

Mid Career Option Application Packet Master of Public Affairs Degree

School of Public and Environmental Affairs



Indiana University Northwest

Revised 2010

**School of Public and Environmental Affairs
Master of Public Affairs Degree
Indiana University Northwest – 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46408
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Mid-Career Option Policies and Procedures**

1. The Mid-Career Option

The purpose of the mid-career option of the Masters of Public Affairs degree program is to recognize the professional capabilities of those with previous experience in the public or private sector. This experience may be of a management nature or may be in program or policy development which may or may not include management experience, e.g., a planner. Further, the work experience does not have to be with a public agency. Management and policy level experience gained in the private and nonprofit sectors is generally relevant

It is the policy of Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs, as published in the School's official bulletin, that "the granting of mid-career option credit is based on work experience gained before the time students being their first SPEA graduate course." At Indiana University Northwest this policy statement is interpreted and applied to mean that the granting of Mid-Career Option credit is based on experience gained prior to unconditional admission to the MPA program. Experience gained after unconditional admission will not be credited against the work experience requirement.

I. THE MID-CAREER OPTION (MCO)

The Graduate-Program Committee (GPC) of SPEA-IUN may grant up to a maximum of twelve (12) credit hours toward the MPA degree for students who have had **significant professional-level work experience** in policymaking and/or management. *Professional-level work* is that responsibility requiring extensive education and/or specialized training and/or continuing development (e.g., at least an undergraduate degree), also providing substantial control and/or advantage over the manner in which the person performs that work. Specifically, credit will be granted for work experience gained before the student completes thirty-six (36) credit hours of coursework in the MPA degree program.

The following guidelines will be used by the GPC in awarding the credits:

1. In order to earn **THREE** (3) credit hours, a student must have had one-two years of professional-level work experience in policymaking and/or management with a public, private, or nonprofit organization in any of the following areas:
 - A. Directing a program (or programs)
 - B. Planning and developing a program (or programs)
 - C. Making decisions on organizational or human-resources management/development
 - D. Preparing budgets
 - E. Conducting public and/or legislative-relations programs
 - F. Formulating and evaluating organizational policies
 - G. Conducting public policy analyses
 - H. Engaging in comparable professional activities

2. In order to earn **SIX** (6) credit hours, a student must have had two-five years of professional-level work experience in policymaking and/or management in a public, private, or nonprofit organization that includes significant responsibilities for at least two (2) in any of the following areas:
 - A. Directing a program (or programs)
 - B. Planning and developing a program (or programs)
 - C. Making decisions on organizational or human-resources management/development
 - D. Preparing budgets
 - E. Conducting public and/or legislative-relations programs
 - F. Formulating and evaluating policies
 - G. Conducting public policy analyses
 - H. Engaging in comparable professional activities

3. In order to earn **NINE** (9) credit hours, a student must have had at least four years of executive responsibilities in policymaking and/or management in a public, private, or nonprofit organization that includes managerial responsibilities for at least four (4) in any of the following areas:
 - A. Directing a program (or programs)
 - B. Planning and developing a program (or programs)
 - C. Making decisions on organizational or human-resource management/development
 - D. Preparing budgets
 - E. Conducting public and/or legislative-relations programs

- F. Formulating and evaluating policies
- G. Conducting public policy analyses
- H. Engaging in comparable professional activities

Additionally, the experience must encompass supervising a significant number of staff, including other supervisors and/or managers.

4. In order to earn **TWELVE** (12) credit hours, a student must have had at least seven years of executive responsibilities in policymaking and/or management in a major public, private, or nonprofit organization that includes executive responsibilities in a major organization for at least four (4) in any of the following areas:
 - A. Directing a program (or programs)
 - B. Planning and developing a program (or programs)
 - C. Making decisions on organizational or human-resource management/development
 - D. Preparing budgets
 - E. Conducting public and/or legislative-relations programs
 - F. Formulating and evaluating policies

2. Mid-Career Option Application Policies

- A. Students are eligible to apply for Mid-Career Option credit only after they have been unconditionally admitted to the MPA program; only work experience gained prior to unconditional admission may apply for the awarding of credit. Students must be in good academic standing at the time of submitting the application.
- B. Students should apply for Mid-Career Option credit immediately upon full admission to the MPA degree program. In no case should an application be made after 24 hours of course work.
- C. Determination of Mid-Career Option credit is made separately from decisions about transfer of credit.
- D. Under no circumstances will the Mid-Career Option credit and transfer credit total more than 21 of the 48 credit hours required for the MPA degree.
- E. Students receiving Mid-Career Option credit should carefully plan the rest of their degree program in consultation with an advisor. Generally Mid-Career Option credit is applied first against elective courses and then required concentration courses. In very rare instances will credit be applied to core course requirements.
- F. Students may appeal the initial Mid-Career Option credit decision by submitting a request for reconsideration in writing to the SPEA Division Director.

3. Procedure

The Mid-Career Option Application is to be prepared by the student after unconditional acceptance into the graduate program. A faculty member will act in an advisory capacity to interpret the MPA program to the student in order that he/she can evaluate his/her professional experience as it relates to the objectives of the student's MPA educational program. Mid-Career Option Applications will be acted upon only if the student is in good academic standing. Only the work experience gained before unconditional acceptance will be considered for Mid-Career Option credit.

The application will be reviewed by the SPEA-IUN Graduate Program Committee, a committee of the faculty. An interview with the student may be required at the option of the Committee. The Graduate Program Committee will make a recommendation concerning the Mid-Career Option to the SPEA Division Director. Whenever possible, this recommendation will include a designation of the number of hours to be waived, i.e., electives, concentration courses, and some indication of the contextual nature of the Mid-Career student's program. In most cases, the waiver will be restricted to elective courses. Only to a lesser degree will concentration and core courses be waived. It is the Committee's option to

structure the student's program at the time of the application review, to leave this activity until later, or to judgment of the student's faculty advisor.

