



# INDIANA UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST

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COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
School of Public and Environmental Affairs

## Master of Public Affairs Graduate Policy Manual

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the School of Public & Environmental Affairs Program is to sustain a diverse, collaborative community of learning that provides professional education to develop ethical, motivated, and effective leaders and to impact our changing region, nation and world through community engagement and research.

The SPEA MPA Graduate Program Policy Manual was developed by the Graduate Program Committee (GPC) to be a usable, comprehensive document which identifies the program specific standards and policies used to govern the Graduate Program in the School of Public & Environmental Affairs at Indiana University Northwest.

The implementation of the policies developed in this manual are in effect the semester immediately following the acceptance of the policy by the GPC.

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# SCHOOL OF PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

## Master of Public Affairs Policies

### ADMISSIONS

#### MPA APPLICATION REQUIREMENT:

All potential applicants must submit a complete application packet for admission to the MPA or certificate programs; no exceptions.

#### ADMISSION DECISIONS:

Decisions concerning admission to the MPA and Certificate programs may only be decided by a quorum of the Graduate Program Committee (GPC) physically present. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the GPC members (i.e., five members).

#### MPA DEADLINE FOR ADMISSION:

Students intending to enroll in the MPA degree program must have submitted a complete application packet by **August 1** of every year in order to start fall classes. However, students applying for admission who are unable to submit their graduate transcript by August 1 because they are enrolled in Summer II classes and wish to begin the fall cohort, may submit an incomplete application if the file is **only missing these grades**. In these cases, the SPEA Graduate Program Coordinator/Chair will review the applicant after receipt of Summer II grades.

For full consideration by the committee, a **complete application** consists of the following:

- Application, Residency Form & Self Disclosure Form
- Letter of Intent
- Resume/Curriculum Vitae
- Official undergraduate transcript and/or a graduate transcript
- Minimum 3.0 undergrad gpa is needed for admission to MPA program.  
*Applicants whose gpa is below the 3.0 requirement will be required to submit official GRE scores.*
- Writing sample conforming to the application guidelines

- GRE exam score of 280 or higher is required for admission (combined verbal and quantitative score). If the applicant's undergraduate GPA is 3.0 or higher the GRE is waived. For graduate certificate students who have a GPA of 3.30 or higher in their three SPEA required certificate graduate courses, the GRE will also be waived. ***Note: The GRE scores are not required for admission to the SPE graduate certificate programs. GRE or gpa requirement must be fulfilled for admission to the MPA program.***
- Three letters of reference from individuals who know the candidate in a professional capacity, such as a college professor or work supervisor.
- Application fee of \$40.00 is required at time of submission of application.

### **ADMISSION OF CERTIFICATE STUDENTS:**

Certificate students who intend to enroll in the MPA program are subject to most of the same admission requirements as MPA students. Students must submit a letter of intent, a writing sample conforming to the application package instructions, an official undergraduate transcript and/or official graduate transcript and three letters of reference from individuals who know the candidate in a professional capacity, such as a college professor (outside of SPEA) or work supervisor.

Certificate students wishing to continue in the MPA program will be required to submit an updated application packet which consists of the application, residency form, self-disclosure form, and letter of intent. The students file will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee (GPC) for determination of admission to the MPA program. ***Note: Admission and completion of any certificate program does not automatically grant admission to the MPA program. All students will be evaluated following successful completion of the certificate program to determine if they exhibit the required professional attitude & successful classroom collaborative skills to be admitted to the MPA program. Students who do not exhibit these skills may not be admitted to the MPA program***

The deadline for application submittal for Certificate students will be as follows:

- Spring Semester Enrollment: November 15 of each academic year
- Summer Session Enrollment: April 15 of each academic year
- Fall Semester Enrollment: August 1 of each academic year

### **CERTIFICATE STUDENTS SEEKING MPA ADMISSION BEFORE THE GPC MEETS:**

All certificate students must wait until the Graduate Program Committee (GPC) meets to make a determination about admission before continuing beyond the certificate courses and/or nine hours.

## **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

Any letters written on behalf of the student for admission to the SPEA Graduate Studies Program are not permitted to be released to the student once received by the School of Public & Environmental Affairs. There is an expectation of privacy regarding the individual submitting the letters on behalf of an applicant therefore, no copies of reference letters will be provided to applicants/students. All application materials are the property of the School of Public & Environmental Affairs and cannot be released to any applicant.

## **WRITING SAMPLE FOR APPLICATION PACKET**

Applicants to the School of Public & Environmental Affairs will be required to submit a writing sample with their application for admission the program. Applicants must be advised that Turnitin Software will be used to evaluate the quality of the writing and also alert the GPC of any detected plagiarism.

