

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

STUDENT MANUAL

School of Planning and Public Affairs

The University of Iowa

2023-24 Academic Year

SELECTED DEADLINES

2023-24 Academic Year

August 21-27	Registration changes can be made in MyUI; no additional authorizations required.
August 25	First semester course waiver requests due.
August 28	Registration changes can be made in MyUI; requires departmental/advisor approval.
September 1	Last day for graduate students to register late, add courses, or change S-U status.
September 5	\$100 late registration fee charge in affect. Must have dean's approval to register.
September 29	Deadline for Dec. graduates to submit Transportation Certificate Completion form.
September 29	Deadline for degree applications for December graduation.
October 1	Summer internship papers due to advisor for course credit in the fall semester.
October 1	Summer internship evaluation forms with employer's signature due to administrative services coordinator for fall credit.
October 10	Plans of Study Summary Form and final exam requests for Dec. graduates due in Graduate College.
October 15	Plan of Study/MyPlan, Area of Concentration form, and Progress Self-Evaluation must have been approved by advisor.
Nov. 6-Dec. 1	Spring early registration
November 13	Last day for graduate students to withdraw or drop courses. Last day to submit work to faculty for removal of incompletes.
November 27	Final exam reports due in Graduate College.
December 4	Single thesis deposit due in Graduate College.
December 15	Deadline for advisors to put signed summer internship evaluations into the student electronic record.
January 16-22	Registration changes can be made in MyUI; no additional authorizations required.
January 23	Registration changes can be made in MyUI; requires departmental/advisor approval.
January 29	Last day for graduate students to register late, add courses, or change S-U status.
January 30	\$100 late registration fee charge in affect. Must have Dean's approval to register.
February 1	Fall and summer semester internship papers due to advisor for credit in the spring semester.
February 1	Fall and summer internship evaluation forms with employer's signature due to administrative services coordinator for spring credit.
February 23	Deadline for degree applications for May graduation.
February 23	Deadline for May graduates to submit Transportation Certificate Completion form.
March 5	Plans of Study Summary Form and final exam requests for May graduates due in Graduate College.
March 15	Plan of Study/MyPlan, Area of Concentration form and Progress Self-Evaluation must have been approved by advisor (for students who began in spring semester).
March 25	Two-page student paper for MPA oral exam due to examining panel
April 1-5	Final oral examinations for May MPA graduates
April 3	Deadline for advisors to put signed fall and summer internship evaluations into the student's electronic record
April 8-26	Fall early registration
April 15	Last day for graduate students to withdraw or drop courses. Last day to submit work to faculty for removal of incompletes.
April 15	Spring semester and academic year internship papers due to advisor (for May graduation).
April 15	Spring semester and academic year internship evaluation forms with employer's signature due to administrative services coordinator for spring credit.
April 16	Final exam reports for May graduates due in Graduate College.
April 23	Single thesis deposit due in Graduate College.
May 9	Graduate College Commencement - 7:00 p.m. at Carver Hawkeye Arena
May 10	Deadline for advisors to put signed spring semester and academic year internship evaluations into the student electronic record.

PREFACE

The purpose of this student manual is to provide answers to questions that could arise during a student's period of study in The School of Planning and Public Affairs (SPPA) at the University of Iowa. It includes information on a wide range of students' potential concerns and questions and provides a detailed explanation of program requirements and applicable policies. This manual should be consulted whenever questions on these matters arise.

This manual should allay any doubts and prevent possible misconceptions about students' obligations and rights. Any questions not answered by the manual should be referred to a student's advisor or to the School Director. SPPA faculty and staff stand ready to assist students in any way we can.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF POLICIES

The policies contained in this manual are effective and binding for all students in the school who commence their studies during the 2023-24 academic year. Students who enrolled in a prior year are normally bound by the policies that were in effect at the time they entered the program. They should refer to the **Student Manual** for the year they entered the program, during their entire period of enrollment. All relevant versions of the Student Manual are available on the SPPA website under [Current Students](#).

When policies involving students change, students already enrolled have the option to continue under the previous policies (in place when they joined SPPA) or to follow the new ones. Such policies include those pertaining to areas of concentration, final examinations, theses, and academic performance. Any questions about which policies are applicable, or what options exist for a student entering the School at any specific time, should be addressed to the student's advisor or to the director.

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE

SPPA Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Plan and Principles of Community

SPPA has adopted a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Plan. It is available here: <https://sppa.uiowa.edu/about-us/strategic-plans/diversity-inclusion-plan>. This plan spells out the School's commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice, and how this commitment translates into practices. The plan also includes Principles of Community that SPPA faculty, staff and students are expected to adhere to. Those principles are below.

SPPA's Principles of Community

Preamble

The School of Planning and Public Affairs is a learning, teaching and research community. These principles of community spell out our values, intentions, as well as best practices guiding our behaviors and interactions.

These principles, initially developed by students, faculty and staff on February 12, 2021, will be revisited annually. It is our intention that SPPA students, faculty and staff will commit to these principles. Implementing these principles requires honing our collective skills over time. Thus, we will regularly make time for open discussions, training, and skill-building as we seek mutual and life-long learning.

Principles

- Honesty and integrity are core values in our teaching, learning, research and administration.
- We respect the dignity and humanity of all persons. We oppose violence and advocating violence, and seek nonviolent solutions to interpersonal and social issues.
- We strive to uphold a just community free of discrimination in our interactions, teaching, research, administration, and outreach practices.
- We recognize the intrinsic connections between diversity of perspectives and experiences, and excellence in learning, teaching, research and administration.
- We are committed to freedom of expression and open dialogue that respect all perspectives, differences and commonalities, and to creating conditions where everyone feels safe to express their views. To do so, we:
 - Stay open to discussing all ideas, even unsettling ones we may disagree with;
 - Let everyone self-identify rather than identify others (e.g., “POC”, “minority” is not acceptable to everyone, and word usage changes over time);
 - Listen carefully to -and do not silence- others, and validate others' statements and feelings;
 - Call each other in (i.e., asking for clarification) rather than out (i.e., judging or silencing);
 - Accept and learn from the feedback we receive during mutual learning moments;
 - Show generosity, acceptance, and forgiveness for others and ourselves (no one is perfect), thus giving each other grace and the “benefit of the doubt” (i.e., assuming the best);
 - Take responsibility for our actions, give meaningful apologies when needed, and are accountable for learning and improving our skills (accountability and forgiveness go hand in hand);

- Pay attention to others' cues, strive to be sensitive to others' potential trauma history, and check in with those who might experience inappropriate treatment;
- Remain mindful of cultural differences and diversity within cultures, and of how words and behaviors might be understood or perceived differently;
- Acknowledge and be mindful of the power we hold as students, staff and academics, and of the unequal power relationships among ourselves;
- We show leadership in addressing the most pressing issues facing our local and global communities are central to our educational mission, and guide our curriculum, research, and outreach activities.
- We promote open and equitable access to opportunities for learning and development for students, staff and faculty.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy (including childbirth and related medical conditions), disability, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, service in the U.S. military, sexual orientation, gender identity, and associational preferences. The university also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to university facilities. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact the Director, [Office of Institutional Equity](#), the University of Iowa, 202 Jessup Hall, Iowa City, IA 52242-1316, 319-335-0705 (voice), 319-335-0697 (TDD), oi-e-ui@uiowa.edu.

University of Iowa Policy on Human Rights

The University is committed to the principle of equal opportunity including access to facilities. Differences in treatment are prohibited when based on race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy (including child and related conditions), disability, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, service in the U.S. military, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preferences. This principle must be observed in the internal policies and practices of the University; specifically in the admission, housing, and education of students; in policies governing programs of extracurricular life and activities; and in the university's treatment of its applicants and its employees. Consistent with state and federal law, reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities and to accommodate religious practices. The University shall work cooperatively with the community in furthering these principles. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact the Office of Institutional Equity, The University of Iowa, 202 Jessup Hall, Iowa City, Iowa, 52242-1316; telephone (319) 335-0705.

Persons who believe they have been subjected to discrimination in violation of the University's policy on human rights can report it following the procedures described in the Operations Manual. (<https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/community-policies/human-rights#3.3>).

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Assistance for Students with Disabilities

Student Disability Services (SDS) serves the University of Iowa's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by providing support and academic accommodations for students with disabilities. SDS collaborates with students, faculty, and staff to create an accessible educational environment for all. Students with disabilities are welcomed as valuable contributors to the diversity of the University of Iowa community.

SDS provides an [orientation video](#) for new students on their website. Specific information about the [application process for an accommodation](#) is also available on their website.

Some [possible accommodations](#) include:

- Exam accommodations
- Class notes
- Alternative media
- Deadline and absence accommodations
- Other accommodations

Students who require an accommodation are advised to contact SDS during the first week of classes and to fill out the SDS Application for approval of their accommodation. The office recommends allowing 10 business days from the time all materials have been received for this review to be completed, and four weeks for accommodations related to final exams. The application process is outlined on the [SDS website](#). Each semester students need to generate their Letter of Accommodations. They should share this letter with the instructor of each class for which the accommodations apply, and work with the instructor to determine how the accommodation will be provided.

Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

This section stems from the UI policy. The university community seeks to eliminate sexual harassment and sexual misconduct through education and accountability. Everyone is encouraged to report concerns or make complaints, including third parties when the respondent is a member of the university community or a visitor. The university is committed to stopping sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. In accordance with regulatory requirements and institutional values, this policy defines expectations for the university community and establishes mechanisms for determining when those expectations have been violated.

Several University of Iowa policies can come into play when there is a complaint of sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and/or stalking. It is not unusual that someone might make a complaint or simply inquire about making a complaint without understanding the policies involved. To review the Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, please see <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/community-policies/sexual-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct>. Guidelines for involved parties are also on this page.

The Title IX and Gender Equity Unit (TIXGE) in the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) coordinate the university's response to reports of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, including dating/domestic violence, and stalking when those reports involve members of or visitors to the university community. Reporting sexual misconduct by University students, faculty, or staff may be made [online](#), at 319-335-0705, or oie-ui@uiowa.edu.

If you are experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment or misconduct, remember: you are not alone. You can find numerous resources on the OIE [website](#). “[How to Help](#)” resources are available for friends, faculty, staff, and families.

The University and the School have established procedures to respond to questions, complaints, or concerns. Research suggests that impacted parties who work with a counselor or advocate heal more quickly and experience less postsecondary trauma. OIE *is not a confidential resource*. Connecting individuals with confidential, supportive resources is among the University's primary concerns. [Confidential victim advocates](#) are below:

- Rape Victim Advocacy Program: 335-6000 (24-hour hotline)
- Domestic Violence Intervention Program: 800-373-1043 (24-hour hotline)
- Monsoon Asian and Pacific Islanders in Solidarity: 866-881-4641 (24-hour hotline)
- Nisaa African Family Service: 338-7617
- Transformative Healing: 319-389-8430
- University Counseling Service (for students): 335-7294
- Faculty and Staff Services, Employee Assistance Program (for faculty or staff): 335-2085
- Women's Resource and Action Center: 335-1486

Coping with Graduate Study, Stress and Mental Health Challenges

Being a graduate student can be stressful, from balancing school and work, plus family issues, to keeping up GPA and passing final exams. Students have access to a number of resources to help deal with these pressures.

Students are encouraged to seek help as a preventive measure or if feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Students should talk to their instructors for guidance with specific class-related concerns. SPPA faculty and staff are committed to supporting all students as much as possible during difficult periods and recommend that students communicate their challenges and seek support as early as possible.

Fellow students can be the most understanding and provide very effective support. Anyone concerned about another student's state of mind should encourage them to talk to faculty or staff, or to look into the wide variety of resources found on the university's [Mental Health at Iowa](#) page.

Anyone who is feeling stressed, overwhelmed, depressed or otherwise struggling with mental health is encouraged to contact [University Counseling Service](#) (UCS) at 319-335-7294 during regular business hours to schedule an appointment.

UCS, [located](#) at 3223 Westlawn South, is available to all currently enrolled students and most services are provided free of charge. Their [services](#) include individual and group therapy, relationship therapy, trans-inclusive services, eating disorder network, referrals, same-day appointments, and [self-help resources](#) (such as how to manage speaking anxiety, sleep issues and stress management).

24-hour support and crisis resources include:

- [UI Student Support and Crisis Line](#) (call/text) at 844-461-5420
- [Johnson County CommUnity Crisis Helpline Service](#) (call/text) 988
- 988 Suicide and Crisis [Lifeline Chat and Text](#)
- [24-hour National Graduate Student Crisis Line](#) (1-877-GRAD-HLP; 877-472-3457) "All counselors have completed training to understand the unique issues faced by graduate students."

If you have a mental health condition and are experiencing a medication issue, [Student Health](#) may be the best resource. The mental health providers are located in [4189 Westlawn South](#) and appointments may be scheduled by calling 319-335-8394.

For those with food insecurity, assistance is available through these organizations:

- The [UI Food Pantry](#), 278 IMU (Student Activities Center)
Provides nutritious food and basic necessities for University of Iowa students, faculty, and staff in need.
- CommUnity Crisis Services and [Food Bank](#)
- [Coralville](#) and [North Liberty](#) each have a community food pantry as well.

Tobacco Free Campus

As mandated by Iowa law, the University of Iowa campus, including all buildings and grounds, are designated as tobacco free. For the purpose of this policy, tobacco products are defined as including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookahs), bidis, kreteks, smokeless tobacco, chewing tobacco, snus, snuff, electronic cigarettes, and any non-FDA-approved nicotine delivery device.

Information on the smoking policy, smoking cessation resources, boundary maps and other frequently asked questions is available on the Human Resources [website](#).

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Orientation, Plan of Study/My Plan and Advising

Orientation

Just before the beginning of classes, the school holds an orientation session with new students in the masters' programs. Curriculum structure, academic progress, course waivers, and other general requirements are explained. In addition, students are given keys and instructions on the use of departmental facilities, and their responsibilities are explained regarding the student room, known as the drafting room.

All [forms](#) and documentation related to student advising should be uploaded into MAUI by the advisor after the student has completed them. These include:

- snapshots of plans of study/MyPlan
- Area of Concentration forms
- Change of Advisor forms
- Core Course Waiver forms
- progress self-evaluations (no specific form)
- Internship Approval form
- Internship - Employer's Report on SPPA Intern
- Internship Credit Approval form (with internship paper)
- Certificate in Transportation Planning Completion form

Plan of Study/MyPlan

Each student is to develop and review with their advisor a **two-year plan of study** (referred to in MyUI as MyPlan) during their first semester using the process described below. The purpose of the plan of study/MyPlan is to ensure that the student satisfactorily completes all course requirements for graduation, including core courses and courses in an area of concentration (see section on "Areas of Concentration"). MyPlan multi-semester plans of study are to be approved by advisors before becoming effective. This is done directly in MAUI (the University's electronic repository for faculty to record student advising and related files) by the advisor, through taking a "snapshot" of the reviewed and agreed upon plan of study/MyPlan. "Snapshots," are automatically stored under Advising Notes.

Video tutorials for Sample Plan, MyPlan and Schedule Builder are available at <https://myui.uiowa.edu/my-ui/help/registration/academic-planning.page>.

Students may view/edit their plan and view advising notes in MyUI's Student Information section, through Advising Notes/Files.

MyUI serves as a hub to access most of the UI systems and tools students use. A **Sample Plan** of study, showing requirements for the student's program, is uploaded for them in MyUI at the beginning of their first semester, found under Student Information, Advising. Planning students will find a non-thesis and thesis version.

The Sample Plan is only an outline of the recommended coursework and sequence and should be exported into **MyPlan**. (Video available on "[Creating a MyPlan from a Sample Plan](#)"). MyPlan is a multi-semester document, which must be created and customized as part of the student's official record. The student must include courses to complete at least one area of concentration. The student's advisor can view MyPlans, but only the student is able to create, edit and save them.

Each semester, when the next semester's courses are available in MyUI, the student can export their desired courses from MyPlan into **Schedule Builder**. Schedule Builder is an unofficial document used

as a road map for scheduling. Versions of Schedule Builder combinations can be saved, allowing the student to use one-click registration.

Before a student may register for the next semester, their MyPlan should be revised if necessary and they must meet with their advisor. Obtaining the advisor's approval serves as permission for course registration each semester. After the student's first semester, their course registration date and time can be found on MyUI on the Home tab. All previous versions of MyPlan remain as part of the student's advising record (saved as "snapshots"). Revisions are subject to the same approval process.

Students are encouraged to create sample plans in Schedule Builder ahead of all semesters to assist the school in planning for course offerings.

Students should be mindful that Sample Plans and MyPlan do not calculate if the student has met requirements for graduation.

Area of Concentration

Each student must declare an area of concentration during their first semester (see Selected Deadlines) and submit the Area of Concentration form to their advisor for inclusion in their electronic student record (MAUI). Students should input grades for their concentration courses at the end of each semester. Any changes to the Area of Concentration, require completing and submitting a new form. If through the course of study the student desires to change their area of concentration, a new form must be submitted to their advisor and also included in their electronic record. See "Area of Concentration" section for detailed information about the concentrations and requirements.

Dropping/Adding Courses

[Dropping and adding](#) courses after the semester registration has closed is done electronically through MyUI. Students are responsible for obtaining the required signatures/permissions and then processing the drop/add. Those who need to sign do not automatically receive notification. When the dean's signature is required, students should contact either Sara Pettit, Academic Affairs Coordinator or Heidi Arbisi-Kelm, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, who are the dean's delegate for signature/authorization in the Graduate College.

Advising and Progress Self-Evaluation

New students are assigned faculty advisors based on their stated areas of interest and advisors' availability. Students are asked to meet with their advisors during the first two weeks of the semester to introduce themselves, review class schedules, and make certain that each student understands School requirements. Students with combined degree programs are advised by the school's Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).

Students are to submit a one-page self-evaluation, reflecting on their academic progress during their first semester's experience, by November 1st (for students whose first semester is a fall semester)¹. That evaluation is to be submitted to the student's advisor for placement in the Advising section of the student's electronic record (MyUI for students and MAUI for faculty). Before the advisor authorizes registration for the spring semester, the advisor and student are to meet to discuss the statement and the preparation of a two-year plan of study/MyPlan (previously created on MyUI). Once a completed plan of study/MyPlan is reviewed by the student with the advisor, who is to include a snapshot of that plan in MAUI, the advisor is to authorize the student to register for the spring semester.

