

PROGRAM POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE MASTER OF
ARTS IN URBAN AFFAIRS & PUBLIC POLICY
BIDEN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & ADMINISTRATION
11/2020

Section 1 - Program Administration

The School of Public Policy and Administration offers six graduate degrees: the doctor of philosophy in urban affairs and public policy, authorized as a permanent degree by the Board of Trustees in May of 1973; the master of arts in urban affairs and public policy, authorized as a permanent degree by the Board of Trustees in May 1974; the master of public administration, authorized as a permanent degree by the Board of Trustees in May 1976; and the master of arts in historic preservation, authorized as a permanent degree by the Board of Trustees in May 2009; doctor of philosophy in disaster science & management, and the master of science in disaster science & management, both authorized in 2010.

The M.A. in Urban Affairs & Public Policy is administered by the program director operating under guidance specified in the document "Academic Reorganization of the College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy".

Section 2 - Degree Requirements

2.1 REQUIREMENTS OF THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN URBAN AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY. The Master of Arts in Urban Affairs & Public Policy is an interdisciplinary degree based on the development of skills in critical thinking, concept integration, rigorous examination of the conditions of society, articulation of the consequences and implications of changes to public policy and effective communication of findings to the policy world. The context of the program is distinctively urban. It seeks to graduate individuals who combine the skills and theory to work in a variety of policy analysis/planning positions. The degree can also prepare individuals for further graduate work at the doctoral level.

2.1.1 CREDITS. Students must complete 36 credit hours of graduate work. All students are required to attain a grade of B- or better in all courses counted towards the Masters of Urban Affairs & Public Policy degree. In accordance with University policy, students must also maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0.

2.1.2 REQUIRED CORE COURSES. Students take the following two courses which together provide an introduction and overview of the field:

UAPP 649 - Civil Rights Law & Policy (3 credits)

UAPP 703 - Urban Society & Public Policy (3 credits)

Students also take the following three methodological courses:

UAPP 702 - Research Methods for Urban & Public Policy (3 credits)
UAPP 691 - Quantitative Analysis in Public & NP Sectors (3 credits)
UAPP 707 - Public Policy Analysis (3 credits)

The following three theory courses are also required:

UAPP 701 - Public Policy (3 credits)
UAPP 693 - Economics in Public & NP Sectors (3 credits)
UAPP 613 - Planning Theory & Urban Policy (3 credits)

- 2.1.3** AREA OF RESEARCH. Students will take 6 credits of additional coursework that collectively define an area of research. Faculty will pre-define several areas in which the School has strength, but students are also free to develop their own area of research with the advice and consent of their academic advisor. The initial pre-defined areas of research include: urban and regional planning, housing and community development, health services policy, nonprofits and philanthropy, historic preservation, and media and public policy. Information on areas of research is available in the Biden School Administration Office and on the School website.
- 2.1.4** CERTIFICATE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION (12 credits)
The Certificate in Historic Preservation is a 12-credit program through which students can extend their study in that specific area within the MA program. The certificate has two required core courses: UAPP 629: Historic Preservation Theory and Practice (3 credits) and UAPP 630: Methods of Historic Preservation. Student then chose 6 credits of electives from the approved list of courses for the Graduate Certificate in Historic Preservation.
- 2.1.5** THESIS. Under circumstances deemed appropriate for the student, with approval of the student's advisor and the appropriate program committee director, a thesis (6-credits) must be submitted as a capstone project. The thesis is to be written under the supervision of a three-person faculty committee chaired by the student's principal advisor and defended in an oral examination before this three-person faculty committee. The thesis committee should provide guidance throughout the process of topic selection, research, writing, and evaluation. Successful oral defense of the thesis, as certified by the student's advisor to the M.A. program director enables a recommendation to be made that the Master of Arts degree be conferred upon the student. General guidelines and regulations governing the format, development, and presentation of the thesis must conform to the University requirements reflected in the Office of Graduate Studies' Thesis Manual.

2.1.6 WAIVERS OF REQUIRED COURSES. Courses required in the M.A. may be waived if comparable courses or the requisite skills are, or will be, acquired elsewhere under an approved plan of study. To waive a required course, a student must have a petition to waive approved and signed by her or his advisor and a person currently responsible for teaching a course. A record of the signed waiver shall be sent to the program director and included in the student's file. Students must petition to substitute one course for each one that is waived. Waivers cannot be used to reduce the total number of credit hours (36) required for the completion of the M.A. degree. The petition must be approved by the student's advisor and a record of the substitution sent to the program director to be included in the student's file.