## **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS:**

Any student applying for the MPA program or a certificate program must request official transcripts from his/her prior university (or universities). Official transcripts must be mailed through the U.S. mail system, electronically sent from the sending school's registrar, or delivered by hand unopened in a sealed envelope. *Unofficial transcripts will not be considered part of a complete application.*  
(Created 04/07/14)

## **RECIPROCITY OF ADMISSION TO MPA PROGRAM:**

Any IUN MPA applicant who has been admitted previously to another IU MPA program will be granted reciprocity on this campus and the application process will be waived. Students must have been admitted to another IU campus within the last five years for this policy to be in effect. If a student was admitted over five years ago, that student will be deemed a new student and reciprocity will not be in effect.  
(Created 04/07/14)

## **STUDENTS PREVIOUSLY ADMITTED TO MASTER'S PROGRAM OUTSIDE OF IUN:**

Students who have been previously accepted to an accredited graduate degree program and completed the program do not need to take the GRE in order to complete the application process for SPEA at IUN, however, all other items are required for the application process. (Created 10/12/12)

Graduate student grades awarded outside of SPEA may be excluded from admission decisions.

## **ASSIGNMENT OF ADVISORS FOR MPA & CERTIFICATE STUDENTS:**

It will be the policy of the Graduate Program Committee that all graduate students will be assigned to an advisor designated by the department to assist with program completion, registration, academic records, etc.

## **TRANSFER CREDITS FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES:**

MPA students may transfer up to nine (9) hours of SPEA-equivalent electives (on-line or traditional classroom format) from other accredited graduate programs if the student received a grade of B or higher. No transferred courses will be allowed to substitute for courses in the MPA core. Applicants must submit their request in writing to the GPC for approval of transfer credit. Certificate students will not be permitted to use credits earned from other programs or universities to meet certificate program requirements

## **HOME CAMPUS COURSE POLICY:**

In an effort to maintain course enrollment and avoid course cancellation, all students are required to complete courses for their degree requirements in residency at IUN or via IUN online. No core classes are to be taken outside of the IUN campus. Concentration courses are expected to be taken through IUN, however a student may request permission from the GPC to take an online course through IUPUI or IUB. This process will be limited to two classes (six hours) through either campus location. All requests must be in writing to the Graduate Program Committee. Student must also complete the consortium agreement and understand the payment policy to the receiving campus.

## **PRE-REQUISITE COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All MPA students will be required to take two statistics courses (V500 Quantitative Tools for Public Affairs and V506 Statistical Analysis for Policy & Management) and V517 Public Management Economics as part of the curriculum. Prior to admission to the MPA program the applicant's transcript will be reviewed to assess if they have taken an undergraduate statistics and economics courses.

If an applicant has not had an undergraduate course in statistics or economics, they will be advised that the SPEA-K300 (Statistical Techniques) will be a prerequisite to enrolling in V500 and/or ECON-E102 or ECON-E104 prior to enrolling in V517. For those students who have not taken a statistics or economics class will be required to take the equivalent undergraduate course for statistics (SPEA-K300) and/or economics (ECON-E103 or E104).

## **TEST-OUT OPTION FOR V500**

Students with a strong background in statistics (or quantitative tools) have the option of testing out of the V500 course. If the student tests out of the V500 course, they will need to take an additional graduate level course to meet the minimum 48 hour credit requirement for degree completion.

## **ACADEMIC STANDING**

### **GRADUATE PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS:**

Upon admission to the MPA program, students will have a maximum 7 years to complete the program. Should a student discontinue his/her studies, and wish to return at a later date, they may do so under the same degree requirements that were in effect upon admission to the program. If a student returns to their studies and it has been a year or more, the student will follow the current degree requirements that are in place for that program.

Certificate and MPA students must have completed their certificate in a maximum of 18 hours unless there is a scheduling conflict. All certificate students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher based on the entire number of classes taken. Students whose GPA falls below 3.0 for three semesters will be dismissed.

### **MPA DOUBLE CONCENTRATIONS**

IUN MPA students who choose to double concentration must complete the core requirements for both areas of concentration before the MPA degree will be awarded. This will necessitate taking additional six to nine credit hours of courses, for a total of 54-57 hours. Failure to successfully complete each course will result in the double-major status not being awarded.

### **GRADUATE NON-DEGREE STUDENTS:**

Graduate non-degree students may take up to 12 hours of SPEA classes. These classes will not automatically count towards a certificate or MPA.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRESS**



Students are considered to be in good standing during any semester in which their academic grade point average is at least 3.0 (B) both for their last semester's course work and for the cumulative average of all course work completed. Only courses with grades of C (2.0) or above may be counted toward degree requirements. However, grades below C are used in computing the cumulative grade point average, even if a course is repeated and a higher grade is earned. Certificate students who do not have a 3.0 cumulative grade point average within their first 9 credit hours will be dismissed.