The faculty advisor is also available to advise the student as to the pertinent documentation required. For example, the advisor may ask the student to submit a copy of his/her resume with the application or to have one or two of his/her supervisors review the petition and certify its accuracy.

An appeal procedure exists. The appeal of the Graduate Program Committee's decision is directed to the Division Director who will then ask the Committee to review its prior decision. The Committee may either reaffirm the former position or take a new position based upon information provided by the student in his/her appeal. This second decision is subject to further appeal processes in accordance with the provision for such appeals contained in the Student Handbook of Indiana University Northwest.

4. Application Guidelines

The student in his/her Mid-Career Option Application should list each position the student has held prior to unconditional admission to the MPA program for which Mid-Career Option credit is sought. It will materially assist the student in the completion of the application if the following information is gathered for each position:

- A. The nature of the student's duties and responsibilities in each position

- B. The number of people supervised by the student in the position
- C. The size of the budget of the student's employing organization
- D. The influence the student has had on the size and preparation of the organizations budget
- E. The kinds of decisions that the student was required to make. Give examples of typical decisions
- F. The kinds of technical expertise the student was required to have in addition to any necessary managerial skills.
- G. The amount and kinds of interaction with elected officials, administrators, managers, or other operational and policy-making personnel in agencies and organizations outside of the student's employing organization. The amount of influence the student had on the policy and operational decisions made by operational or policy-making personnel in other organizations.
- H. The experiences the student has and in intergovernmental, interagency, or inter-organizational relationships.
- I. The amount and kinds of interaction the student has had with public interest groups. Give examples of such experiences.
- J. Examples of the kinds of impact the student has had on realizing the goals of the employing organization.

Not every question will be applicable to each position for which Mid-Career Option credit is sought. Furthermore, applications should not necessarily be limited to answers to these questions. Students are encouraged to give whatever additional information they feel is pertinent. However, every student applying for the Mid-Career Option should submit an application essentially in the same format, containing, at a minimum, answers to the above questions.

Students should submit a position description form for each position for which Mid-Career Option credit is sought. In addition, students will need to provide one to two supervisory evaluations for each position for which Mid-Career Option credit is sought.

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Degree Concentration: _____

For each position you have held before receiving unconditional admission, please submit the following position description. Answer each question to the extent that the response is applicable and fully informative. Attach additional sheets if more space is needed. You are encouraged to provide, in addition to the answers to these questions, any further information about the position which you think will be helpful in evaluating your application.

Position Description

Job Title: _____

Employer: _____

Name and address of immediate supervisor: _____

Dates Held: _____

1. Describe the nature of your duties and responsibilities in this position:

2. How many people did you supervise?

3. What was the size of the budget of your organization?

4. What influence did you have on the size of the budget; what responsibilities did you have for preparation of the budget?

5. What kinds of decisions were you required to make? Give examples of typical decisions you made.

6. What kinds of technical expertise were required of you in addition to any necessary managerial skills?

7. How closely did you work with elected or appointed officials, administrators, managers, or other operational and policy-making personnel in agencies or organizations outside of your organization? What influence did you have on the policy or operational decisions made by operational or policy-making personnel in other organizations?

8. What experiences have you had in intergovernmental, interagency, or other interorganizational relationships? Give examples.

9. Did you have regular contact with public interest groups or other constituent groups? What was the nature of that contact? Give examples of your experience.

10. What impact have you had on realizing the goals of your organization?

11. Additional Comments

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Mid-Career Option Supervisory Evaluation

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 open many records to student's inspection. The law also permits the student to sign a waiver relinquishing his/her right to inspect letters of recommendation. The applicant's signature below constitutes a waiver; no signature means the student will have the right to read this reference.

Date: _____ **Signature:** _____

Name of applicant: _____

Degree Sought: _____

Anticipated date of graduation: _____

Please answer the following questions in as detailed and candid way as possible. In particular we are trying to determine the general level of responsibility and the degree of supervision, management, and/or professional knowledge and skills required for the position which the applicant either now holds or recently held.

Title of applicant's position: _____

Name of organization: _____

Function of organization: _____

Please describe briefly the nature of the responsibilities and duties assigned to the position of the applicant. (It would be helpful, if possible, attaching a sketching an organizational chart and indicating the position of the applicant.)

Length of time in position:

What level of education is normally required for the position?

_____ High School _____ Graduate Degree _____ Two years of College
_____ Other or equivalent _____ College Degree

What kind of experience is normally required for the position?

Please describe and indicate the degree to which the applicant was involved in the policy and decision-making process of the organization.

A. Did the applicant develop program proposals for his/her unit?

_____ Yes _____ No

B. Did the applicant prepare or make recommendations on the budget for his/her unit? Yes, the applicant provided information that is pertinent to utilize.

_____ Yes _____ No

C. Did the applicant appoint or make recommendations on the appointment of personnel for his/her unit?

_____ Yes _____ No

D. Was the applicant required to interact with officials or decision-makers outside of his/her organization, e.g., elected officials, representatives of other governmental units, civic leaders, officers of private and/or nonprofit organizations?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please indicate what kinds of officials or decision-makers and the nature of the interaction.

E. With what other external organizations, persons, and groups did the application work?

Approximately how many employees worked under the applicant's general direction?

A. How many employees did the applicant supervise directly?

B. Approximately what percentage of these employees directly supervised by the applicant occupied positions normally requiring professional level training and education?

C. Did the applicant supervisor other supervisors

_____ Yes _____ No

Please add any additional information which you believe would be useful to evaluate the applicant's performance.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____