Before April 1st, the student should provide a second one-page reflective evaluation of his/her progress and hold another meeting with the advisor. This second student evaluation is to be deposited in

¹ Students who start their planning studies during a spring semester should submit their evaluations by April 1st.

MyUI/MAUI, registration authorized, and any necessary revisions to the plan of study/MyPlan saved in MyUI/MAUI. In this meeting with his/her advisor, the student is to be reminded of internship requirements, and if the student knows they are taking an internship, the [Internship Approval form](#) should be approved at this time by the advisor and uploaded into MAUI. See the “Internship” section for details on internship requirements.

By November 1st in the third semester of study, a third and final evaluation of academic progress should be provided by the student, a discussion held with the advisor (to include calculations to ensure all graduation requirements will be met and that final-semester registration is consistent with the plan of study/MyPlan), and, if necessary, a revised plan of study/MyPlan agreed to by the advisor and an approved snapshot saved in MyUI/MAUI. Progress towards passing the final examination should be discussed at this time.

No further student progress self-evaluation is needed for students in a two-year plan of study/MyPlan. The exit survey will serve as a final evaluation. Students in combined programs or in programs of study extending beyond two years should consult with their advisor to determine whether additional student evaluations are needed.

Change of Advisor

Under some situations, it may be appropriate for a student to change advisors. Students may initiate the procedure for changing advisors by discussing the proposed change with the existing and the proposed advisor, and then submitting a Change of Advisor form (available on the SPPA website) to both advisors and the director for their permissions. To effect the change, the new advisor should upload the form into the student’s advising record in MAUI after all permissions have been granted. Students should not hesitate to request a change if they feel that doing so will enhance their educational experience.

Best Practices for Graduate Students and Their Advisors

The progress, development and success of a graduate student hinges on the commitment of both the student and the advisor. Basic principles of best practices in mentoring and graduate student life appear below. Graduate students should be aware of what is necessary for their success, and their advisors likewise should be aware of practices that promote their students' best interest.

Expectations of Graduate Students

1. A graduate student has the **primary responsibility for successful completion of their degree**. Graduate students should be committed to their graduate education, demonstrate this by efforts in and outside the classroom, and in research. A graduate student is expected to maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, excellence, scholarly curiosity, and ethical standards.
2. A graduate student should **meet regularly with their advisor** and provide updates on the progress and results of ongoing research.
3. A graduate student should be **knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of the graduate program, the graduate college, and the institution**. The student should strive to meet these requirements, including teaching responsibilities.
4. A graduate student should **contribute to maintaining an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, and free of harassment and discrimination**.
5. A graduate student should **acknowledge primary responsibility to develop a career following the completion of the degree**. The student should seek guidance from available resources, including but not limited to their advisor and SPPA career services coordinator.
6. A graduate student should **comply with all institutional policies, including academic program milestones**. The student should comply with both the letter and spirit of all best practices and policies of the institution.

Expectations of Advisors

1. The advisor should be **committed to the education and training of the graduate student as a future member of their professional community**.
2. The advisor should **meet one-on-one with the student on a regular basis**.
3. The advisor should **upload forms from students into MAUI in a timely manner** to prevent problems when evaluating the student's record for meeting graduation requirements and as a resource for staff when assisting students during their time in the program.
4. The advisor should be **knowledgeable of the requirements and deadlines of their graduate program(s) as well as those of the institution**, including teaching requirements and human resources guidelines. The advisor should guide the student in these areas to ensure academic and professional success.
5. The advisor should **encourage the graduate student to attend professional meetings**.

6. The advisor should **provide an environment for their graduate students that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, and free of harassment and discrimination.**
7. The advisor should **not require the graduate student to perform tasks unrelated to their academic and professional development.**
8. The advisor **should provide career advice and assist in finding a position** for the graduate student following the student's graduation. The advisor should provide honest letters of recommendation and be accessible for advice and feedback on career goals.

Credit for Courses Taken Prior to Enrollment

Minimum Requirements

Credit for courses taken prior to admission to the School of Planning and Public Affairs may be allowed to apply toward the program's 42 s.h. requirement under the following conditions:

1. Students must have been classified as enrolled in a graduate program during the semester(s) in which they took the requested “transfer” courses.
2. The courses are evaluated as graduate-level classes. The Office of Graduate Admissions will make this determination for all external transcripts.
3. They were not part of the requirements for any degree previously completed, or currently in progress, with the exception of courses taken to meet the requirements of formal combined-degree programs with our school.
4. Their subject area is closely related to that of school courses.
5. SPPA applies no more than 15 graduate semester hours that were completed prior to SPPA admission toward a student's plan of study/MyPlan.
6. Courses older than ten years are inadmissible for credit.
7. All other Graduate College rules are complied with, including the minimum of 60 hours for two master's degrees. (See the Academic Program, section X. G.: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual>)

Student Obligation

A student who wishes to transfer course credits must present course syllabi, reading lists, and other supportive materials as necessary to demonstrate that courses for which credit is sought are germane to the degree offered by SPPA, and comparable in rigor to courses taught at Iowa. When transferring credits, students should be mindful that content knowledge mastery may be tested on the final exam.

Timing

Following admission into SPPA, but before the beginning of the first semester of classes, students requesting credit for courses taken elsewhere should present their request, with supporting data, to the director. Timing of the request is especially important if the credits applied for, and any courses to be waived, would affect the student's first-year plan of study/MyPlan.

Students already at the UI may submit the request to a faculty advisor who may submit the request for approval to the director.

It is important for students to understand that credits allowed for work done elsewhere (and waivers of specific courses – see “Waiver of Core Course Requirements” page), are allowed only upon approval; under no circumstances should a student alter their plan of study/MyPlan in anticipation that credits will be allowed by the faculty before such determination is made.

Non-U2G Courses Taken at The University of Iowa

If a student classified as an undergraduate, and not a U2G student, takes graduate courses in the School, these courses **cannot** count as graduate credits if the student is later admitted to the School for a master's degree. The School will normally waive the requirement to take those specific courses (see "Waiver of Core Course Requirements" page), but the number of semester hours needed to graduate is not reduced.

A student who is classified as a nondegree seeking student ("special student") in the **Graduate College** may take up to two courses of SPPA coursework for graduate credit. If a nondegree student is later accepted into the School, courses taken in SPPA as a nondegree student will count toward the required number of semester hours. Courses taken when a person is enrolled as a nondegree student in the **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**, however, cannot be applied for graduate credit.

If a student in another graduate-level college at the University of Iowa (i.e., law) takes graduate courses in planning or public affairs prior to admission to a combined-degree program involving that other college and planning/public affairs, those semester hours are counted. They are counted as transfer credits rather than academic residence credits. The student must still complete a minimum of 24 hours of academic residence credit after admission to planning or public affairs. Due to the number of hours required in the various combined-degree programs, it is rare that this limitation constitutes a problem.

Undergraduate Courses Taken for Graduate Credit

Before conferral of their bachelor's degrees, U2G students who have been admitted to the UI Graduate College can count upper-level (3000-4999) undergraduate courses towards their graduate degree while still classified as an undergraduate, which is typically their senior year.

Both non-U2G students and U2G students whose bachelor's degrees have been conferred may receive graduate credit towards their graduate degrees for a maximum of 6 s.h. of upper-level (3000-4999) SPPA or non-SPPA undergraduate courses.

If such courses are not listed on the student manual, a written approval from the faculty advisor is needed. The students must prove that a substantial portion of the material in an upper-level course is not covered in a graduate-level course offered by SPPA, or in the list of non-SPPA courses in the URP or MPA curricula, and that the upper-level course potentially helps the students' career goal.

In rare cases (e.g., there are not enough available graduate courses offered or there are scheduling challenges), students may request more than 6 s.h. upper-level undergraduate courses to be considered for graduate credit towards their degree. Students must prove that the substantial portion of the material in an upper-level course is not covered by any other available graduate course on campus and that the upper-level course potentially helps the students' career goal.

Assistantships²

Award Criteria

All assistantships are subject to funding availability. Most graduate assistantships are awarded on the basis of merit. For entering students, merit is determined holistically by their application materials, including undergraduate GPA, work experience, the statement of purpose, and letters of recommendation. For continuing students, a leading measure of merit is the program GPA. However, consideration is also made of faculty, school needs, student skills that can meet those needs, and past performance as a graduate assistant. Calculation of the program GPA is explained in the [Grading section](#) of this handbook. Performance includes the promptness of task completion, the quality of work, adherence to scheduled hours, general initiative, availability, and regular contact with the faculty supervisor.

Students requesting aid must take at least 9 semester hours of classes that count towards the public affairs degrees during the semester(s) in which they receive aid.

SPPA's policy is to not award any student more than **four** semesters of aid in the form of assistantships or substantial fellowships.

Full-Year Assistantships

Assistantships for incoming students are typically awarded for both the fall and spring semesters. Returning second-year students who have a relatively high program GPA also may be awarded assistantships for both semesters. It should be stressed that all students who are awarded full-year assistantships are reviewed after the fall semester. Continuation of an assistantship for the spring semester cannot be assured unless the student has performed their assistantship duties satisfactorily. In addition, the second semester of aid is contingent on achieving at least a 3.2 program GPA during preceding semesters.

