

PUBLIC AFFAIRS, MPA

The Master of Public Affairs (MPA) Program provides education in public management and policy analysis that prepares students for careers in public policy and administration within the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

The award-winning La Follette School faculty includes economists, political scientists, sociologists, and public affairs scholars who teach the skills and tools needed for a career in public affairs. They are experts in social policy, health policy and management, public administration, public policy analysis, environmental policy, poverty, and tax policy and government finance.

Beyond campus, the city of Madison, as the state capital, provides a wealth of opportunities for La Follette School students to participate in outreach and acquire practical experience as professional project assistants or interns with public and private entities. Students benefit from the strong relationships that La Follette School faculty have with these organizations, in keeping with the Wisconsin Idea of public service. This includes the Family Impact Seminar and Committee Connect—opportunities that use evidence-based research to inform policymakers and improve public policy.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMBINED DEGREES AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Some students earn additional credentials while they work toward their public affairs degrees. Students must follow double degree (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/?policy=doubleddegrees>) and dual degree (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/?policy=dualdegreesgradprof>) policies. The following combined degree and certificate programs have been established, though students choose to do double-degrees and graduate certificates beyond those listed below:

- Law (Juris Doctorate)
- Master of Public Health
- Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning
- Doctorate in Neuroscience
- Energy Analysis and Policy Certificate through the Nelson Institute in Environmental Studie
- Business, Environment, & Social Responsibility; Entrepreneurship; or Strategic Innovation offered through the Wisconsin School of Business.

Law and Public Affairs (MPA/J.D.)

Increasingly, careers in the federal, state and local governments, as well as nonprofit organizations and private sector businesses require an understanding of public administration, policy analysis, and public affairs, as well as law. Many students choose to pursue the dual law and public affairs degree because of their interest in employment in government agencies, government relations law practice, or in other policy-oriented firms and organizations.

For most students the dual degree program will add about a year of study to the three years it takes to complete law school, but will save approximately one year of study compared to doing the two programs separately.

Public Health and Public Affairs (MPA/MPH)

The Master of Public Affairs (MPA) and Master of Public Health (MPH) dual-degree program prepares health policy professionals as policy

analysts and public managers in the increasingly important area of health care. Dual-degree MPA/MPH students develop a solid foundation in policy analysis and public management offered by La Follette faculty and substantive knowledge in public health offered through the School of Medicine and Public Health.

The dual degree program generally takes between two and one-half years to three years to complete, including summers.

Neuroscience and Public Affairs (MPA/Ph.D.)

Advances in neuroscience have important policy implications for child welfare and education, community development, mental health and health care, bioethics and aging, environmental risks and national security. The Neuroscience and Public Policy Program (NPP) and the La Follette School of Public Affairs courses prepare students to work in the growing array of domestic or international policy jobs involved in the management of science and its integration into policy analysis and design. Students become good scientists and effective communicators, managers, and advocates of good public policy.

The double degree program typically takes five years to complete, including summers. Degree requirements are completed in the first three years. The focus of the fourth year is on research and thesis development, as well as completion of the Ph.D. Preliminary Exam. Students continue doing research and defend their thesis in the fifth year.

Urban and Regional Planning and Public Affairs (MPA/M.S. in URPL)

The La Follette School and the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture offer a three-year double-degree program in Urban and Regional Planning and Public Affairs that culminates in two degrees: a Master of Public Affairs degree and a Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning.

ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website. Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet** the minimum requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s). Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	January 1
Spring Deadline	This program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	This program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Required.
English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English must provide an English proficiency test score and meet the Graduate School minimum requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a

Letters of Recommendation Required 3

Applicants for the MPA program should submit official transcripts showing undergraduate performance with at least the equivalent of a 3.0 G.P.A. (on a 4.0 scale), three references, a statement of purpose, Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores, and a resume. Prerequisite courses include: ECON 101 Principles of Microeconomics, PSYCH 210 Basic Statistics for Psychology or MATH 221 Calculus and Analytic Geometry 1 or MATH 222 Calculus and Analytic Geometry 2 or STAT 301 Introduction to Statistical Methods or SOC/C&E SOC 360 Statistics for Sociologists I, and POLI SCI 104 Introduction to American Politics and Government. Applicants without this background may be admitted with the understanding that these courses will be completed before beginning the program.