**CERTIFICATE AND MPA STUDENT GPA REQUIREMENT:**

All MPA and certificate students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Students must receive grades of B or higher in all SPEA courses. However, students may receive one grade of C in a SPEA course once during their certificate or MPA. Students whose grades fall below 3.0 will be placed on probation. Students may be on probation no more than two semesters during the course of their certificate or MPA. Students placed on probation a third semester shall be dismissed.

**MPA PROBATION AND DISMISSAL:**

All certificate and MPA students must maintain GPA of 3.0 or higher. Students may only receive one grade of C in their entire certificate and/or MPA degree. Students whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be on probation and may be limited in the classes they are allowed to take. Probation may not exceed two semesters. Any certificate or MPA student exceeding two semesters on probation shall be dismissed.

The first semester which the students' GPA falls below 3.0, the student's file will be reviewed by the GPC. Students will be informed of what they must do in order to stay enrolled in SPEA. Likely requirements will be to reduce the number of courses allowed to be taken (even if this means the student no longer qualifies for financial aid), courses that must be taken and the grade that the student must receive in that course, etc. Students who do not follow the instructions of the GPC are likely to be dismissed.

The GPC will also review students at risk of dismissal based on SAP criteria. Students are reminded that over 75 percent of their courses must be successfully completed; students with 25 percent of courses with grades of W, F and I are likely to be dismissed.

**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF DISMISSED GRADUATE STUDENTS:**

MPA or certificate students who have been dismissed due to poor grades or for any other reason may reapply to the GPC after 12 months. Students should submit a letter explaining the circumstances of their dismissal and include a prevention plan to ensure that a second dismissal does not occur. Such decisions are completely at the discretion of the SPEA Chair with the input of the GPC. (Created 12/03/12)

### **GRADUATE STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES**

SPEA Students who have been accepted into either a graduate certificate program or the MPA are expected to make progress towards their degrees by taking graduate level courses every semester. Undergraduate courses must have prior approval of the graduate academic advisor assigned to that student or a SPEA/CHHS administrator. This approval must be in writing and evidence of that approval is to become a part of the student's academic file. Undergraduate courses may not be used to satisfy graduate program requirements. Exceptions are possible for some pre-defined, upper-level undergraduate courses, subject to approval by the academic advisor and SPEA/CHHS administration and are limited to a maximum number of six credit hours.

(Created 01/16/13)

### **COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS**

Each concentration within the MPA program and/or the certificates have a specific curriculum that was developed for each sub program plan. All students will take the required core classes and concentration classes as outlined in the degree planning sheet. No course substitutions will be made or will override any of the designated courses for the degree plan. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

### **UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE COURSES USED IN GPA CALCULATIONS:**

Only SPEA graduate courses will be used to determine a student's MPA or certificate GPA. Any undergraduate course(s) taken by a student while pursuing an MPA (which is not appropriate or recommended unless is required to fulfill a prerequisite requirement) will not be used in the GPA calculation.

### **GRADING SYSTEM**

SPEA follows the official grading system of Indiana University described in the introductory section of the bulletin. Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.iun.edu/bulletin/policies/grades/>.

### **INCOMPLETES**

A grade of Incomplete must be removed within the time specified by the instructor of the course; if not, the grade automatically changes to an F one calendar year after the Incomplete was given.

### **WITHDRAWALS**

Students must formally withdraw from courses in the timeframe allowed by the Registrar's office. This information can be found at the web site:

<http://www.iun.edu/bulletin/policies/withdrawals.shtml>.

### **ADD/DROP COURSES**

All students must follow the university policy for adding and/or dropping courses. The first week of each semester is the designated add/drop period. *After week one no late course additions/registrations will be processed. No exceptions to this policy will be made.*

### **COURSE WAIVERS**

Requests for a waiver of specific courses or requirements on the basis of previous course work are to be submitted in writing to the Graduate Program Committee (GPC). Waivers do not grant course credit, therefore, students will be responsible for ensuring they have taken the appropriate amount of credit hours to replace a waived course if approved. The MPA programs requires a total of 48 credits. No waivers will be permitted for any of the certificate programs.

### **STUDENTS WISHING TO COMPLETE A CERTIFICATE AFTER THE MPA DEGREE:**

Students who have earned their SPEA MPA degree will not be allowed to return for a certificate in another concentration. If the student can show extraordinary circumstances, such as a significant career change, the student may be allowed earn one additional certificate after review by the GPC. All requests must be put in writing to the GPC for consideration.

### **STUDENTS WISHING TO COMPLETE A CERTIFICATE AT THE SAME TIME AS THEIR MPA DEGREE:**

Students may attempt completion of their certificate at the same time as their MPA degree. Students wishing to complete both programs will need to complete at least two additional classes (6 hours), which means it will require a minimum of 54 hours to obtain the certificate and MPA. Students enrolled in the MPA who wish to obtain a certificate at the same time must submit a letter of intent to the Graduate Program Committee (GPC).