In making assistantship awards to continuing students, funds are first allocated to meet commitments to students awarded aid for a full year. Remaining funds are then divided into two portions, one for first-year students, and the other for students in their second year or later. Within each of these groups, assistantships are awarded according to the criteria described above.

One-Semester Assistantships

Incoming and returning students may be awarded assistantships for one semester. Whether such students receive further assistantships depends upon their performance in public affairs (see award criteria above), and upon the demand for and availability of funds.

² This section incorporates by reference the agreement between the Iowa State Board of Regents and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Local 896-COGS, and is amended in accord with any revisions to University of Iowa collective bargaining agreements put into effect. The agreement is available at <https://grad.uiowa.edu/graduate-student-employment-agreement>.

Requests for Assistantships

To apply for an assistantship, students should apply in response to appointment postings publicized by the School no later than March 1 for the summer and fall semesters, or by October 1 for the spring semester. Students must submit an "Assistantship Request" form, which can be obtained from the School's administrative services coordinator. The form requires information about students' preferences for an assistantship assignment (e.g., research assistant, teaching assistant, career services, student outreach). Students may also be asked to fill out a form about their individual skills. Students who have been awarded full-year assistantships (contingent on high-level performance) must submit a similar form stating their assistantship preferences for the upcoming semester. Assistantship request forms and preference forms must be returned by the date indicated on the application. If the deadline is not met, the student may be ineligible for an assistantship the following semester. Students are notified of their appointments in writing by April 15 for fall and by November 1 for spring.

Assistantship Awards and Incompletes

Assistantships will not be awarded to continuing students who have one or more incompletes from any UI course remaining at the time assistantship decisions are made or by the start of the semester an assistantship begins. An exception is in those cases where the grade could not change the decision. That is, aid will be awarded if substitution of an F for each incomplete results in a GPA high enough to warrant aid, and aid will be denied if substitution of an A for each incomplete results in a GPA too low to warrant aid.

Failure to Perform Duties Satisfactorily

Students who fail to perform their assistantship duties satisfactorily will receive written notice from the School director. This letter informs the student of any performance problem and indicates what conditions must be met to remedy the situation. If these conditions have not been met within the time period indicated in the written notice, the student's assistantship may be subject to reduction in pay or complete termination. If job performance is considered unsatisfactory at any subsequent time for the same student, the student is again notified of the problem and may be subject to termination immediately. Any financial hardship created by any assistantship reduction or termination are the responsibility of the student, not the School.

Fellowships

Fellowships are awarded primarily to new students. A fellowship is a set amount that the student may apply to their tuition. There is no work requirement for a fellowship. Fellowships offered at the time of admission are not renewed for subsequent semesters. Fellowships might become available for later semesters subject to funding availability, but this is not guaranteed.

Grading and Academic Performance

The School utilizes a grading system that includes pluses and minuses. The [program GPA](#) is calculated using grades for all courses taken at the University of Iowa that **can** be applied to the student's plan of study/MyPlan for their degree, **regardless of whether they exceed what courses are needed to complete the degree**. The program GPA is used in making financial aid awards and in determining academic performance for meeting the 3.0 grade point requirement for graduation.

The plus/minus system is translated into grade points according to the policy in effect for the University, as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>
A+	4.33
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00
D-	0.67
F	0.0

The program GPA may differ from the UI cumulative GPA because the program GPA only includes courses on the university transcript that **can** be applied to the MPA degree. In those cases when a student has re-taken a required or concentration course, both grades are used in computing the program GPA.

In core classes, the maximum grade is an A. Also in core classes, A's and A minuses are limited to no more than 50 percent of the class; in non-core classes, A pluses are highly restricted and it is recommended to instructors that there be no more than 50 percent A's and A minuses.

Minimum Grades

In order to receive credit towards graduation, students must earn a minimum of a B- in core, capstone and concentration classes. In other classes, students must earn a minimum grade of a C-.

Incomplete Courses

Students should make every effort to complete their coursework during the semester of registration. Occasionally, however, students find it necessary to take an incomplete in a course. The

Office of the Registrar's policy is that an incomplete automatically converts to an "F" at the end of the next full semester (winter session excluded), even if the student does not enroll after the session the "I" was posted. The exact date of the conversion each semester is determined by the Office of the Registrar (typically when transcripts are run at the end of the following semester).

To change a grade that has become an "F," approval by the instructor, the School director, and the collegiate dean is required. It is the School's policy that only in exceptional cases will grade changes be approved at this point. Therefore, a student should **not** anticipate that an incomplete removed after the Registrar's deadline will be assigned a grade other than "F." Merely revising work is not, in and of itself, a sufficient basis for the instructor to change an F grade. The work needs to be completed to the instructor's satisfaction.

One final point: it is unwise to submit work required to remove an incomplete just prior to the Registrar's deadline. If the instructor believes that revisions or additions to this work are necessary, a student could miss the deadline. Sufficient time for review and grading should be allowed, and extra burdens should not be placed on instructors at busy periods.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not tolerated in academic or professional contexts. A person can lose their job for plagiarizing as well as suffer major public embarrassment. Both the University of Iowa and the School of Planning and Public Affairs take issues of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. This section defines cheating and plagiarism, provides guidelines for how to avoid plagiarism, and explains the procedures followed in the event a student in the school is accused of cheating or plagiarism. Further information about the University's expectations regarding student conduct, including academic conduct, can be found in the [Code of Student Life](#).

What is Cheating?

Cheating occurs when a student receives inappropriate help in completing an assignment, quiz or examination. It is quite proper to ask fellow students for help to understand concepts or other aspects of a homework assignment, and proper to give other students such help if they ask for it. However, it is never appropriate to ask someone else to do an assignment for you, or to copy their answers (or to provide answers or do work for someone else). Neither is it appropriate to ask fellow students for help *during* a quiz or in-class examination. Many students in planning and public affairs work in teams on assignments, or in preparing for examinations. Unless the instructor informs you otherwise, this is appropriate, *as long as each member of the team participates in team discussions and work, and as long as each member of the team completes their own work*. Merely listening to the solutions other students discuss and then copying them down to present as your own work does *not* constitute teamwork and should not be tolerated by other members of the team. The following list of examples may clarify what cheating (or the appearance of cheating) includes:

1. Copying other students' answers to assignments, exams, or quiz questions;
2. Allowing another person to copy your answers to assignments, exams, or quiz questions;
3. Taking notes or books to an in-class examination or quiz (unless the instructor has given you explicit permission to do so) and using them to answer questions;
4. Misrepresenting your contribution to a group project;
5. Having your assignments or exams completed by others or online services; and
5. Collaborating with other students on any piece of work if you have been explicitly instructed not to do so.

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the misappropriation of intellectual property, which can take many forms. It can range from purposeful cheating (pretending someone else's work is your own), purchases of term papers, to lack of appropriate citations or references or too heavy a reliance on other people's words and/or ideas. Ideas are presented in many formats, and just because something exists only on the internet or in some other electronic format does not mean it is not intellectual property. Given the seriousness with which the University and the school treat plagiarism, it is important to avoid any appearance of inappropriate or unattributed use of other people's ideas and words. The Graduate College addresses plagiarism in the [Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College](#), Part I, section IV, part F and G. The following list of examples may clarify what plagiarism (or the appearance of plagiarism) includes:

1. Using someone else's phrases and/or sentences without citing the work from which they are drawn or identifying the words as a direct quote;
2. Presenting someone else's argument in your own words and as if it were your own, without referring to or citing the author. Obviously, you may have come up with the same thought independent of someone who published it. If you did, you should be able to show how you came to that conclusion;
3. Relying on other people's written words for a portion of your paper (cutting and pasting) even though you may cite them;

4. Paraphrasing someone else's paper or work sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph, although you do not copy their words precisely. This is still "stealing" someone else's intellectual property, especially if you do not cite them at every point;
5. Copying someone else's paper or work (or large portions of it) verbatim without quotation marks and passing their word as yours, whether you cite them or not; and
6. Including illustrations, tables, maps, etc. from a report, web page, article or any other piece of work without properly citing the source.

When and how should work be referenced or cited?

If you refer to an argument someone made, a finding they report, or anything else that is not "common knowledge" that someone else has provided, you should reference them, using either footnotes or the author's last name(s) and an accurate date of publication in parentheses at the end of the sentence or paragraph in which you finish explaining their point/argument in your own words.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Direct subsidies to private producers have been largely replaced by block grants and tax credits that provide only partial subsidies. Nevertheless, HUD retained responsibility for much of the housing produced under earlier programs, through mortgage insurance provided by the FHA and through Section 8 contracts that subsidize projects. *[Both of these points count as "common knowledge" and don't require a citation, although they were mentioned in this and several other reports referenced.]* By the mid-1990s, the appropriations necessary to renew contracts (and avoid mortgage foreclosures that would cripple the FHA) threatened to eclipse all other housing needs (CBO, 1994). *[This is a less well-known fact, and a specific finding of the report referenced.]*

If you want to use the author's precise words, because they are a particularly good, colorful or distinctive description, or because they are reported conversation, a direct quote is proper. Direct quotes may be as long as a paragraph; direct quotes longer than three lines should be set off in a block, but shorter quotes of phrases or sentences are indicated with quotation marks. All direct quotes should be followed by a citation - usually, the author's last name, date of the work, and page number of the direct quote. Specific citations should also be used for any illustrations (tables, pictures) that you cut and paste into your own work. It is quite acceptable to use footnotes instead of the citation method shown here. The point is the work should be acknowledged accurately.

