

# Graduate School of Public Affairs

University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center  
(UCDHSC)



## Handbook for the Master in Public Administration Program

Approved by the GSPA Faculty  
September, 1986  
Revised September, 1989  
Revised August, 1990  
Revised August, 1991  
Revised January, 1992  
Revised February, 1997  
Revised January, 1998  
Revised December, 1999  
Revised January, 2006– final version

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Purpose of Handbook

This handbook is designed to acquaint students with the policies and procedures of the Graduate School of Public Affairs and, in so doing, to facilitate their progress toward earning the degree of Master of Public Administration. Ignoring or postponing these procedures may delay completion of the degree. Therefore, students are encouraged to read this handbook carefully and consult their advisors in cases where they have questions.

The policies and procedures described here are subject to change and can be affected by changes in the policies of the University of Colorado. University-wide policies have priority over the policies of GSPA.

Policies governing the MPA Program are almost identical for the Downtown Denver and Colorado Springs campuses; however, students at Colorado Springs should consult a copy of that program's handbook for campus-specific details and personnel.

## 1.1 Graduate School of Public Affairs

The University of Colorado's Graduate School of Public Affairs offers three degrees: Master of Public Administration, Master of Criminal Justice, and Ph.D. in Public Affairs. The principal functions of the School are to: (a) provide programs of professional education, training, and service for people working, or with aspirations to work, in the public and nonprofit sectors, and (b) undertake research on issues of concern to the field of public administration; federal, state and local government; and nonprofit organizations.

## 1.2 The MPA Degree

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree is multidisciplinary and designed to provide graduate professional education for men and women who wish to prepare themselves for administrative and/or policy careers in government, the nonprofit sector, or organizations that are concerned with government affairs. The program also provides education and training for those already employed in the public and nonprofit sectors to enhance their skills and assist them in gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to advance their careers. In addition to the courses offered by GSPA, cooperating departments and schools of the University offer courses and seminars that may be included in the degree plans of graduate students who anticipate receiving the MPA degree.

The MPA curriculum is designed to integrate theory and practice, to produce managers and policy makers who have the knowledge and skills necessary to manage organizations and to analyze and evaluate policies and make recommendations for improvement.

Graduates of the MPA program will be able to:

- Make use of a broad base of knowledge and research in public and nonprofit administration and policy analysis;
- Communicate effectively in written and oral forms; and
- Apply critical thinking skills to solve problems in a constructive manner.

### 1.3 MPA Administration

The MPA program is administered by the Graduate School of Public Affairs. The MPA Director is the key administrative officer for the program. She chairs the MPA Committee, which develops and approves overall MPA policies, and serves as the central contact for questions regarding MPA policies. The Director of Marketing, Community Relations, and Alumni Affairs also serves on the MPA committee and is a source of information to students regarding the program and its policies and procedures. Dawn Savage and Antoinette Sandoval, the two student services coordinators, are also available to answer questions regarding procedures. They can provide information on applying to the program, registration, financial aid, and related issues.

## **2. ADMISSIONS**

### 2.0 Admissions Requirements

Students who wish to apply for admission to the MPA program should request an application package from the Director of Marketing, Community Relations, and Alumni Affairs at (303) 556-5985. The director can answer students' questions about the program. Prospective students need to submit a completed University of Colorado Graduate Admission Application. All application materials, including letters of recommendation, transcripts, and test scores should be sent directly to the Student Services Coordinators by the source (e.g., college, testing service, individual providing reference). Transcripts and examination scores issued to the student cannot be accepted.

Applicants must submit the following materials:

1. Parts I and II of the University of Colorado Graduate Admission Application
2. Two sets of official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work. The transcripts must indicate successful completion of a baccalaureate degree from a college or university of accredited standing, preferably with a grade-point average of 3.00 or higher (where 4.0 = A).
3. A \$50 application fee. A check for this amount made out to "UCDHSC" (University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center) must accompany the completed admission application.

4. Three recommendations from qualified references on forms that the applicant will receive upon requesting an application package. Recommendations may come from professors, employers, or others who are acquainted with the prospective student's scholarly abilities and/or professional work. Unless students have been out of school for some years, we encourage students to include at least one or two references from faculty with whom they completed a course.
5. Official reports of scores on a scholastic aptitude test, such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT) or the Graduate Management Aptitude Test (GMAT). (NOTE: The submission of test scores is optional, not mandatory, for students who qualify for the Executive MPA.) These aptitude test scores should be no more than five years old. Information about examinations and necessary registration forms may be obtained from the UCDHSC Assessment and Testing Center.

Applicants planning to take the GRE in the future should specify that their graduate major at the University of Colorado will be Public Administration (Graduate School Department Code Number 4801 for item 11, and Institution Code R-4875-1 on the GRE application form). Students must take the verbal, quantitative, and writing portions of the test.

6. International students whose first language is not English are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or an equivalent. Minimum TOEFL scores for admission to the MPA program are 550 on the paper version and 223 on the computer-based version of the TOEFL.
7. Additional materials required for application to the Program on Domestic Violence include:
  - (a) An essay of no more than five pages that:
    1. Describes your commitment to the movement to end violence against women and children by relating your past involvement with the movement in a staff, board and/or volunteer capacity. Please describe the contribution(s) you have made to the movement, and the benefit(s) you have received from your service. Please list any coursework you have completed regarding violence against women.
    2. Outlines your philosophy regarding organizational management and leadership. Give a personal example of putting this philosophy into action.
    3. Explains your personal beliefs about why women are battered.
    4. Describes your vision of how you might be involved in a management capacity within a domestic violence (or related) nonprofit or public organization in the future (after successfully completing the Program on Domestic Violence).
    5. Explains the strengths that you bring to and the growth you expect from the Program.
  - (b) Resume

The Admissions Subcommittee of the MPA Committee will weigh all the materials described above in making admissions decisions. Admission to the MPA program is based upon applicants' academic qualifications as demonstrated by their previous academic performance and test scores and the length and level of their work experience. Some students pursuing an MPA have not been in the classroom for quite a few years. In these cases, their work experience will be considered as a factor in admissions. The committee attempts to judge each candidate's potential for academic and career success.

