](#)

Health and Wellness Resources

CENTER FOR WELL-BEING PROGRAMS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

The Center for Well-Being Programs and Psychological Services helps students make the most of their university experiences and gain the tools and insights they need to thrive emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

The center offers individual counseling (primarily for crisis intervention, assessment, short-term support, and referrals to private mental health care); psychotherapy and discussion groups; workshops and presentations; consultation and outreach; and self-help and Web resources, including online mental health screenings.

Center staff will help students locate and connect with any off-campus services they need, and insurance usually assists with the cost of off-campus care. The counseling staff is composed of psychologists, social workers, and graduate and postgraduate trainees. Counseling is confidential, in accordance with ethical and legal standards, and there is no charge for services. For more information, please visit: [Center for Well-Being Programs and Psychological Services](#)

RECREATIONAL SPORTS AND FITNESS

The Jacobs Fitness Center, located in the Sports Center, is a state-of-the-art facility, providing quality health, fitness, and recreations programs to meet the variety of needs and interests of a diverse campus population and to foster broad participation and encourage active lifestyles, provide a healthy release from academic rigors, and develop lifelong habits of activity. It includes a wide range of both cardiovascular and strength training equipment. Staff members are on duty whenever the fitness center is open to help with exercise or equipment questions.

For registered students, membership fees are included in tuition. Membership includes use of the fitness center, the Reeves Aquatic Center Pools, the Bender Arena basketball and volleyball courts, outdoor track, and tennis courts. Every semester, the center offers a variety of group exercise and mind-body classes such as step aerobics, spinning, kickboxing, Pilates, and yoga. Personal training services are also available for a fee. The fitness center hosts an annual 5K and a biathlon, and it offers wellness programs and incentives for participation throughout the school year.

A valid AU ID card is required for entrance to the Jacobs Fitness Center. For more information, please visit: [Recreation and Fitness Center](#)

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER (SHC)

The Student Health Center (SHC) provides primary care medical services as well as health education and wellness programming to AU students. The clinical staff consists of an interdisciplinary team of physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, and medical assistants. These primary care clinicians initiate treatment and coordinate all aspects of care, including referrals to specialists when required. Students are encouraged to develop a relationship with an on-staff provider of their choice, called a primary care provider (PCP). The SHC is part of an organized network of community hospitals and providers that serve AU students. Services provided at the SHC are completely confidential; a student's medical record and any other health information can be released only with the student's written permission. Students should bring their AU ID card, insurance card, and method of payment to every visit.

Services at the SHC are available by appointment, preferably made 24 hours in advance. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please visit: [Health Center](#)

HEALTH INSURANCE (X3380)

Health insurance is available to all graduate students. Master's students taking 9 or more credit hours a semester, or students holding F1 or J1 visas, are automatically enrolled, and the charge will appear on their tuition statement.

Master's students taking fewer hours may voluntarily enroll. Students who drop from full-time to part-time status will lose their health insurance benefits unless they voluntarily enroll. For more information, please visit: [Student Health Insurance](#)

Student Life: Housing and Dining

HOUSING

AU is located in northwest Washington, D.C. and has easy access to public transportation using the nearby Tenleytown Metro station, the AU shuttle bus, or one of the numerous Metro buses with routes near the AU campus.

For on-campus housing accommodations for graduate students, please contact Housing and Residence Life: [Contact Information](#)

The Office of Campus Life offers resources for students needing to find off-campus housing, including an off-campus housing posting website, workshops about working with landlords and financial planning, and individual consultations for personalized guidance regarding options, leases, and neighborhood analyses.

Useful websites include:

- [Off-Campus Housing Services](#)
- [Off-Campus Housing Website](#)

DINING

Students have many options for dining both on- and off-campus. The most popular methods of paying for meals and services in addition to cash and credit/debit cards is called EagleBucks. EagleBucks is a prepaid, stored value account associated with a student's AU ID card. Funds may be added to the account at machines across campus, in person at the Housing and Dining Programs office, and on EagleBucks.com. Money added to the account never expires. EagleBucks can be used on campus at food locations, the Campus Store, and the UPS store, as well as other off-campus businesses. For more information, please visit: [Eagle Bucks](#)

American University Police and Public Safety

The American University Police handle issues related to security and public safety. They provide escorts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for community members to and from university-owned property. Call boxes are also located across campus and can be identified by the blue lights at the top of the call box. For more information, please visit: [University Police](#)

Students are encouraged to sign up online for AU Alerts, an email and text message-based system for quick communication with students, faculty, and staff. When an incident occurs on campus, such as a fire or school closing, users will be notified without having to place a telephone call or check a website. For more information, please visit: [AU Alerts](#)

International Student Resources

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES (ISSS)

The mission of International Student and Scholar Services is to advance American University's commitment to building a global community by orienting, advising, and advocating for international students and ensuring compliance with federal regulations governing international educational exchange.

Programs and services include:

- immigration advising and workshops
- personal, academic, and financial counseling
- international student orientation
- cross-cultural training
- ethnic and nationality club advising
- consumer resources

For more information, please visit: [International Student and Scholar Services](#)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT REGISTRATION

In addition to the registration procedures for continuing or new degree students, the following steps must be taken by international students (i.e., students who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents):

- Students enrolling at AU for the first time or for a new program are required to take their passport, I-94, I-20, or IAP-66 (if applicable) to ISSS.
- International students with F-1 or J-1 visas are required to register full-time for each semester; they must obtain written permission from ISSS to obtain a waiver from this requirement. Failure to do so may result in loss of status.
- Students who fail to register full time, or obtain a waiver, or fail to provide ISSS with copies of all required immigration documents as of the first day of class for a semester will be unable to register.
- Students in B-1/B-2 status are not eligible to register.

CONTACTS

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Taryn Morrissey, Ph.D.

Department of Public Administration and Policy Chair

Associate Dean of Research

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(202) 885-6323

Julie Coe

Director of Graduate Advising

Programs:

- MPA and Key Executive Leadership (Domestic Students)
- Certificate(s) in Key Executive Leadership, Public Management, Public Financial Management, and Leadership for Organizational Change (Domestic students)

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(202) 885-6159

Nelly Boishin

Academic Counselor (Graduate Advisor)

Programs:

- MPP, STEM-MPP (Domestic Students)
- Certificate in Policy Analysis (Domestic Students)

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Cris Dinu

Assistant Director of International Graduate Student Development

Programs:

- MPA, MPP, STEM-MPP (International students | F-1 and J-1 visa holders)
- Certificate(s) in Policy Analysis, Public Management, Public Financial Management, Leadership for Organizational Change, Nonprofit Management, and Cyber Policy and Management (International students | F-1 and J-1 visa holders)

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Janet Nagler

Academic Counselor (Graduate Advisor)

Programs:

- Combined programs (BA/BS-MPA/MPP, JD/MPA, JD/MPP)
- Certificate in Nonprofit Management (Domestic students)

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