FOR EXAMPLE:

As Feldman and Chowdhury (2002) note, compact housing forms achieved through space efficiencies and multistory design have a significant impact on both construction and life cycle costs.

Compact building forms minimize the building's "envelope," and thus decrease costly building components, such as the foundation, roof, and exterior walls. A one-story single-family dwelling is more expensive to build than a two-story structure with the same square footage, quality of construction and amenities. Compact building forms also reduce life-cycle costs because they are less expensive to heat, cool, and maintain. (Feldman and Chowdhury 2002, page x)

All works referred to or cited should be listed (unless your instructor tells you otherwise). If you use the method shown above, a reference list should be attached to the paper. If you use footnotes, that is where the works should be listed.

There are several acceptable referencing styles: The American Psychological Association (APA, 7th edition) and the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS, 17th edition). More information and examples on the APA and CMS styles can be found at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html.

If you are unsure whether a reference or citation is needed, err on the conservative side. Your instructor can also provide advice on this issue. A good UI guide to citation styles can be found on the [Library Guide](#) resource website created for students in your program, under Citation Help.

Penalties for cheating and plagiarism

Both cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offenses. In cases where either cheating or plagiarism is suspected, the School's policy is that the faculty member involved submits the evidence to the director. The director then evaluates the evidence to determine if there is probable cause to suspect that cheating or plagiarism has occurred. If there is probable cause, the director confronts the suspected student(s) with the evidence. If the student(s) acknowledges participating in cheating or plagiarism, the director takes one of the following actions:

1. If the student(s) has not committed a prior offense of this nature, the penalty shall be that the grade of zero is assigned to the assignment involved. Such a zero grade is conclusive and may not be changed by re-doing the item involved.
2. If the student(s) has committed a previous offense, such student(s) shall be dismissed from the School.

If the suspected student(s) denies cheating or plagiarizing, the director forms a committee composed of three faculty members (not to include the faculty member directly involved) and three non-voting students (not to include the student(s) involved). This committee interviews the student(s) involved, investigate the evidence, call witnesses if necessary, and take all measures to determine if cheating or plagiarism has occurred and to identify the responsible person(s).

Upon completion of its task, the committee reports the results of its investigations to the director. If the committee has determined that there is not sufficient evidence to substantiate an incident of cheating or plagiarism, or that there is insufficient evidence to identify the person(s) at fault, the director notifies the faculty and any students who have been directly involved in the investigation and close the inquiry. If, however, it has been determined that plagiarism has occurred and the wrongdoer(s) have been identified, then the director applies the appropriate penalty as specified in items (1) and (2) above.

It should be noted that it is the policy of the School that those who knowingly assist a person in cheating or plagiarism are equally at fault and are subject to the same penalties.

Student Appeals Procedure

Occasionally a student may feel wronged by a decision made by a faculty member, a committee of the faculty, or the faculty as a whole. In such a case, the student may appeal the decision according to the following procedure³:

1. Appeal is made to the director, giving the facts of the case and the basis for the student's appeal. This appeal must be made in writing;
2. The director may then either conduct an investigation personally or appoint a committee of the faculty (which must consist of at least two faculty and which may consist of the entire faculty) to conduct an investigation. When the appeal involves a decision or action of one particular faculty member, that person shall not be on the investigating committee. The student shall be permitted to present their case to the investigating committee;
3. If the director conducts an investigation, the director may either grant or deny the appeal, take other appropriate action, or refer the matter to the faculty as a whole for a decision;
4. If the investigation is conducted by a committee, that committee may grant or deny the appeal, or take other appropriate action;
5. Where the appeal involves a matter of School policy, it should be noted that any change in policy is normally approved by the faculty as a whole;
6. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of a committee of the faculty, the student may ask that the faculty as a whole review the decision. Such a review is conducted at the option of the director;
7. It should be noted that further appeal can be made to the Graduate College, according to policies and procedures of the Graduate College. These are outlined in the [Graduate College's Academic Policies](#). The Graduate College should be contacted for further information.

The University ombudsperson may prove of assistance in instances of this sort and should be contacted directly by the student.

Other student concerns: There are several opportunities for students to express concerns about the master's programs. Additionally, student representatives are elected by students to represent student opinion at faculty meetings. Each semester a town hall meeting takes place at which students can express concerns.

When students have concerns about how specific classes are taught, they should meet directly with the director. The director will either take up the matter directly or take it to an executive meeting of the faculty.

³ In the event of disputes involving the University Collective Bargaining Agreement, the grievance procedure specified in that [agreement](#) applies.

Committee on Progress

Student progress is monitored by the faculty. One indication of unsatisfactory progress toward completion is a failure to maintain a program GPA of 3.0. This is above the Graduate College's standard of 2.75, below which a student is considered to be on academic probation by the Graduate College. The program GPA is derived from all courses taken at the University of Iowa which **can** be applied to the student's plan of study/MyPlan, regardless of whether they exceed what courses are needed to complete the degree. (The student should be aware that incomplete grades, while not entering into the computation of the grade point average, do not indicate successful completion of the required 42 units.)

Students who do not show progress toward the degree according to their plan of study, or whose program GPA is below 3.0, are automatically placed in a status of Official Concern and a Committee on Progress is convened. The Committee on Progress is composed of the student's academic advisor and one other faculty member appointed by the director. Its task is to assist students in overcoming academic problems. The students are allowed one semester in which to bring their program GPA up to the 3.0 level, or to make substantial progress toward bringing their GPA up to 3.0, while making progress toward the degree according to their plan of study. The Committee on Progress establishes the conditions that must be met for a student to be removed from Official Concern status and determines whether or not these conditions have been met. Failure to meet the conditions set forth by the Committee on Progress shall result in dismissal from the program.

Conditional Status

Students may be admitted on "conditional status." Students on conditional status must meet the obligations of regularly admitted students and may have additional conditions attached to their admission, e.g., the obligation to take remedial course work. Conditional students who do not satisfy admission conditions are subject to dismissal by decision of the faculty.

Final Examination

The School requires that a final examination be administered to each graduate student prior to receiving a degree.

For non-thesis students, the final examination builds upon the Public Affairs Capstone I and II group project experience in which students apply what they have learned in core courses to a real-world problem with a client such as a planning department, community organization, or a public agency (for more information, see the Sustainable Communities Lab or Capstone sections). There are two parts to the final exam: oral and written. Students who pass the first part (oral) do not need to take the written portion. Students who do not pass the oral portion, take the written test a few weeks later, before the Graduate College's deadline for final exam reports. Students who pass the written portion are deemed to have passed the final examination.

The purpose of the final exam is to measure the student's ability to not only practice good public policy analysis or public management but also to reflect on one's practice in the context of critical theories and methods featured in the core curriculum. Thus, in the final examination, students are asked specific questions requiring demonstration of how knowledge obtained in the core courses was applied to the group's work performed in Sustainable Communities Lab or Capstone. The purpose of the examination, therefore, is to ascertain the ability of students to effectively and intelligently apply knowledge, skills, and abilities developed in the core courses to an actual real-world problem.

At the beginning of the fall semester the School issues second-year students a set of study or preparatory questions.

The oral part of the final examination is administered each MPA student in the third week after Spring Break, and prior to the Graduate College's deadline for receiving final exam reports, (typically the second week of April). One week prior to the oral exam date, each candidate for the degree must submit to the examining panel a two-page paper that describes the specific contributions the student made to the Capstone project.

If a written exam is necessary, the student should arrange the exam time with their examining panel being mindful of the Graduate College's deadlines for graduating that same semester. If a student does not take the written portion of the exam prior to the Graduate College deadline for final examinations, the student shall be failed on the basis of their oral examination.

Each student is examined by an examining panel of three faculty members named by the School's director. At least two of the members must be tenured or tenure-track faculty in the School. The faculty committee remains the same for both the written and oral parts.

Consistent with Graduate College requirements, members of the evaluating panel evaluate each examination as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory and two votes for an unsatisfactory performance on the examination result in failing the oral portion of the final examination. A report of the outcome of the final examination (including the oral portion and, if taken, the written portion) is due in the Graduate College no later than 48 hours after the examination, and by the deadline date established by the Graduate College.

If a student fails the final examination (both oral and written), the student is entitled to one retake. Under Graduate College rules the retake cannot be taken until a subsequent semester. Students must be registered in the semester in which they graduate, so extra tuition/fees would apply to delayed graduations. The retake may be written or oral (not both). If the student fails the retake, s/he is dismissed from the program. For the retake, the new committee consists of the chair of the first committee plus two faculty members who did not serve on the first committee. They are appointed by the director. The retake exam must be taken no later than 12 months after the first exam.

According to the Graduate College rules, a student must graduate within three sessions after passing the final examination for a master's degree. A session is defined as beginning in the semester subsequent to final exam completion and includes summer semester but excludes the winter session.

SPPA RESOURCES

Career Assistance

The School is committed to providing outstanding career assistance for both summer internship and post-graduation jobseekers, with a dedicated career services coordinator. Students are urged to use all the services offered, and to begin preparing early. The School offers job information access and personal advising support until the student secures their first job or for up to one year after a student's graduation date, whichever comes first.