### 2.1 Provisional Admission Status

Students who do not meet the minimum qualifications for admission may be admitted as provisional students if elements of their application suggest they may be able to perform successfully in the program. Provisional students will be required to take two of three core courses (PAD 5001, 5003, or 5004) in their first semester and make at least a B in each course. They may take no other GSPA courses until they have been formally admitted into the program. Students should take these courses in a traditional, face-to-face format unless the on-line format is the only feasible option. At the conclusion of their first semester, students' performance in these courses will be reviewed to determine if they should be admitted to the program.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2 Admission Calendar

Admission to the MPA program is made on a semester basis. The calendar for submission of admission materials is as follows:

Fall Semester	June 1
Spring Semester	November 1
Summer Session	April 1

*All* application materials should normally be received by these deadlines.

Applications are reviewed as soon as they are complete, and students are notified by letter as soon as admission is granted by GSPA. Students seeking financial aid must await formal approval for admission by the University. This process may take slightly longer than the GSPA admissions process.

### 2.3 Nondegree Seeking (Special) Student Status

Students need not be admitted to the MPA program in order to take courses offered by the department. Such students can attend classes as "nondegree" students by completing an

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<sup>1</sup> Students in the Rocky Mountain MPA Program may take their provisional courses on line. Students whose work schedules hinder their taking two courses in one semester may take one of the three courses in two subsequent semesters. Other exceptions include students in the Domestic Violence concentration who complete their courses as a cohort. These students may take the domestic violence course in their first semester along with one of the three specified courses for provisional students. On the UCCS campus, if only one of the three courses is offered, students may take that course and one elective their first semester or they may consider on-line delivery of the specified courses. The Associate Dean on the UCCS campus will serve as their advisor.

Application for Nondegree Admission. These applications are available from the UCDHSC Office of Admissions and Records. Students pursuing a certificate in one of the concentration areas rather than an MPA degree should apply as nondegree students.

Other nondegree students include students who are interested in exploring the courses and either have an application in process or may apply in the future. If a nondegree student later applies and is admitted to the program, no more than twelve credit hours of course work taken as a nondegree student may be applied to the MPA degree.

Taking courses as a nondegree student contains some element of risk because admission to the program is not a certainty. Therefore, we encourage students to apply as soon as they have realized they are interested in pursuing the degree. The nondegree status is most useful when students want to explore the field and/or when their application is not complete (e.g., test scores and/or reference letters have not been received, and they want to begin courses).

#### 2.4 Readmission of Former and Suspended Students

*Former Students:* Students who have been admitted to GSPA must complete their course work within six years from their date of admission (see Section 3.2). Occasionally, however, students find it necessary to interrupt their course work for one or more semesters.

Students who have not enrolled in any courses during the semester for which they were admitted will be considered inactive and required to resubmit a Part I Application; they should contact the GSPA Student Services Coordinator.

If three or more *but fewer than twelve* semesters (including summer session) have passed since the student has been enrolled, the student should:

1. Contact the GSPA Student Services Coordinators to determine his/her eligibility to return and pursue the same degree; and
2. Submit a new Application Part I to the UCDHSC Office of Admissions for the term in which they expect to return to the University. A \$50 application fee is required.

If more than twelve semesters (including summer session) have passed, readmission requires repeating the full application process (see Section 2.0).

*Suspended Students:* A suspended student (see Section 7.1.2) is eligible to apply for readmission no sooner than one year after the suspension, and must submit a new Part I Application. Approval or rejection of this application rests jointly with the GSPA Dean and the MPA Director. Students who do not agree with this decision may appeal to the UCDHSC Graduate Council.

## 2.5 Faculty Advisers

Following admission to the MPA program, students will be assigned a faculty adviser by the GSPA office. The faculty adviser provides information and advice on the MPA curriculum and specific course offerings. Specifically, the advisor works with the student to complete a Degree Plan which outlines the courses the student might take each semester and serves as a guide for completing the program. The student should schedule a meeting with his/her faculty adviser within the first two weeks of the first semester of attendance to complete a Degree Plan and learn more about the program.

Those students who have selected a concentration are assigned an advisor who works in that area of concentration. Students who do not choose a concentration are assigned advisors on a faculty rotation basis. Students may request another advisor if they find their assigned advisor's area of expertise and interest does not serve their career needs. Students may learn of the areas of expertise of faculty by reviewing the backgrounds and research interests of faculty on the GSPA website. Students wishing to change faculty advisers can do so by asking another faculty member to serve as adviser and, upon obtaining agreement, notifying the GSPA office of the change.

## **3. MPA REQUIREMENTS**

### 3.0 Credit Hours

To earn an MPA degree the student must:

- (a) complete a minimum of 36 semester hours of graduate work with a total grade-point average of B or better;
  - (b) receive a grade of B- or better in all required core courses (see Section 3.3).
- Students who do not meet this minimum grade requirement in a core course must re-take the course until they meet the requirement.

No graduate course in which the student has earned a grade less than a C- is accepted toward the degree.

