

Master of Public Administration

With a unique combination of theoretically grounded course work and practical application, our Master of Public Administration (<https://spaa.ku.edu/master-public-administration-mpa/>) degree provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to lead, innovate, and problem-solve in public sector and non-profit settings.

Our Edwin O. Stene Master's program is one of the oldest and most respected programs in the United States, beginning with our local government leadership program founded in 1948. Since 1998, our tradition of excellence in educating students at the masters' level has been recognized by U.S. News and World Report with a #1 ranking in local government.

On-campus and Online Program Options

The MPA degree meets the needs of both full-time students who are looking to launch a career in public service as well as those who already have a career and are looking to accelerate it by pursuing an MPA degree part-time. The MPA degree may be obtained through course work offered at the Lawrence Campus or online through synchronous and asynchronous courses.

Local Government Management Concentration for MPA City/County Management Fellows

MPA students specifically interested in local government are invited to apply to our 2-year City/County Management Fellowship program (<https://spaa.ku.edu/citycounty-management-mpa-fellowship-program/>). Local government is the School of Public Affairs and Administration's most recognized program and has been ranked the #1 program in the country by *U.S. News and World Report* since 1998.

Fellows receive all of the advantages of being in the KU MPA program and also benefit from:

- Designated scholarship awards;
- Attendance to the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) annual meeting, supported by the School;
- Links to a large and welcoming professional network;
- Peer group learning and camaraderie;
- Additional experiential learning through part-time and full-time internships and other professional development opportunities.

The key distinctive feature of the Fellowship is its structure where the first year revolves around full-time intensive coursework and the second revolves around a full-time, paid internship or employment.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

MPA Admission

Please visit the MPA Admissions page (<https://spaa.ku.edu/master-public-administration-mpa/>) for complete admissions information and application deadlines.

For all applicants, a completed application includes:

1. Online Graduate Studies application (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>).
2. A nonrefundable application fee, submitted online with the application form.
3. 1 official transcript from the degree-granting college or university and any post-graduate college or university attended.
4. 3 letters of recommendation. If possible, at least 1 should be an academic reference.
5. A 750-1250-word reflective essay describing your background and career goals. Clearly indicate how the MPA degree fits those goals. Please describe how your personal background has influenced your decision to pursue a career in public service. For example, you may discuss any educational, economic, cultural, or social experiences that shape you as a candidate. If there are any academic deficiencies in your record, please address them in your statement.
6. A current résumé.
7. A writing sample that is at least 5 pages long. It should be a well-cited work in which you critically analyze (not just summarize) an issue.
8. Non-native speakers of English must meet Graduate Studies English proficiency requirements (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>).

Prospective students interested learning about public administration through the scope of local government career may apply to the City/County Management Fellowship program (<http://kupa.ku.edu/city-management-fellowship-0/>). Application to this program requires an additional essay.

Students who are interested in enrolling in master's level coursework in public administration without formal admission to the graduate program are encouraged to apply for graduate non-degree seeking student status.

MPA Degree Requirements

Students may complete the MPA degree:

- On-campus in Lawrence; or
- Online via a combination of synchronous and asynchronous course work.

Eligible MPA applicants may apply for the on-campus, Lawrence modality in the Local Government Concentration for MPA City/County Management Fellows.

While completing the following degree requirements, graduate students are expected to understand and follow Office of Graduate Studies policies (<https://policy.ku.edu/office/Graduate-Studies/>) relevant to their student status and academic standing.

| Code | Title | Hours |
|--|--|-----------|
| MPA Core Courses | | |
| PUAD 824 | Creating Good Public Policy | 3 |
| PUAD 835 | Managing Public Money | 3 |
| PUAD 836 | Data Informed Decision-Making | 3 |
| PUAD 841 | Context, Ethics and Legal Environment of Public Administration | 3 |
| PUAD 845 | Managing Public Organizations | 3 |
| One School of Public Affairs & Administration graduate certificate¹ | | 12 |
| Four classes within City & County Management, Public/Nonprofit Management, Public Policy, Performance Management, or Urban Planning to complete certificate requirements. | | |
| Concentration or Elective Courses | | 12 |
| Completion of the Local Government Management Concentration (see below) or four additional electives of graduate course work either from the School of Public Affairs & Administration, or outside the School in chosen in consultation with the program advisor and approval from the program director. | | |
| PUAD 703 | Foundations of the Nonprofit Sector | |
| PUAD 708 | Collaboration in Public Administration | |
| PUAD 825 | Urban Policy and Administration | |
| PUAD 828 | Nonprofit Management and Policy | |
| PUAD 834 | Human Resource Management | |
| PUAD 837 | Advanced Public Budgeting and Finance | |
| PUAD 839 | Topics in Public Administration: _____ | |
| PUAD 851 | Infrastructure Management | |
| PUAD 853 | Policy Analysis | |
| PUAD 854 | Innovation and Organizational Change | |
| PUAD 857 | Performance Management and Governance | |
| PUAD 858 | Performance Audit | |
| PUAD 861 | Data Analytics | |
| PUAD 862 | Emergency Management in the United States: Theory and Practice | |
| PUAD 863 | Program Evaluation | |
| PUAD 892 | Reflections on Practice | |
| PUAD 898 | Leading to Create a Culture for High Performance | |
| PUAD 930 | Research Seminar in Public Administration and Democracy | |
| PUAD 931 | Research Seminar in Public Management | |
| PUAD 932 | Seminar in the Intellectual History of Public Administration | |
| PUAD 934 | Research Methods in Public Administration | |