### **INDEPENDENT STUDY/ARRANGED COURSES (V580/V590)**

Students are permitted to engage in up to 6 credit hours of approved Independent Study/Arranged Courses. Approval must be granted and all students must complete the appropriate paperwork in a timely fashion. **Note: No core classes can be substituted with any independent study and/or arranged course.**

Students must submit their requests in advance of the registration period for the semester they wish to complete such course (i.e., one month prior to the start of the semester). No late submittals will be reviewed after this deadline. If not approved by faculty member and program director, student will not be permitted to enroll in independent study/arranged courses.

Note: Any regular required course that is not passed with a B or better must be taken in the classroom setting and cannot be substituted with an independent study/arranged course. No exceptions will be made.

Other Requirements for V580/V590 Courses:

- No more than six hours of any combination of V580 and V590 courses with SPEA faculty.
- Credits can be used to fulfill electives and may not be used to complete a required foundation or core classes.
- All students must have a minimum gpa of 3.0 or higher and may only be taken after successful complete of the core classes (except for V600).
- Must be taken with a full-time tenure-track SPEA faculty member.
- Faculty member and student must agree on the topic, which should address an import issue in the field of the faculty member who will be advising student.

The faculty member supervising this arranged class is responsible for the following:

- Completing the required form with student signature
- Submitting request to GPC for review and approval
- Requesting the signature of the SPEA Director
- Student shall be given a copy of the paperwork once all the necessary signatures have been obtained and a copy shall be placed in the student's file.

All arranged courses must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Program Committee and Program Director prior to registration of the course. All requests for arranged courses and/ or independent study need to be submitted one month prior to the start of the semester

that the course will be taken. All paperwork must be submitted and approved before student will be permitted to register. Certificate students may not enroll in any V580 or V590 courses to complete program requirements.

*(Revised 01/27/2015)*

## **V600 CAPSTONE COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The M.P.A. core requirement ensures that each student acquires both the prerequisite analytical skills and an understanding of policy issues and governmental processes that compose the environment within which graduates will pursue their careers. Therefore, students enrolling in the Capstone in Public & Environmental Affairs (V600) must meet the following requirements prior to registering for this course:

- Must have completed a minimum of 39 graduate credit hours.
- Must have completed all core requirement courses which include all of the following: V500, V502, V506, V517, V540 and V560. **No exceptions.**

## **GRADUATE STUDENTS' RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS**

In accordance with Indiana University regulations, student records are confidential and are available to other persons only under specific conditions as outlined in university regulations.

Additional information on confidentiality of records can be found at:

<http://www.iun.edu/bulletin/services/registrar.shtml>

### **STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students are responsible for planning their own academic programs and for meeting the requirements for their degree or certificate programs. Faculty and academic advisors may assist students in meeting their responsibilities. Due process is followed in the event of disciplinary or other actions. Students should read the IUN Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, which can be accessed at <http://www.iun.edu/bulletin/policies/student-rights.shtml>. In addition to the University's code, students should also familiarize themselves with the

College of Health and Human Services Code of Conduct which can be accessed at [www.iun.edu/chhs/docs/chhs\\_code\\_conduct.pdf](http://www.iun.edu/chhs/docs/chhs_code_conduct.pdf), to ensure they are aware of these rights and

responsibilities.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity requires that students take credit only for their own ideas and efforts. Misconduct, including cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, interference, or facilitating academic dishonesty, is prohibited because it undermines the bonds of trust and cooperation among members of this community and between us and those who may depend on our knowledge and integrity. Complete details are contained in the Indiana University Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct at [www.iun.edu/bulletin/policies/student-rights.shtml](http://www.iun.edu/bulletin/policies/student-rights.shtml).

### **ACADEMIC APPEALS**

Students may appeal academic decisions made by SPEA faculty members. Attempts to resolve such issues should be made first at the class/instructor level. If necessary, written appeals should be submitted to relevant program directors. Appeals must be submitted before the last day of classes in the semester following the point at which the events in question occurred.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend all classes. While individual faculty members may create their own attendance policies, students should understand that absences are expected to be rare and that faculty should be contacted in advance if possible.

(Created 08/01/2013)

### **ACADEMIC PLANNING**

Students are expected to take required courses as indicated on their planning sheets. Students are expected to know the course rotation schedule and take courses as appropriate in order to complete their degree on time. Failure to take the specific courses at certain times may result in a delay in the degree. In very rare circumstances, and only with the permission of both the Graduate Program Coordinator and the affected faculty, shall substitutions for elective courses be allowed. No substitutions for the core courses will be permitted.

(Created 08/01/2013)