Pre-service students (those who have not had the equivalent of at least one year of professional practice experience in a public or nonprofit organization) are required to take an additional three semester hours of field study, bringing their minimum total hours to 39 semester credit hours. These three credit hours are met by taking PAD 6910, Field Study in Public Administration (see Section 3.9 below).

### 3.1 Course Load

The normal course load for a full-time student is 9 to 12 credit hours per semester; for financial aid purposes, full-time status for graduate students is five credit hours per semester. Students who work full time should not carry more than six semester hours. Students who would like to carry a course load above 12 hours per semester should consult their faculty advisers.

### 3.2 Time Requirements for MPA Degree

Although the MPA program requires intensive commitment, it does not require full-time study. Most courses are offered during evening hours, on weekends on an intensive basis, or on-line. Students should expect to complete the degree in no less than one and no more than six years (the average is about two and one-half years). Time spent on Leave of Absence (i.e., when the student is not enrolled in courses) does count toward the six-year limit.

With the approval of their faculty adviser and the MPA Program Director, students who are making steady progress toward the degree may be allowed to extend the six-year limit by one or two additional semesters. Such approval should be sought as far as possible in advance of the student's planned graduation date.

### 3.3 MPA Common Core Courses

All MPA students must complete the following common required core courses<sup>2</sup>:

PAD 5001	Introduction to Public Administration and Public Service	3 credit hours
PAD 5002	Organizational Management & Change	3 credit hours
PAD 5003	Research and Analytic Methods	3 credit hours
PAD 5004	Economics and Public Finance	3 credit hours
PAD 5005	Democracy and Policy Making	3 credit hours
PAD 5006	Leadership and Ethics	3 credit hours
<i>TOTAL</i>		<i>18 HOURS</i>

Course descriptions can be found in the course catalog.

### 3.4 MPA Electives

Students must complete five elective courses (15 credit hours) to be selected with the approval of their faculty adviser. GSPA offers a wide variety of electives in management and policy areas. Some are offered on a routine basis; others may be a one-time offering. Concentration courses are electives that may be taken by students pursuing that concentration or students who have an interest in just a particular course. Some examples of other elective courses offered by GSPA include but are not limited to:

PAD 5220	Managing People in Public and Nonprofit Organizations
PAD 5310	Policy Formulation and Implementation
PAD 5400	Law and Public Policy
PAD 5440	Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
PAD 5503	Budgeting and Accounting
PAD 5626	Local Government Politics
PAD 5650	Disaster and Emergency Management Policies

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<sup>2</sup> Students in the Executive MPA program must complete PAD 5001 and three others as agreed upon with their advisor. See Section 4.1.5.

In addition, students may take courses at other colleges and universities or in other schools and colleges within UCDHSC. Up to nine semester credit hours may be transferred in from other institutions (see Section 7.0).

### 3.5 Independent Study

Students who are interested in pursuing a specific line of study or inquiry which is not covered through the regular course offerings may elect to take an independent study course with a member of the faculty. Students should first consider what area of study they would like to pursue and discuss the topic with a willing faculty member who has expertise in the area. With faculty assistance, such students will then develop a course of study which meets the requirements of the University and GSPA, as well as student needs. Students must then complete a CU-Denver Special Processing Form (available from the GSPA Office) and have it approved by the supervising faculty member. The form must be submitted and approved by the posted add/drop period. Such students will then be registered for PAD 6840, Independent Study, with the use of the Special Processing Form.

Independent study courses are subject to the following restrictions: Participating students must be fully admitted to the MPA program. The credit hours for any one independent study course may vary from one to three credit hours, the exact credit hours to be determined by the faculty supervisor and commensurate with the degree of complexity and difficulty of the project. No more than six hours of independent study credit may apply toward MPA requirements.

### 3.6 Capstone Requirements: Advanced Seminar and Thesis

All MPA students are required to complete PAD 5361, Advanced Seminar in Public Policy and Management, in which they write and present a professional paper that is the product of independent study. The Advanced Seminar is taken during the *last* semester of the student's degree program. All core courses should be completed before the advanced seminar course is taken.

The Advanced Seminar course is the capstone course for the program. In it, students conduct an independent client-based project or research project. They work with a client in a public or nonprofit agency to identify a problem and then, using the knowledge and skills they have gained in the program, develop a paper to address the problem. Projects take many different forms including business plans, marketing plans, surveys and interviews, salary studies, etc. The principle of the course is that it provides students with an opportunity to integrate what they have learned and apply it to a real world problem. Further, it provides the faculty opportunity to judge the student's ability to perform such work. (See Guidelines for Course Administration and Advising, AY 96-97: PAD 5361.)

The thesis option is available for MPA students, but is rarely used. The Advanced Seminar provides students with the opportunity to pursue a research option for those who prefer a pure research project, but students are encouraged to pursue the client-oriented option in order to practice their research skills with a public agency or organization. The thesis option, however, may be appropriate for students considering application to the Ph.D. program. Unlike the

advanced seminar, the thesis option is six-credit hours and, thus, requires a substantive research project. The student conducts a comprehensive review of the theoretical and research literature in the subject area of their thesis and collects original data or analyzes existing data in new ways. (See the GSPA Thesis Guidelines for more detail.)

The thesis option is available only to those students who have achieved an exceptional academic record and who wish to pursue independent research of a theoretical nature that will take longer than a research-based advanced seminar paper.

Minimum eligibility requirements for pursuing a thesis include:

1. Matriculation in the MPA program (Executive MPA students are not eligible);
2. Successful completion of all core courses;
3. Overall GPA of 3.75 or higher;
4. Demonstrated ability to pursue theoretical work, as evidenced by two submitted research papers developed in GSPA courses or elsewhere;
5. Preliminary identification of a thesis topic or area of interest; and
6. Agreement of two GSPA faculty members to serve on the thesis committee (one as Thesis Adviser).