With the approval of the Urban Affairs and Public Policy program director, a maximum of 6 credits may be waived for a matriculating student in the M.A. program who has completed graduate level M.A. courses with a grade of “B” or higher in an urban affairs and public policy or equivalent program as part of their undergraduate program so long as those credits were not used to satisfy the requirements of a previous degree program.

Section 3 - Admissions Policy and Procedures

The purpose of the admissions criteria is to identify those applicants who can benefit from, and make a distinct contribution to the graduate programs in the School of Public Policy & Administration. Applicants are sought who show promise of constructive involvement with faculty, staff, and other students in instruction, research, and public service. Consideration is also given to the student's potential for successful completion of his or her graduate program.

Given its mission, the School seeks students with a mix of interests, backgrounds, and areas of competence and among whose goals is to do research in urban affairs and public policy. To meet its academic and research goals as well as to be responsive to the multicultural backgrounds of prospective students, the School of Public Policy & Administration employs a wide spectrum of criteria in assessing a prospective student's motivation, interest, and ability to perform successfully. No one criterion is the sole basis of an admissions decision. (Approved by Academic Council 7/30/86)

3.1 M.A. ADMISSIONS POLICY STATEMENT. M.A. admissions criteria and indicators of these criteria are listed below.

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Indicators and Sources</u>
<p>A. Genuine interest and motivation to pursue graduate study in public administration/urban affairs and public policy; personal objectives, aspirations, and plans are well formulated and coherent.</p>	<p>Statements by candidate in admission application and/or subsequent communications; personal interviews (telephone conversations when personal interviews are not possible) with members of the M.A. faculty and the Admissions Committee.</p>

B. Expectations of sound academic performance in graduate level work.

Review of undergraduate achievement and any previous graduate level work. Particular emphasis on assessing achievement in the context of the quality of the institutions candidate has attended and the trends or patterns in achievement in the last 1 - 2 years of applicant's program. Letters of recommendation from faculty; reports/papers written by candidate (published or unpublished).

C. Ability to apply previously acquired competencies to problem areas, community, or organizational needs.

Contributions in and nature of professional work experience, volunteer service and/or internships. Assessments by faculty, professionals, and/or community leaders.

The successful M.A. candidate for admission will ordinarily have an undergraduate grade point index above 3.0. In addition, the successful applicant will have a well-constructed and well-written personal statement indicating the applicant's interest in the program and the fit between the program and his/her professional interests . The quality and extent of previous related work experience and the motivation to pursue a professional career in the public service sector are particularly important.

3.2 ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

3.2.1 M.A. in URBAN AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE. Applications for the M.A. program are assessed by an admissions committee. The committee is appointed by the director of the M.A. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy program. The committee is composed of between 2-4 faculty members. Recommendations concerning admissions are transmitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by the program director.

3.3 ESTIMATES ON PROGRAM ADMISSIONS. For the M.A. program in urban affairs and public policy, we estimate 6-8 admissions each year.

Section 4 - Advisement, Evaluation, and Examinations

4. ADVISEMENT, EVALUATION, AND EXAMINATIONS OF STUDENTS IN THE M.A. PROGRAM IN URBAN AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY. One or more members of the faculty share the advising of all incoming M.A. students and monitor the progress and performance of students during the first semester of full-time study. The student's advisor is responsible for monitoring student progress and performance on a regular basis until the completion of all degree requirements. The student prepares a plan of study that is approved by the advisor and that plan becomes the basis for monitoring progress throughout the program.

All candidates for the M.A. degree are expected to maintain a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative index out of a possible 4.0. The grades of all students in the M.A. program are reviewed after each semester by the program director. In cases of substandard performance, actions are initiated in accord with general University guidelines regarding warning, probation, and termination. A decision to recommend to the Office of Graduate Studies to terminate a student requires the review and confirmation of a majority of the Biden School of Public Policy & Administration faculty. In addition to these procedures, at the end of each academic year the program faculty convenes to review the progress and performance of students in the program and to take appropriate action in cases of substandard performance.

Section 5 - ESTIMATE ON PROGRAM COMPLETIONS. It is likely that the School will graduate 6-8 masters of arts in urban affairs and public policy in each of the next four years.

Section 6 - COURSES

Additional course work is available through other departments of the College of Arts and Science, the Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Earth, Ocean and Environment, Education and Human Development, Health Sciences and the Alfred Lerner College of Business and Economics.