In addition to having an advanced degree, students need experience to be competitive. The majority of SPPA students have internships in the summer between their first and second year. (See the section on "Internships" for the qualifications that need to be met.)

Resume

All students should write or update their resume **and** have the Career Services Coordinator and a faculty member review it before the beginning of their second semester. Tips specific to students in each program can be found in the online [SPPA Career Services Manual](#). The SPPA career service coordinator specializes in supporting URP and MPA students. The UI Pomerantz Career Center primarily serves undergraduates, but their [website](#) offers general resume and cover letter examples. Although not dedicated to SPPA students, the [Graduate College Grad Success Center](#) is also available to SPPA students for career support.

Students should begin to submit resumes for job and internship applications to consulting firms and post-graduation fellowships in the fall semester. Local governments are more likely to advertise openings after January. Students interested in nationally competitive internships should be mindful of early deadlines during the fall semester.

Resume Book

Every year SPPA compiles a Resume Book which students may contribute to. To be included in the book, students are required to attend the career services presentation on resumes. The book is distributed by email to approximately 950 alumni every spring. Each year one or more students obtain a position through one of the alums contacted in this way.

Job Postings

Beginning in January, 45-60 new job and internship are posted weekly on the SPPA [website](#). This service brings outstanding job, internship and fellowship opportunities to SPPA students, and assists them in securing challenging, interesting positions nationwide. SPPA also maintains a list of more than 2000 links to potential employers in local government, at planning and public affairs organizations, and consulting firms nationwide. This site is available to assist students and enhance individual searches.

Alumni

We maintain close contact with our alumni. We also receive employment notifications from alumni and other professionals who would like to advertise internship and entry-level positions directly to our students. Graduates tend to move up the ladder quickly; and years later, they are still happy with the education they received at Iowa. Alumni and students are encouraged to join and be active in the LinkedIn group, University of Iowa School of Planning and Public Affairs Alumni & Student Group. Students are welcome to contact alumni for advice, informational interviews, and networking opportunities. If alumni contact information is not available through LinkedIn, the career services coordinator can assist students in obtaining it.

Mock Interviews

In the spring semester the School arranges mock interviews in which selected planning and public affairs employers “interview” students for hypothetical positions. At the end of the interview, the employer gives feedback on the student’s resume and interviewing strengths and weaknesses. Additional support for employment searches is provided for planning students by the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association in which practitioners conduct mock interviews for students and other young planners. Participating in mock interviews allows students the opportunity to experience a professional interview, which can be quite different from previous experience. Students will benefit by improving their interviewing skills and career prospects.

Networking

LinkedIn profiles are equal in importance to a well written resume. It is highly recommended students create a competitive one to increase networking and to build a professional online presence. Guidelines are included in the SPPA online Career Services Manual and the career services coordinator offers feedback. Students are also encouraged to begin networking with professionals in the field, including at local, regional, and national conferences. To support this, the school is often able to provide some travel expense assistance. (See the section on “[SPPA Support for Student Travel](#).” Travel support is also available from various sources at the university (see “[UI Sources of Support for Travel](#)”).

Mentors

Students should contact the SPPA career services coordinator for assistance in identifying alumni to approach about mentoring. A mentor match service is also offered by the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association before each annual conference.

Resume Builders

Additional strategies for finding a position include: joining a national professional organization; creating your own website to highlight your skills and portfolio; becoming involved with local or regional planning or public affairs related organizations; running for a [campus charter committee](#); running for a position on the Executive Committee of the American Planning Association’s [Student Representatives Council](#) (for planning students). Additional suggestions are in the [Career Services Manual](#) under “Opportunities to Beef up Your Resume.”

Facilities

Computer Facilities

SPPA students can use the Instructional Technology Center (ITC) in room 327 (the "drafting room"). This facility has been established using student fees to promote computer-based instruction of students in SPPA and other academic units. The computers are available by HawkID login to all students on campus for 40 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters. [Printing](#) output (black and white or color) is directed to the printer in the ITC.

The School's computers are housed in room 351 (the SPPA library). ArcGIS and other specialized software are available on both the library and ITC computers. Adobe Creative Cloud is available only on the library computers. Output is directed to the printers in the ITC.

Note: The hard drives on all computers (ITC and library) are periodically cleared by ITS throughout the semester, as they are not intended for personal data storage. Remember to save your work to OneDrive, the shared network drive, or your personal flash drive.

OneDrive features are available in all ITCs on campus and the SPPA library computers.

1. Users are automatically signed into OneDrive when they sign into an ITC workstation.
2. Files On-Demand allows users to see and access files in the cloud and download them on-demand only when they need them, saving space on the computer.
3. All files located in Desktop, Documents, and Pictures folders are automatically stored in OneDrive.

Depending on the type of machine used (Windows vs. Mac), user experience may differ. Learn more about these updates in the [OneDrive support article](#).

Laptops

A few laptops are available on an as-needed basis for short term use. To inquire about availability, which is on a first-come basis, please contact Nick Carino-Marek at grad-help@uiowa.edu.

Computer Cluster Use by Non-SPPA Students

During the 40 hours per week when the ITC in room 327 is open to all university students, SPPA students do not have priority use of computers or printers. After hours, on weekends, and during university breaks, the computer facility is available **only** to SPPA students and faculty.

Students in our School are asked to use good judgment when the hour arrives to close the facility for the day. Non-School students should be informed in a courteous manner that the cluster closes at 5:00. Good interpersonal relations are important in working with the somewhat different usage circumstances of SPPA versus other students.

Software Downloads and Copyrights

There are restrictions on what may be installed on university computers due to security concerns, usage, and the cost. If you have any software requests, contact the SPPA director and the School's ITS support person at grad-help@uiowa.edu.

It is important to keep in mind that essentially all computer software is copyrighted. Under no conditions are users of SPPA computers allowed to copy any software programs.

Reserving Facilities

There are a few occasions when an instructor wishes to use the computer lab for a course. On those occasions, there will be a sign posted stating the date, time and course number. Generally, however, the facility will be operated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Fishbowl Meeting Room and Teleconferencing Center

The School's space also includes a meeting room available to students, faculty, and staff--the Fishbowl. The Fishbowl includes two large HD screens, a computer, and teleconferencing equipment. The space is to be used for groups such as Sustainable Communities Lab/Capstone meetings, web conferencing with project partners, and faculty meetings. The equipment can also be used by individuals to facilitate job and internship interviews. It may be reserved by checking the Outlook reservation calendar. To check availability and make a reservation, send a meeting invitation to RES-JH327A-Fishbowl@uiowa.edu. Note that your reservation won't be completed until you received an "ACCEPTED" message back from RES-JH327A-Fishbowl@uiowa.edu, which is managed by the SPPA administrative services coordinator.

The University's preferred web conferencing software is [Zoom](#). A Zoom professional account is site licensed for all faculty, staff, and students and there is no limit on the length of meetings. For interviews, students may also use their personal Skype account or the university's Skype for Business (see <https://its.uiowa.edu/support/article/2783> and <https://its.uiowa.edu/skype#!how-to-and-support>). GoToMeeting is not recommended. Students should make sure they are familiar with the software and that all equipment is working several days before a scheduled meeting or interview.

SPPA Shared Drive

We have two spaces divided on our shared drive (U: drive, Urban folder), one for course materials and the other for shared student file storage. The "Courses" folder is writable by faculty and readable by students. The "Students" folder is writable by all SPPA students and faculty. The "Students" folder will be emptied every year by August 1st. Please make sure any files you wish to keep are copied elsewhere by then, or they will be lost.

The file services are available on campus or [remotely](#) when connected to the campus Virtual Private Network (VPN). The UI Information Security and Policy Office has issued more [stringent restrictions](#) regarding using a personal computing device or a university provisioned resource while abroad. When planning to travel or work abroad and there's a possibility of performing any type of UI work or research, contact our School's ITS support person as early as possible at grad-help@uiowa.edu.

From a Windows machine, you can create a mapped drive to the following location: <\\iowa.uiowa.edu\shared\Urban\Students> or <\\iowa.uiowa.edu\shared\Urban\Courses>. The mapping does not transfer between computers. Students who log in to a different computer will have to map to the drive again.

On a Mac you can connect to the server at: <smb://iowa.uiowa.edu/shared/urban>

At the end of the academic year, students in Sustainable Communities Lab/Capstone will be directed to archive their files on a research drive under the school's control. Otherwise, all student work will be swept over the summer.

Wireless Hot Spots

The Eduroam [WiFi](#) network is available throughout Jessup Hall and the surrounding outdoor areas.

Student Use of Equipment, Supplies and Drafting Room

Use of Copier/Scanner

Students may use the School's copier/scanner for scanning only. Scanning may be done by emailing the document to yourself at no charge. Students have access to the copier/scanner in the SPPA library from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on a non-priority basis.

The University [Copy Centers](#) provide copying and printing services and accept university ID cards and cash for payment. The closest Copy Center is now located at 2500-B University Capitol Centre, open M, W, F from noon-4:00 p.m.

Duplication of Materials at School's Expense

The student is to obtain permission from the instructor for work to be charged to the School in instances where such reproduction is for the instructor's use.

Faculty will determine how to reproduce materials such as student papers which are to be distributed in a class.