A student wishing to undertake the thesis option applies formally through her/his faculty academic adviser, first, to establish eligibility with respect to the above criteria, and second, to identify appropriate faculty members to serve on the student's thesis committee. The thesis committee consists of three people: a major advisor who is a full-time GSPA faculty member, and two others. One of these must be a GSPA faculty member, though the person can be an adjunct faculty member, and the other is a reader who has expertise in the area, but is either from the community or another school or department. (NOTE: Although the formal procedures entail application through the academic adviser, the student is encouraged to make informal contacts with appropriate subject-matter faculty to determine interest and availability.)

### 3.7 Internship (Field Study in Public Administration)

#### 3.7.1 Overview

Students who do not have at least one year of professional experience in the field of public administration or nonprofit management, or the equivalent, are required to enroll in Field Study in Public Administration (PAD 6910).<sup>3</sup> Other students may choose to complete an internship to obtain additional experience that differs from or is more specialized than their past experience. These internships may be completed locally or in another city or state. (GSPA receives announcements of internships available in public and nonprofit settings across the nation.)

In the internship, students work part-time or full-time as interns for government agencies, legislatures, government-related organizations, and nonprofit groups. At a minimum, students

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<sup>3</sup> Students enrolled in the Program on Domestic Violence who do not have at least one year of professional experience working in the domestic violence field or equivalent will be required to enroll in Field Study in Public Administration (PAD 6910).

are required to complete a total of 300 work hours for the internship. This includes a minimum of 240 hours on the job and 60 hours completing a paper about the internship. The internships may be paid or unpaid, depending upon the organization involved. Students gain useful experience in public management, policy research, and the policy process through their work. The objectives of the internship are:

1. To expose MPA students to the challenging career opportunities in the public service.
2. To enable public and nonprofit organizations to attract good students to government, thereby improving the overall quality of the public service.
3. To provide pre-service students with “real world” work experiences to allow them to link classroom training with actual practice of public administration.
4. To offer students experience that will allow them to make better informed career decisions.

### 3.7.2 Requirements

In their internships, students must meet both the requirements of their employing agency and those of the Graduate School of Public Affairs. The requirements of the employer are established before actually beginning work through a written agreement. The written agreement must be approved in advance by the GSPA field study instructor for the course. (The field study instructor is typically the student’s faculty adviser.) In order to earn three semester credit hours, students must work a minimum of 240 hours on the job. The work period can be for an academic semester or during the summer. Work schedules are arranged with the student’s employing agency. In addition, both the employer and the student will complete an evaluation of the internship experience upon completion of the hours.

Students also write a paper to describe the nature of the field experience, how they used the knowledge and skills they gained through their course work, and the knowledge and skills they gained in the internship. Portions of this paper should compare and contrast the learning in the organization with learning from the scholarly literature and classroom instruction. The field study instructor will advise the student on the paper, read and provide feedback, and give a final grade for the paper and the internship.

### 3.7.3 Application and Administration Procedures

To be eligible for an internship, students must have completed at least 18 credit hours toward the MPA degree. The student should then contact their Student Services Coordinator to obtain more detailed policies on internships. (These policies can also be obtained from the GSPA website.) The next step is for the student to find an internship. Requests for interns from agencies and organizations are posted on the GSPAJOB electronic mailing list. Students use the file to identify potential positions. The UCDHSC Career Center also works with students to identify internships. Lissa Gallagher specializes in working with GSPA students to find internships. She

can be reached at (303) 556-4542. Alternatively, students may initiate contact with agencies not included on the GSPAJOB list to seek internships. Students should also contact their advisors for suggestions concerning internships and other faculty who may have expertise and contacts in the specific area of interest. Students are responsible for identifying potential internships, contacting the agencies and arranging for interviews. The GSPA office is able to facilitate this process, but the final responsibility lies with the student.

When the student has initially established an internship relationship with an agency or organization, the intern's supervisor at the agency will need to complete a short form outlining the agreement between the organization and the student and the tasks in which the intern will be involved. The agreement must be approved by the field study instructor (who is typically the student's faculty adviser) before the student begins work.

During their internships, students should meet periodically with their field study instructors periodically to discuss the internship work, how it is building on course work, the knowledge and skills being acquired, and the paper to be produced. The instructor will establish a time frame and discuss expectations for the paper. The paper must be completed and a grade assigned for credit to be obtained for the course.

Upon completion of the internship program, both the intern and the supervisor will complete an evaluation report. These forms are available from the GSPA Student Services Coordinators or on the GSPA website (<http://www.cudenver.edu/Academics/Colleges/GSPA>).

#### 3.7.4 Request to Waive the Internship Requirement

The admissions committee examines each student's application to the program and determines whether an internship is appropriate or should be waived. Students who believe vital experiences have been overlooked may appeal the admissions decision. To do so, they should obtain the Request to Waive the Internship Requirement form from the GSPA office or the MPA section of the GSPA website (<http://www.cudenver.edu/Academics/Colleges/GSPA>). After completing the form (which requests the attachment of a current resume and a sheet describing the applicable work experience), students should discuss the request for waiver with their faculty advisors.

## **4. OTHER MPA OPTIONS**

### 4.0 Overview

The MPA degree offers several options to students. Students in the traditional program may choose to apply to or enroll in a concentration. The MPA concentrations include: local government; environmental policy, management, and law; nonprofit organizations; and domestic violence. Another option for students with significant experience in the public sector is the Executive MPA program. Each of these concentrations and special programs is described below.