Every applicant whose first language is not English and whose complete four-year undergraduate instruction was not in English, must provide official scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB). The applicant must provide at least one of these minimum standardized test scores: TOEFL computer-based test score 237, TOEFL internet-based test score 92, IELTS score 7, or MELAB 82. Even if a student has the minimum score, the program can require the admitted applicant to take the on-campus ESL exam and register for any recommended English-as-a-second-language course(s) in the first semester of graduate study.

The La Follette School of Public Affairs only admits for the fall semester. The priority deadline for admission is listed above in the table. Applications are accepted after this date on a rolling admission basis, but there is no guarantee that space in the incoming class will be available.

FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/>) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

La Follette School fellowships and assistantships are offered on a merit basis to select public affairs and international public affairs applicants who submit all application materials by **January 1**. Need is considered for some scholarships, so submitting a FAFSA by December 1 is also recommended.

Please refer to the Funding and Financial Information (<https://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/admissions/funding-financial-information/>) section of the La Follette School website for more information (www.lafollette.wisc.edu).

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirements>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	Yes

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students are able to complete a program with minimal disruptions to careers and other commitments.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirements Detail

Minimum Credit Requirement	MPA: 42 credits MPA with accelerated track: 36 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	MPA: 16 credits MPA with accelerated track: 36 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	Half of degree coursework (21 out of 42 total credits) must be completed in graduate-level coursework. For MPA accelerated track, 19 of 36 must be completed in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university's Course Guide (https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide (https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/)).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required.
Other Grade Requirements	Students must earn a BC or above in all core curriculum coursework. A grade of C is the minimum grade permitted in elective courses that count toward a La Follette School degree.

Assessments n/a
and
Examinations

Language No language requirement.
Requirements

REQUIRED COURSES

Students must complete 42 credits, including six core courses, a one-credit professional development seminar, plus eight elective courses. An internship can count for up to three elective credits. The program generally takes two years.

Six required courses are the foundation of the MPA degree program:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
PUB AFFR 800	Public Affairs Professional Development Workshop	1
PUB AFFR 818	Introduction to Statistical Methods for Public Policy Analysis	3
PUB AFFR/POLI SCI/ URB R PL 874	Policy-Making Process	3
PUB AFFR 880	Microeconomic Policy Analysis	3
PUB AFFR 873	Introduction to Policy Analysis	3
PUB AFFR/POLI SCI/ URB R PL 878	Public Management	3
PUB AFFR 869	Workshop in Public Affairs	3

Recommended Electives in Public Affairs

Students build proficiency beyond the core requirements through elective courses, including:

PUB AFFR 819	Advanced Statistical Methods for Public Policy Analysis	3
PUB AFFR 827	Administrative Internship	1-3
PUB AFFR/ POLI SCI 871	Public Program Evaluation	3
PUB AFFR/ A A E/ENVIR ST/ POP HLTH 881	Benefit-Cost Analysis	3

Recommended Two-Year Plan of Study

Code	Title	Credits
Recommended progression		
<i>Fall Year One</i>		
PUB AFFR 800	Public Affairs Professional Development Workshop	1
PUB AFFR 818	Introduction to Statistical Methods for Public Policy Analysis	3
PUB AFFR/POLI SCI/ URB R PL 874	Policy-Making Process	3
PUB AFFR 880	Microeconomic Policy Analysis	3
<i>Spring Year One</i>		
PUB AFFR 873	Introduction to Policy Analysis	3
PUB AFFR/POLI SCI/ URB R PL 878	Public Management	3
<i>Spring Year Two</i>		
PUB AFFR 869	Workshop in Public Affairs	3

Public Affairs And Urban and Regional Planning (MPA/M.S. URPL)

The La Follette School of Public Affairs and the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture offer a double degree Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning and a Master of Public Affairs. Students completing the double degree must follow the double degree plan. The Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture requires 45 credits for the Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning. The La Follette School requires 36 credits for the Master of Public Affairs. Per UW-Madison Graduate School policy, an overlap of 25% of credits is permitted (9 credits can count toward both degrees). Students can graduate with both degrees by completing 72 credits in three years.

Graduate coordinators for both programs have sample curricular plans that they will share with prospective or current students to assist with successful completion of all degree requirements.

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Work from Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 12 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements. This work does not appear on UW-Madison transcript nor count toward graduate career GPA.

UW-Madison Undergraduate

Up to 7 credits from a UW-Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree. This work will not appear on the student's graduate transcript. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

UW-Madison University Special

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 9 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW-Madison University Special student. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PROBATION

The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

1. Good standing (progressing according to standards; any funding guarantee remains in place).
2. Probation (not progressing according to standards but permitted to enroll; loss of funding guarantee; specific plan with dates and deadlines in place in regard to removal of probationary status).