Use of Supplies

Students are expected to provide their own supplies for class work. The supply closet contains supplies for staff and faculty use. Research and teaching assistants may draw supplies directly related to their employment from their faculty supervisor.

Office supplies needed to complete Sustainable Communities Lab and Capstone projects are to be provided by the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) on a limited basis. Please consult with IISC's director about whether IISC can purchase the item or not. Examples include copying, envelopes, postage, name tags, paper cups, plates, napkins, coffee, etc.

All professional printing must be completed by University of Iowa Printing and Mailing Services. Please allow at least one week to process printing requests.

Stationery, envelopes, stamps, and related items are exclusively for official School purposes and are not for personal use.

Use of Letterhead

Students may use the School's electronic letterhead only for correspondence related to official school business and after permission from a faculty member. Electronic letterhead is available from the administrative services coordinator. The faculty person must read and approve the correspondence before it is sent out on letterhead; advance permission alone is not sufficient.

Keys

On the day of orientation, students are issued two keys, one for the drafting room and one for their desk. Keys are to be returned by commencement day. If keys are not returned by the deadline students will be charged \$7 on their U-bills for each key they received.

A limited number of keys are available for use of the SPPA library and are available on a first-come basis. These are typically checked out for the semester to those wishing to use special software located on the library computers or using the room for research on evenings or weekends.

Please note: Jessup Hall is locked after hours and on weekends. You may access JH at these times by using your Iowa One ID card which you should obtain at the beginning of your first semester. For problems with building access, contact the SPPA administrative services coordinator.

Drafting Room

The Drafting Room (327 Jessup) is an important part of the School. It provides master's students a place to work and keep materials. Along with the School library and the ITC, it provides space where students can work and meet with fellow students. The sense of community that develops among students throughout the course of their study has much to do with the shared space they enjoy in the Drafting Room.

Because the Drafting Room is a shared space, students should not leave the room unlocked and unattended overnight or on weekends.

Students should also exercise caution in working late at night in the Drafting Room. Jessup Hall is locked in the evening, but students should take care when they leave the building. Students should look to assist each other so that no one has to leave the building alone. Information about personal safety, the Rave Guardian app, and Nite Ride are available on the University's [Safety and Support site](#).

General

Misuse of School supplies or resources may subject a student to disciplinary action.

Personal Effects

SPPA does not accept responsibility for lost or missing items left unattended in Jessup Hall. Because of the high cost of books and laptops, students are urged to exercise care in where they place them and to consider locking them in their desks.

Student Travel

SPPA Support for Student Travel

During each student's time in SPPA, the School may provide one-time partial funding to support student travel to a professional conference that enhances students' education.

In years of limited funding, priority is given to second-year students and to students involved in the school's student organization, SPPASA. Funding is only provided during the time when a student is registered as a full-time student.

The faculty will consider requests for support for travel to or registration for attendance at an appropriate conference. An appropriate conference is one directly related to some aspect of urban and regional planning or public affairs.

Conference dates may change and it is recommended students check the organization's website for the most up-to-date information.

Public Affairs-related conferences:

ICMA (International City/County Management Association) offers the [Edwin O. Stene Scholarship](#) for graduate students to cover registration for the annual conference and includes a stipend intended to cover travel and lodging expenses. Deadline to apply is in early August.

Students may choose to attend a conference from the following.

- **American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)** April
List of [affiliated conferences](#) includes:
 - Midwest Public Affairs Conference (MPAC) June
 - National Conference of Minority Public Administrators Mar.
- **Assoc. for Research on Non-Profit Organizations & Voluntary Action (ARNOVA)** Nov./Dec.
This is a research-oriented organization for non-profit researchers.
- **Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP)** May
For those who want to work as a fund-raising officer.
Offer a certification program [ACFRE](#)
- **Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)** May
For state/local finance officers, offering students internship opportunities, scholarships and student chapters
<https://www.gfoa.org/about-gfoa/student-opportunities>
- **ICMA (International City/County Management Association)** Sept./Oct.
- **International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP)** July
professional, annual conferences, certifications

- **International Economic Development Council (IEDC)** Sept./Oct.
 Offering certification for economic development officials.
 Credentials from IEDC are highly preferred in job ads.
 One of our recent alumni found this conference very interesting and helpful.
- **Iowa City/County Management Association (IaCMA)**
- **Iowa Municipal Management Institute (IMMI)** Mar.
 hosted annually by IaCMA
- **Iowa League of Cities, annual conference and exhibit** Sept.
- **Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)** April
 This is a political science conference but has a large public policy/public
 admin turnout. The conference has a track for undergraduates who are
 interested in presenting research. Held annually in Chicago.
- **National Associations of Commissions for Women (NACW)** July
- **Public Management Research Conference (PMRC)** May/June
 Public Management Research Association (PMRA) is a nonprofit academic
 membership association that furthers research on public organizations.
 The conference is research-driven but practitioners attend too and it "has
 become the foremost gathering of leading public management scholars in
 the US and around the world."
- **Women in Public Finance** Sept.
 WPF Wisconsin Chapter
 WPF Chicago Chapter
- **Young Nonprofit Professionals Network** Chapter mtgs. vary

UI Sources of Support for Travel

The University of Iowa offers additional sources of support for student travel:

- The [Graduate and Professional Student Government](#)

- The [Graduate Student Senate](#)

- [Student Impact Grant](#)

The University of Iowa Office of the President and the University of Iowa's Center for Advancement's Student Advancement Network (SAN) have partnered to create the Student Impact Grant, which provides funding for a variety of activities for undergraduate and graduate students outside of the classroom, such as research, travel, and service projects. The President's Office has generously allocated \$7,000 per semester to help enhance the student experience at the University through these grants.

For winter/spring travel, applications will be accepted online beginning August 28, 2023 until the deadline on September 29, 2023.

The application period for summer/fall semester travel has been mid-January to mid-February.

- The UI [Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research](#)

The student must be presenting at the meeting (oral or poster presentation) for which they are requesting travel assistance and the student must be working in the areas of environmental global change and environmental sciences. A maximum of two students per research group will receive travel funds.

Note: To qualify, you must have a CGRER member (Spak) sign your application as your advisor. Academic year applications are typically due January 15 and so students should be alert to this deadline. In the past, Sustainable Communities Lab/Capstone projects have qualified for this opportunity.

Student Awards

Jim Harris Memorial Scholarship Award

The Jim Harris Memorial Scholarship award was established in 2002 to honor the memory of the planning program's first Chair, Jim Harris. The scholarship recognizes a student(s) (or recent graduate) who best exemplifies Jim's commitment to community service and passion for social justice.

The award is based on the faculty's evaluation of the person(s) best demonstrating excellence in community service. Community service may include volunteer work with a non-profit organization, involvement in a professional planning-related organization, or in advocacy on planning-related issues. Paid employment does not typically qualify as community service. The service may have taken place anywhere – in Iowa City, elsewhere in the state of Iowa, elsewhere in the nation, or internationally. Current students and those who have graduated during the past academic year are eligible. At least part of the service should have occurred during the student's time in the School.

Nominations are to be submitted to the director by February 1st. Nominees are asked to provide a resume and brief description of community service activities. The recipient of the award is announced by March 31st.

AICP Outstanding Student Award

The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) sponsors an outstanding student award each year. This is not a national competition. Instead, each planning school selects a student for the award. Under our procedures, nominations for the outstanding student may be made by faculty, staff, or students. Any student who graduates during a given academic year and has a cumulative GPA of at least 3.50 is eligible to be nominated for the award for that year.

Nominations are to be submitted to the planning director by February 1st. Nominees are asked to provide a resume and brief description of the criteria as listed below. A Student Award Committee, consisting of two faculty members, makes a recommendation to the faculty, which then selects the recipient.

Planning's selection of an outstanding student is based on the faculty's assessment of the quality of the student's work in planning and the student's promise of success as a professional planner. In making this assessment, the faculty will look for evidence of the student's intellectual ability, acquired skills, and commitment to planning. Definitions of these three categories are provided below.

Intellectual Ability as demonstrated by:

- The innovative nature of work accomplished while in planning;
- The ability to analyze problems and methods critically;
- The ability to synthesize concepts and apply them to real situations, and;
- A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.50.

Acquired Skills as demonstrated by:

- The ability to communicate clearly and succinctly in written and oral forms;
- The ability to design a research effort and monitor its implementation;
- The ability to apply analytic methods to their appropriate uses, and;
- The ability to work effectively in a team or group situation.

Commitment to planning as demonstrated by:

- Contribution through service to the students, staff or faculty;
- A sense of professional direction;
- Individual initiative and desire for a successful career in planning;
- Leadership in student organizations, and;
- Contributions to the planning profession through participation in planning activities of state or local government, such as planning boards or commissions.

MPA Outstanding Student Award

Each year, SPPA faculty will select a student to receive the MPA Outstanding Student Award. Any MPA student who will graduate during a given academic year and has a cumulative GPA of at least 3.50 is eligible to be nominated for the award that year. Self-nominations are allowed.

The selection of an outstanding student is based on the faculty's assessment of the quality of the student's work and the student's promise as a future leader in public governance. In making this assessment, the faculty will look for evidence of the student's intellectual ability, acquired skills, and commitment to public service. Details of these three categories are provided below:

Intellectual ability as demonstrated by:

- The innovative nature of public affairs work accomplished;
- The ability to analyze problems and methods critically;
- The ability to make evidence-informed decisions regarding public problems;
- The ability to synthesize concepts and apply them to real situations, and;
- A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.50.