Students may also pursue one of GSPA's dual degree programs. These include joint programs with the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at UCDHSC (MPA/MURP), with the College of Liberal Arts at UCDHSC (MPA/BA), and with the Department of Communications at UCDHSC (MPA/Master of Science in Technical Writing, MSTW) and the University of Colorado Law School on the Boulder campus (MPA/Juris Doctor).

As an alternative to the traditional degree described above, the MPA student may choose to apply to four other formats of program delivery: the Accelerated MPA program (AMPA), the Rocky Mountain MPA program (an on-line degree program designed primarily for students who live at a great distance from the Denver metropolitan area), and the Western Slope program (for students who live in the Grand Junction or Western Slope area of Colorado). Each of these is described briefly below.

#### 4.1 Special MPA Programs: Executive MPA, Concentrations, and Certificates

Although many students earn a general MPA degree, others choose to pursue a concentration. Students choosing a concentration use their elective hours to take courses in their concentration. Students wishing to declare a concentration must take their electives in the concentration area and courses approved by their concentration advisor. Concentrations typically have two to three required courses; the remaining courses for the concentration can vary, but must be approved by the concentration advisor. The courses for each concentration are listed below.

Certificates in each of these areas may also be earned by students who do not wish to earn an MPA degree, but would like to gain knowledge in one of the concentration areas. A certificate may be earned by meeting the 15 credit-hour requirement for each concentration.<sup>4</sup> (See Section 2.3 on Nondegree-Seeking Students for information on applying to pursue a certificate.)

##### 4.1.1 Environmental Policy, Management, and Law Concentration

Two of the three courses listed below are required of students in this concentration:

PAD 5631	Seminar in Environmental Politics and Policy
PAD 5632	Seminar in Environmental Management
PAD 5633	Seminar in Natural Resource and Environmental Health Law

Plus three other elective courses approved by the director of the Environmental Law and Policy concentration, Professor Lloyd Burton.

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<sup>4</sup> To earn a certificate in Environmental Policy, Management, and Law, students must also complete PAD 5001, Governance and Institutions.

#### 4.1.2 Local Government Concentration

Two of the three courses listed below are required of students in this concentration:

PAD 5625	Local Government Management
PAD 5626	Local Government Politics and Policy
PAD 5628	Urban Social Problems

Plus three other elective courses approved by the director of the Local Government concentration, Professor Allan Wallis.

#### 4.1.3 Nonprofit Organization Concentration

These two courses are required for all students pursuing the nonprofit concentration:

PAD 5110	Seminar on Nonprofit Management
PAD 5140	Nonprofit Financial Management

Plus three other elective courses from the list below or other courses approved by the director of the Nonprofit Organization concentration, Professor Stephen Block.

PAD 5120	Nonprofits and Public Policy
PAD 5130	Collaboration Across Sectors
PAD 5150	Understanding and Achieving Funding Diversity
PAD 5160	Nonprofit Boards and Executive Leadership
PAD 5170	Strategic Management for Nonprofit and Public Managers
PAD 5180	Social Entrepreneurship

#### 4.1.4 Domestic Violence Concentration

The four courses listed below are required of students in this concentration:

PAD 5910	Women and Violence: A Sociological Perspective
PAD 5920	The Psychology of Domestic Violence
PAD 5930	Battered Women and the Legal System
PAD 6600	Social Change and Domestic Violence Advocacy

Plus one other elective course approved by the director of the Program on Domestic Violence, Barbara Paradiso.

#### 4.1.5 The Executive MPA

This option is designed for senior officials and managers. Admission is highly competitive and is based upon (1) evidence of ability to successfully complete graduate-level course work, and (2) executive-level experience in the public or nonprofit sector and the demonstrated potential to provide future executive leadership.

In addition to the application materials listed in Section 2.0, applicants to the Executive MPA program must submit a current resume and the Executive MPA Data Sheet, a form available on the GSPA web site that requests information about their management experience.

Submission of scores from such aptitude tests as the Graduate Record Examination is not mandatory for students who qualify for the Executive MPA. If their undergraduate GPA is near the minimum for admission, however, they may be advised to present test scores as supporting evidence of academic aptitude.

The Executive MPA requires 30 credit hours of course work at GSPA, plus six credit hours at one of the Management Development Centers, or MDCs (one in Baltimore, MD and the other in Aurora, CO) of the federal Office of Personnel Management ([www.leadership.opm.gov](http://www.leadership.opm.gov)). The six credits at the MDCs must include one of the Assessment Seminars (Management, Leadership, or Executive) and one of the Core Leadership Seminars.

Two GSPA courses are required for all Executive MPA students: PAD 5001 (Introduction to Public Administration and Public Service), taken as the first course in their program, and PAD 5361 (Advanced Seminar), which should be the last course in the program. Executive MPA students must also complete three core courses in addition to PAD 5001 and five other elective courses. Up to four elective courses may be taken at the MDCs.

Although Executive MPAs are not required to take all six core courses, they will be expected to demonstrate competencies in the basic areas of the core: administration/management, research/statistics, economics/finance, public policy, and ethics. Skills may be demonstrated by past course work, on-the-job experience, or by successfully completing GSPA courses. The advisor will determine if the student has demonstrated these skills. The advisor for this program is Associate Dean Linda DeLeon.

## 4.2 Dual Degree Programs

Dual degree programs have the advantage of reducing the number of courses that students would need to complete if they obtained each degree separately. For most, this is accomplished by having required courses in one program count as electives in the other program. Students must apply formally to each program for admission and indicate to each program their desire to pursue a dual degree.