3. Unsatisfactory progress (not progressing according to standards; not permitted to enroll, dismissal, leave of absence or change of advisor or program).

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Every graduate student will have one faculty advisor in addition to the Admissions and Advising Coordinator to support their academic progress.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

MPA: Credit load by term varies. Students typically take 10 credits in their first semester in the program, increasing to 12 credits for the next two semesters so that they can plan a lighter load of 9 credits when in their final spring semester due to demands from their workshop course. Students need advisor approval to take 15 credits.

MPA with accelerated track: 12 credits

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Master's degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Dean of Students Office (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

Students should contact the department chair or program director with questions about grievances. They may also contact the L&S Academic Divisional Associate Deans, the L&S Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning Administration, or the L&S Director of Human Resources.

OTHER

n/a

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAREERS

Career development is an integral part of the La Follette School experience, and data show extremely high percentages of employment three to six months post-graduation. The La Follette School offers:

- Visits with local employers as well as regular trips to Washington, D.C. and Chicago
- Networking opportunities
- Career development seminars with public affairs professionals
- Connections with alumni mentors

The career services coordinator works with students one-on-one to develop essential skills, such as interviewing, writing strong cover letters and resumes, and researching internships and permanent employment. During the first-semester course Professional Development Workshop (<https://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/degree-programs/courses/pa-800-professional-development-workshop/>), students also create an individual plan and portfolio that help them proactively move toward their academic and career goals.

La Follette School alumni work in all levels of government, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. Popular positions include policy analyst, consultant, executive director, research analyst, project manager, and government liaison. MPA alumni have held positions with these agencies, organizations, and businesses:

- Congressional Research Service
- Deloitte
- Duke Margolis Health Policy Center
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Grant Thornton
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency
- Oregon Legislative Fiscal Office
- UW–Madison Center for Education Research
- U.S. Government Accountability Office
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau

Please refer to the Career Development (<https://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/career-development/>) section of the La Follette School website for more information (www.lafollette.wisc.edu).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. (Knowledge) Demonstrate understanding of major current and past policy debates, research findings, and analytical methodologies in each of the following core areas: microeconomic policy analysis, quantitative tools for policy analysis, policy analysis, the policymaking process, and public management.
2. (Knowledge) Demonstrate critical thinking skills. They will retrieve and examine the policy literature and evaluate evidence for and against hypotheses, identify knowledge gaps, strengths and weaknesses in existing literature, synthesize knowledge, and develop conclusions.
3. (Applied Research Skills) Read, comprehend, and effectively summarize policy research and policy-relevant academic research.
4. (Applied Research Skills) Effectively summarize data for a general (non-academic) or policy audience.
5. (Applied Research Skills) Demonstrate competency in methods of inferential statistics including those associated with multivariate regression models.
6. (Professional and Ethical Conduct) Identify and appropriately respond to scenarios involving the ethical and professional responsibilities of public administration.
7. (Professional and Ethical Conduct) Demonstrate the ability to maintain human subjects protections when designing studies, collecting data and reporting results.
8. (Professional and Ethical Conduct) Know and adhere to high levels of professional conduct, ethical decision-making and legal and regulatory compliance.
9. (Professional and Ethical Conduct) Demonstrate the ability to maintain fidelity to objective social science-based research methods.
10. (Communication) Communicate in clear written language: a real-world policy problem, relevant scholarly studies and practical applications, a policy-analytic method to investigate the problem, and client-oriented advice to mitigate the problem.
11. (Communication) Communicate substance of point 1 highly concisely and in language understandable to a non-specialist.
12. (Communication) Communicate substance of point 2 orally.
13. (Professional Skills and Career Preparation) Develop effective job-seeking tools and utilize job-seeking techniques.
14. (Professional Skills and Career Preparation) Complete high quality group projects, including demonstration of effective project management and teamwork.

PEOPLE

Faculty (<http://lafollette.wisc.edu/faculty-staff/>): Barnes, Blank, Chinn, Collins, Copelovitch, Durrance, Edwards, Fletcher, Garcia, Halpern-Meekin, Jacobs, Johnson, Koellinger, Lei, Milton, Nemet, Pevehouse, Schmitz, Smeeding, Teodoro, Wallace, Wang, Weimer, Wolfe, Yackee (director).