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|---|---|-----------|
| PUAD 935 | Advanced Quantitative Methods for Public Administration | |
| PUAD 936 | Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation | |
| PUAD 937 | Qualitative Methods in Public Administration | |
| PUAD 939 | Topics in Public Administration: _____ | |
| PUAD 943 | Constitutional Foundations of Public Administration | |
| PUAD 949 | Law, Courts, and Public Policy | |
| PUAD 998 | Directed Reading on Public Administration | |
| UBPL 701 | Directed Readings | |
| UBPL 705 | Urban Economic Theory and Analysis | |
| UBPL 707 | Sustainability and the Future of Transportation | |
| UBPL 710 | Housing Policy and Planning | |
| UBPL 715 | Community and Neighborhood Revitalization | |
| UBPL 720 | Sustainable Land Use Policy and Planning | |
| UBPL 725 | Environmental Planning Techniques | |
| UBPL 730 | City and County Planning | |
| UBPL 735 | Site Planning and Design | |
| UBPL 736 | Planning Law and Institutions | |
| UBPL 741 | Foundations of Compassionate Critical Thinking | |
| UBPL 742 | Applied Data and Spatial Analysis | |
| UBPL 746 | GIS Applications for Design and Planning | |
| UBPL 750 | Transportation Policy and Planning | |
| UBPL 756 | Data Driving Transportation | |
| UBPL 758 | Transportation for Livable Cities | |
| UBPL 763 | Politics and Planning | |
| UBPL 764 | Real Estate Development | |
| UBPL 767 | Creative Placemaking | |
| UBPL 777 | Equity, Justice, and American Cities | |
| UBPL 780 | Climate Change and Hazards Planning | |
| UBPL 785 | History and Theory of Planning | |
| UBPL 802 | Special Topics in Urban Planning: _____ | |
| A course that serves as a culmination of coursework and professional competencies. | | |
| PUAD 899 | Excelling in the Practice of Public Administration | 1 |
| Total Hours | | 40 |

¹ SPAA certificate availability for completion of the degree is dependent upon a student's modality or concentration. Refer to the School of Public Affairs & Administration Graduate Certificates section below for further detail.

Core Courses

The MPA core provides students with knowledge and skills foundational to advanced educational and professional engagement in public affairs and administration fields. They provide an important underpinning for the MPA certificates and are transferable across a range of public service professions.

School of Public Affairs & Administration Graduate Certificates

The graduate certificate is a way to delve into specific areas of public administration theory and practice. They are structured to provide a condensed version of skills and knowledge to advance in particular professional fields. Certificate options and courses included in the 12-credit hour certificates include:

- City & County Management (<https://catalog.ku.edu/public-affairs-administration/city-and-county-management-gradcert/#degreerequirementstext>)
- Performance Management (<https://catalog.ku.edu/public-affairs-administration/performance-management-gradcert/#degreerequirementstext>)
- Public/Non-profit Management (<https://catalog.ku.edu/public-affairs-administration/public-nonprofit-management-gradcert/#certificaterequirementstext>)
- Public Policy (<https://catalog.ku.edu/public-affairs-administration/public-policy-gradcert/#certificaterequirementstext>)
- Urban Planning (<https://catalog.ku.edu/public-affairs-administration/urban-planning-gradcert/#certificaterequirementstext>)

Students completing the MPA on-campus in Lawrence may choose between any of the above SPAA certificates to fulfill this requirement.

Students completing the MPA Online modality may complete the City & County Management or the Public/Non-profit Management graduate certificates to fulfill this requirement.

Students enrolled in the Local Government Management Concentration complete the City & County Management graduate certificate to fulfill this requirement.

Elective Course Work

Elective Courses allow students to either broaden perspective and explore other sectors of public administration or complete additional course work toward a specific sector of the public service profession. Some options for completing these credits include:

- a second SPAA graduate certificate,
- a graduate certificate outside the program with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies,
- public administration-adjacent courses in other disciplines with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies,
- specific professionalization seminars in local government (for City & County Management Fellows),
- or any PUAD and UBPL graduate-level courses in SPAA.

Local Government Management Concentration

Due to the unique degree completion schedule that allows for MPA City/County Management Fellows part- and full-time internship and employment opportunities as they complete degree requirements, students complete the following courses in the stead of electives.

| Code | Title | Hours |
|---|--|-----------|
| PUAD 892 | Reflections on Practice | 3 |
| PUAD 894 | Professional Development Seminar I: Public Admin Contemporary Issues & Competency Assessment | 3 |
| PUAD 895 | Professional Development Seminar II: Leading to Create a Culture for High Performance | 3 |
| One additional elective course to be selected from the SPAA electives listed above. | | 3 |
| Total Hours | | 12 |

MPA Degree Final Course Requirement

All MPA degree students will complete PUAD 899 Excelling in the Practice of Public Administration in their final semester of the program. This course serves as a culminating review and reapplication of the core competencies and learning objectives emphasized throughout the MPA curriculum. Students will be eligible for degree conferral upon completion of this course and the other credit hour requirements toward the MPA degree.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- lead and manage in public governance.
- participate in and contribute to the public policy process.
- analyze, synthesize, think creatively, solve problems, and make decisions.
- articulate and apply public service perspectives.
- communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.