### 4.2.1 Dual Degree in Public Administration and Urban and Regional Planning (MPA/MURP)

This dual degree program offers students the opportunity to gain skills in planning while also gaining an awareness of the broader public settings in which planning takes place. Students pursuing this dual degree will take 24 credit hours in the MPA program (core courses, the advanced seminar and one elective selected from a proscribed list) and 39 credit hours in Urban and Regional Planning (core plus track courses). Both programs require a statistics course; students may choose one, either the MPA statistics class or the URP statistics class, to count for both program requirements. The required courses in URP count as electives for the MPA degree. Similarly, the required courses in the MPA count as electives for the URP degree.

Students must choose this dual degree before completing more than 30 credit hours in one program. Professor Allan Wallis is the GSPA advisor for this program.

#### 4.2.2. Dual Degree in Public Administration and Technical Communications (MPA/MSTC)

This dual degree might appeal to students who have an interest in the development, operation, and management of communication systems networks and management information systems in public or nonprofit settings. Courses in technical communications include Organizational Communication, Technical Communication: Writing, and Technical Communication: Graphics. The core courses in each program count as the electives in the other program. Professor Lloyd Burton is the GSPA advisor for this program.

#### 4.2.3. Dual Degree in Public Administration and Bachelor of Arts (MPA/BA)

This dual degree is for undergraduate students in the liberal arts who know they want to pursue a career in the public or nonprofit sector. The dual degree allows students to complete what would normally be a six-year program in five years. Bachelor's candidates may pursue a major in any area in the liberal arts (e.g., economics, political science, sociology, communication). The MPA courses count toward the student's elective requirements for the bachelor's degree. Students interested in this joint degree should contact the College of Liberal Arts at (303) 556-3396. The GSPA advisor for this program is the Director of Marketing, Community Relations, and Alumni Affairs.

#### 4.2.4. Dual Degree in Law and Public Policy (MPA/LLD)

Students who are interested in law and public administration may complete these two degrees in four years rather than the typical five years. Students who are interested in obtaining a senior administrative post or representing clients in transactions with government agencies or institutions may be interested in pursuing this dual degree. Students may begin with either MPA or law courses, but they must begin their legal study no later than the second year of this four-year program and their first year of law study must concentrate only on law courses. The GSPA advisor for this program is Professor Lloyd Burton.

### 4.3 Alternate Modes of Completing the MPA: Accelerated and On-Line Programs

This section describes means of completing the MPA degree that differ from our traditional program. These include: (a) the Accelerated MPA program, an intensive 12-month MPA program; and (b) the Rocky Mountain MPA, an on-line degree program for students who live at a distance from the metro area. The special characteristics of each are described below. Otherwise, the standard options described elsewhere in the Handbook apply to each program.

#### 4.3.1 Accelerated MPA Program (AMPA)

This program is a full-time, day-time program designed for strong students who have the desire, energy, and aptitude to complete a master's program in twelve months. Approximately 20 students complete this program each year as a cohort; that is, the AMPA students take all their

courses together as a group. Students begin in the fall semester and, if they successfully complete all their course work, they complete the program at the end of the following summer. During the nine-month academic year, the two semesters are divided into quarters and the AMPA students take three courses each quarter. They begin their advanced seminar project during the last quarter, when they are taking only two courses, and complete the advanced seminar project in the summer. Because of the accelerated nature of this program, students may not choose a concentration or electives. Instead, the program consists of the six core courses, five courses commonly selected as electives by traditional students, and the advanced seminar.

Because of the intensive schedule of the AMPA program, admissions standards are more selective. Further, students who are employed full-time are not eligible for this program. Students need to have sufficient time to meet the rigors of this one-year Master's program.

The program was designed for the increasing number of pre-service applicants applying for the MPA. (Pre-service students are those who have little or no work experience in the public or nonprofit sectors and have often completed their undergraduate degree recently.) However, while the program includes many young students, it also includes a broad mix of people, including students from other countries and individuals making major career changes.

Students in the AMPA program pay a different tuition rate. The rate is more than the tuition traditional students would pay for one year because the AMPA students are taking many more courses; however, the tuition is less than students would pay if they completed the traditional MPA in two years or more. Information on tuition for the AMPA program may be obtained from the Director of Marketing, Community Relations, and Alumni Affairs.

#### 4.3.2 Rocky Mountain MPA Program

The Rocky Mountain MPA program is a program that enables students who live at some distance from the Denver metropolitan area to obtain their MPA entirely through on-line classes. Criteria and procedures for admission to this program are identical to those for the traditional MPA program.

Students in the Rocky Mountain MPA program may choose to concentrate in nonprofit organization or may pursue the generic MPA degree. The local government, environmental, and domestic violence concentrations are not available online.

For the fall and spring semesters, GSPA offers all core courses and the advanced seminar on-line as well as two to three electives. Students may check the course grid on the GSPA web site to identify electives for which on-line courses have been developed and learn when they will be offered.

#### 4.4 Western Slope Program

The Western Slope Program is designed for students interested in public administration who live on the Western Slope of Colorado, including the Grand Junction area. The program is directed by Dr. Fred Ranguet, a member of the GSPA faculty, using Mesa State College facilities. One

course a semester is offered on the Mesa State campus. Students take other courses online or may come to Denver or Colorado Springs for courses offered in weekend-intensive formats.

Admissions procedures for this program are identical to those for the traditional program.

## **5. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

### 5.0 Overview

Financial assistance is designed to support those students who would not be able to attend GSPA without aid. The primary source of student financial assistance is the Office of Financial Aid/Student Employment at (303) 556-2886.

The Colorado Graduate Grant is administered by the Office of Financial Aid. Competition for these funds is based on demonstrated need and is open to graduate students who are residents of the State of Colorado. Grant awards are announced each semester for the following term. Applications are available from the Office of Financial Aid.

The Office of Financial Aid also provides short-term loan assistance to students who have completed one or more semesters in residence. Short-term loans are designed to supplement inadequate personal funds and provide for emergencies. Application should be made directly to the Office of Financial Aid at (303) 556-2886.

Additionally, the Graduate School of Public Affairs offers several types of financial assistance to students. These range from \$100 to \$500 awards and are given out annually. Applications for fall semester are due back to the GSPA office by April 1. GSPA Scholarship Applications are available from the GSPA web site (<http://www.cudenver.edu/Academics/Colleges/GSPA>).

### 5.1 Application Procedures

In order to be considered for university-wide student aid, students must complete application forms available in the Office of Financial Aid. Students are asked to complete an institutional application and a needs analysis form. Eligibility requirements are outlined in the University catalog and can be explained at the Office of Financial Aid. Students who wish to apply for GSPA assistance should complete the GSPA Scholarship Form by April 1.

## **6. MPA GRADUATION PROCEDURES**

Students who have completed all the requirements for the MPA degree can apply for candidacy and graduation in the fall, spring, or summer semesters. (Students who graduate in the summer may participate in graduation ceremonies in the fall. No ceremonies are held in the summer.) There are, however, deadlines for the submission of graduation materials. Should students not be able to meet the deadlines, or if they are unable to complete all the degree requirements by the end of the term in which they seek to graduate, they can reapply for graduation in a subsequent semester.

In order to graduate, students must:

1. Submit an approved Application for Admission to Candidacy form (available from the GSPA Student Service Coordinators) to the GSPA office no later than the end of the first month of the semester in which they plan to graduate. Indicate that by the date of graduation you will have completed all courses indicated on your approved MPA Degree Plan with at least a B average.
2. Submit an Application for Diploma card to the GSPA office no later than the deadline specified above. This form can be picked up from the GSPA Student Services Coordinators and will indicate the exact spelling of your name as it will appear on the diploma.

Students who have completed the Application for Admission to Candidacy and are on the graduation list, but find they will not be able to complete the program requirements before graduation should notify the GSPA office as soon as possible.

## **7. GSPA ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### 7.0 Transfer Credits

Students who have taken graduate course work related to public administration at other institutions may be able to transfer some portion of that work into the GSPA MPA program if the course work has not been applied toward a degree. A maximum of nine graduate-level semester hours may be transferred. Typically, courses that are approved for transfer are counted as electives. In order for a course to substitute for a core or required class, the course must have been completed at an accredited school of public affairs. Students should have made at least a B in courses they request to transfer.

Students should request transfer of credits immediately after successfully completing one semester of course work as a regularly admitted degree student. In order to request a transfer of credit, students need to complete the Transfer of Credit form available from the GSPA Student Services Coordinators and on the GSPA web site (<http://www.cudenver.edu/Academics/Colleges/GSPA>) and attach official transcripts to the form (if GSPA does not have a copy of the official transcripts). The request is then reviewed by the student's faculty adviser, the MPA director and the Dean. Upon review, the Dean's office will notify the student of acceptance or rejection of his/her request.

### 7.1 Grading Policy

Grades offered in GSPA courses (except internship and thesis) are based on an A to F scale, with each letter grade representing the following standard narrative description:

- A. Work beyond the level of a typical graduate student; exemplary work. (An A equals 4 grade points, an A- equals 3.6 points.)

- B. Work typical of a graduate student; indicates student has attained the knowledge and skills intended for the course. (A B+ equals 3.3, a B equals 3.0., and a B- equals 2.7 points.)
- C. Performance is below graduate-level expectations. (A C+ earns 2.3 grade points, a C yields 2.0).
- D. Substandard performance in all aspects of the work of the course; inadequate comprehension of assigned reading material. (D equals 1.0 grade points).
- F. Level of performance demonstrably below that expected of a graduate student; little or no indication that the student can succeed in a graduate program.

### 7.1.1 Incomplete Work

An Incomplete Failing (IF) or Incomplete Withdrawal (IW) grade is given at the instructor's discretion and only when students, for reasons beyond their control, have been unable to complete course requirements. The terms and conditions of arrangements for successful completion of the course are negotiated between the student and the instructor and should be formalized in writing.

Students who stop attending class without formally notifying both the instructor and the GSPA office, or officially dropping a course by the drop/add deadline, will receive a grade of F. It is the responsibility of the student to request a grade of IW (which the instructor is not required to grant) or to notify GSPA and the instructor of his/her need to withdraw (W).

Upon completion of the course requirements, the appropriate letter grade will be submitted to the Registrar by the instructor. This letter grade will appear alongside the IF or IW on the student's transcript. If no report is received from the instructor within one year of the date the original course ended, the grade will become an F or W. Should the student later wish to receive credit for the course for which a W has been recorded, she/he will have to register, pay for tuition again and complete all the course requirements.

The grade of In Progress (IP) can be given only for thesis/final project or internship credits and will be valid until the thesis or internship has been completed.

### 7.1.2 Other General Rules

The following other general rules apply to grading policy:

1. The calculation of overall GPA shall be based on all course work applied to the degree, including any courses taken as a "nondegree" student. (NOTE: Courses taken in nondegree status are not included in the overall calculation of GPA on the official transcripts, but are included in the overall calculation of GPA as conducted by GSPA staff for graduation purposes).

2. A student who fails to maintain an overall “B” (3.0) grade-point average will be placed on probation. Any student receiving a grade of F in any course is automatically placed on probation.
3. Probationary status shall not be allowed to extend beyond three semesters (including summer session) during which the student is enrolled. Failure on the part of the student to remove himself/herself from probation (i.e., by achieving a GPA of at least 3.0) during this time interval will result in automatic suspension from GSPA.
4. A suspended student is eligible to apply for readmission after one year. Approval or rejection of this application rests jointly with the student’s faculty adviser, the MPA director, and the Dean (see Section 2.4 for readmission procedures).

## 7.2 GSPA Policy on Academic Grievances

### 7.2.1 General

This statement describes formal procedures by which a student may seek to remedy academic grievances within the Graduate School of Public Affairs. The School strongly encourages that these matters be settled informally whenever possible. Formal procedures normally should be used only when satisfaction cannot be obtained by informal means (see section 7.2.3 below on informal procedures).

Procedures described below are for grievances of an academic nature. Students with non-academic grievances may use established university mechanisms for such actions, and they may use them for academic grievances as well. For example, the Ombuds Office is a resource available to all members of the UCDHSC community to provide informal conflict resolution. All communications with the Ombuds Office are privileged, meaning that Ombuds personnel will not reveal confidences or identities of the individuals who consult with this office without express permission to do so.

Authority for final action on any grievance within the Graduate School of Public Affairs shall rest with the Dean.

### 7.2.2 Faculty

Students are strongly encouraged to attempt to settle academic grievances first through discussion and negotiation with the faculty member(s) involved. Appeals should normally be filed with the Associate Dean only if the matter is not settled with the faculty member to the satisfaction of the student.

### 7.2.3 Informal Resolution

If initial attempts to resolve the matter with the faculty member are unsuccessful, a student may—but is not required to—seek informal resolution of the problem through the office of the Associate Dean. Students exercising this option will meet with the Associate Dean to explain the

nature of the problem and discuss possible resolution. The Associate Dean will then consult with the faculty member involved, to determine whether an informal resolution of the problem is possible. (A faculty member may also refer a case to the Associate Dean in which attempted bilateral resolution was unsuccessful). At this stage, the Associate Dean shall act as a facilitator or mediator, assisting the student and affected faculty member in achieving a mutually acceptable, voluntary resolution of the issue. Actions of the student, faculty member, and Associate Dean at this stage are understood to be informal and off-the-record, except insofar as noting that informal resolution was attempted.

#### 7.2.4 Notice of Appeal

If informal resolution at steps 2 or 3 above cannot be achieved, an appeal may be initiated by the student. Barring exceptional circumstances, appeals must be filed within 30 days of the event forming the basis of the grievance (or of the unsuccessful use of steps 2 or 3). To appeal, the student must file a statement with the Dean setting forth the nature of the appeal and the remedy sought by the student.

The student should append to the statement of appeal any relevant documentation or other information (e.g., statements of witnesses or others with knowledge of the basis for appeal). If such information is not available at the time the appeal is filed, it should be provided as soon as possible after filing; barring exceptional circumstances, it must be presented within 30 days of filing.

The Dean shall provide a copy of the appeal to the faculty member(s) involved within **five** working days. The faculty member(s) may respond in writing to the appeal, or provide such other documentation and information deemed relevant to decision making on the appeal.

#### 7.2.5 Action by the Associate Dean

If the Associate Dean is neither named in nor a party to the grievance, the Dean shall refer the appeal to that person, unless the student requests otherwise. The Dean shall instruct the student to make an appointment to meet with the Associate Dean within 5 days in order to review and resolve the appeal.

The Associate Dean shall review and investigate the appeal and reach a determination as to the quality of the appeal. The Associate Dean shall report in writing to the Dean within 30 days of initial referral of the matter and shall recommend appropriate action to the Dean. The Dean shall forward a copy of the report, together with a proposal for final action, to the student.

#### 7.2.6 Grievance Committee

Students who do not accept the recommendation of the Associate Dean may, within 10 days of its receipt, appeal that finding to the GSPA Academic Grievance Committee (to be appointed by the Dean). Any Grievance Committee member who is named in or is a party to the appeal shall be replaced by the Dean with another, uninvolved faculty member.

Within 10 days of receipt of the appeal, the Grievance Committee shall convene to review the substance of the appeal and all information generated by it. At its discretion, the Grievance Committee may also obtain such other information as it deems appropriate, including interviews with the student filing the appeal and others with knowledge and information concerning the issue(s) upon which the appeal is based. Within 30 days of receipt of the appeal, the Committee shall submit a written report to the Dean. The report shall contain a summary of the Committee's information-gathering activities, its conclusions and judgments based upon the information gathered, and its recommendations for action by the Dean.

#### 7.2.7 Final Action by the Dean

Within 10 days of receipt of the Grievance Committee's report, the Dean shall take final action on the appeal. Final action shall take the form of a letter to the student stating the action and the reasons for taking it. The Dean may append a copy of the Grievance Committee's report to the letter. The Dean's decision shall constitute final action by the Graduate School of Public Affairs.

#### 7.2.8 Appeal to the Graduate Council

If the student does not accept the Dean's action, appeal can be made to the Graduate Council of UCDHSC, as specified in the catalog. The Council's decision on appeal shall constitute final action by UCDHSC.

#### 7.2.9 Constitutional Rights

Nothing in this procedure is intended to nor should be construed as an abrogation of the rights under law accruing to any student in the Graduate School of Public Affairs.

#### 7.3 Honor Code

With respect to matters of academic dishonesty, GSPA subscribes in full to provisions contained in UCDHSC's Student Academic Honor Code and to procedures for its implementation in the *UCDHSC Catalog*. Copies of the Code are also available in the GSPA office and on the GSPA website, <http://www.cudenver.edu/Academics/Colleges/GSPA>. Students are responsible for knowing UCDHSC policies concerning plagiarism, cheating, and behaving with integrity in their courses and coursework.