Acquired skills as demonstrated by:

- The ability to participate in, and contribute to, the public policy process;
- The ability to articulate a public service perspective including ethics and values;
- The ability to apply analytical methods to their appropriate uses, and;
- The ability to work effectively in a team or group situation, and;
- The ability to communicate clearly and succinctly in written and oral forms.

Commitment to public service as demonstrated by:

- Contributions to SPPA students, staff, or faculty through department service;
- Individual initiative and desire for a successful career in public affairs;
- Leadership in SPPA and/or UI student organizations, and;
- Contributions to local or state community through participation in public affairs activities.

STUDENT ORGANIZATION AND INPUT

School of Planning and Public Affairs Student Association

The School of Planning and Public Affairs Student Association (SPPASA) is a university-recognized student association comprised of graduate students in the School of Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Iowa. SPPASA's primary goal is to further their professional interests in the fields of planning and public affairs .

Throughout the year SPPASA is involved in many activities, including but not limited to garnering financial support for trips and conferences. In order to take advantage of the maximum number of funding opportunities and ensure continuity of the association over the summer months, students elect SPPASA officers in the spring for the following academic year.

Other SPPASA activities include planning social activities, organizing volunteer opportunities, and intramural athletics. All students are encouraged to participate, as the success of this organization is dependent upon student involvement.

Student Representatives

Representatives within SPPA

Each class from both programs select one representative and an alternate to attend regular faculty meetings. In faculty meetings, student representatives are expected to contribute to discussions that are related to SPPA students, convey student concerns to the faculty, and communicate relevant information from the meetings to students. Student representatives are entitled to participate fully in discussions but may not vote. Occasionally it is necessary for the faculty to go into executive session, in which case the student representatives will not be allowed to be present.

Representatives in campus-wide organizations

Each department or interdisciplinary program is allotted one full senator per fifty students to have a representative on the Graduate Student Senate (GSS). Planning and public affairs students should each select an appropriate number of GSS senators and alternatives for their programs.

SPPA Students can run for positions in the various committees of the UI [Graduate & Professional Student Government](#) which advocates for graduate and professional students.

Students with assistantships can be Research Assistants (RAs) or Teaching Assistants (TAs). Both TAs and RAs are represented by the UE Local 896 – [COGS](#) (Campaign to Organize Graduate Students) and attend COG meetings or can run for positions with COGs.

Evaluations of Courses by Students

Purpose

Standardized forms for evaluation of the School's courses are distributed through ICON near the end of each semester in all courses. All students are requested to complete these forms for each course. The course evaluations serve several important purposes:

1. They inform the instructor about course elements where students feel they did well or poorly;
2. They provide insight into ways a course could be improved (e.g., select another text), and;
3. They aid the director in assessing the overall teaching performance of each faculty member.

These evaluations are an important source of information about the quality of a faculty member's teaching.

Students are asked to disassociate their ratings of an instructor with their performance in the course, to be objective; avoid using the evaluations to "help" an instructor they are fond of or to "get even" with one they may be less favorably disposed toward. The sole purpose of the course evaluation process ought to be to improve the quality and relevance of instruction.

Procedure

All class evaluations are performed online during the final two weeks of classes—before final exams begin. Instructors should permit time for completion of the evaluations in class. In any event, students are encouraged to complete these evaluations. The instructor does not receive the evaluation results until final grades have been submitted for the semester. They are also reviewed by the director and utilized in annual performance reviews of faculty as well as at the time of consideration for promotion and tenure.

Exit Survey

An exit survey will be conducted with **all** graduating students at the end of their final semester. Each student will have the opportunity to respond anonymously to an internet-based survey that includes both closed and open-ended questions that allow the student to express their opinions, ideas, and suggestions about their program, the School's facilities, curriculum, and procedures. If students wish, they may follow up their responses to the survey with an oral interview with the director. The School uses the results from the survey to plan and implement improvements.

Online Certificate in Transportation Planning

Students interested in transportation planning or transportation policy related careers may be eligible to be awarded a Certificate in Transportation Planning. The Certificate in Transportation Planning, coordinated by School of Planning and Public Affairs Associate Professor of Instruction, Steve Spears, enables students to be awarded an additional credential. It is documented on a student's transcript at the time the master's degree is earned. To apply to receive the certificate, students must contact the SPPA admissions coordinator before completing their final course for the certificate.

To obtain a certificate, graduate students must complete a minimum of 12 semester hours of transportation-related courses offered in Urban and Regional Planning and related fields.

During the student's final semester, the [Certificate Completion Form](#) must be submitted before the established deadline for the Degree Application set by the Graduate College (approximately 10 weeks before graduation).

Courses are taught primarily online with both real-time interaction and recorded lectures. Some elective courses offered in-person to accommodate student preferences. However, the certificate can be completed entirely online by selecting courses available in that format. Courses are taught by faculty in the SPPA and College of Public Health.

The first semester of the certificate program introduces students to the fundamentals of transportation planning history and practice, and to the relationships between transportation systems, urban form, equity, and sustainability.

The second semester deepens knowledge through specialization in public policy, travel behavior analysis, infrastructure finance, and traffic safety. Finally, in the summer studio course, students undertake a real-world transportation project for a community partner through the [Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities](#) (IISC).

Required	Sem.	Format	Title and Instructor for 2023-24	Sem. Hrs.
URP:6266	Fall	online	Transportation, Urban Form & Sustainability (Spears)	3
URP:6270	Sum.	online	Transportation Planning Studio (Spears)	3

At least one of the following two courses

Electives

URP:4262	Spr.	online	Transportation Research Methods & Analysis (Spears)	3
URP:6260	Spr.	online	Transportation Policy and Planning (Spears)	3
URP:6263	Fall	online	Special Topics in Transportation Planning (Spears)	3

Other Electives

CPH:4220	Spr.	on campus	Global Road Safety (Hamann)	3
URP:6233	Spr.	on campus	Public Finance and Budgeting (Nguyen)	3

Master of Public Affairs Vision/Mission Statement

The Master of Public Affairs degree program prepares/trains the next generation of public managers, administrators, policy makers and analysts who:

- stem from a wide range of socio-demographic backgrounds and interests
- embrace the public services values of public affairs, policy, and administration
- can analyze, develop and implement programs and policies that serve the public interest
- have the knowledge and skills to effectively and fairly manage and lead government, non-profit and private agencies and their staff
- serve their employers, profession and communities by promoting good governance, sound investments, sustainability, resilience, equity and justice
- have successful careers in public service, public administration, as well as non-profit and private sector management in Iowa and beyond

The program's mission is also to serve public and nonprofit sector agencies in the State of Iowa and beyond:

- through student and faculty engagement with communities (IISC and other applied projects)
- through faculty research that advances public affairs, administration, and policy knowledge and practice

The MPA Program

The 2022-2027 University of Iowa Strategic Plan indicates a mission of the university to “bring learning and discovery into the service of the people of the state of Iowa, the nation, and the world, improving lives through education, health care, arts and culture, and community and economic vitality.” At the end of the second decade of the 21st century, societies strive to collectively, creatively, and democratically respond to key challenges facing our communities, our nation, and the world. Among these challenges are:

- environmental change—including an increased incidence and intensity of disasters such as flooding, sea level rise, and wildfires attributable to climate change
- inequalities by race, income, social status, gender, and sexual orientation
- inequalities in access to housing, education, health and economic prospects
- health care, addiction and pandemics
- an aging population
- inadequate infrastructure
- transportation
- immigration
- economic development
- public safety

Interdisciplinary approach to complex issues

In response to these challenges, SPPA created an interdisciplinary master’s degree in public affairs (MPA) to train future leaders to creatively address these and other challenges.

The MPA is inherently interdisciplinary and builds on SPPA faculty and courses as well as faculty in other UI units, all of which they have earned national and international reputations:

- Business—Organizations and Leadership, Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness
- Education—Education Policy
- Engineering—Civil and Environmental Engineering--sustainability
- Geographical and Sustainable Sciences—climate change, sustainability
- History—history of policing, race and American history
- Law—Nonprofit Organizations
- Political Science—Public Policy, Politics
- Public Health—Health Planning and Management
- Sociology and Criminology—Criminal Justice Policy
- Strategic Communication
- Urban and Regional Planning

Campus public affairs centers

The University also hosts important public affairs centers including:

- [Public Policy Center](#)
- [Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center](#)
- [Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities](#)

Degree Objective, Graduation Requirements, and Curriculum

Degree Objective

All students are admitted into the public affairs program to pursue a master's degree without a thesis.

Graduation Requirements

GPA: Attain an overall 3.0 program grade point average for all courses taken at the University of Iowa that **can** be applied to the student's plan of study/MyPlan for the public affairs degree, **regardless of whether they exceed what courses are needed to complete the degree** (see section on “Grading and Academic Performance”).

Credits: Complete 42 hours of course credit in public affairs courses or courses approved by the student’s advisor that contribute to a degree in public affairs. **These may include courses offered by public affairs programs at other universities that were taken prior to enrollment and have been accepted for credit by the UI program faculty.** (See section on “Credit for Courses Taken Prior to Enrollment.”)

Course Work: Complete satisfactorily all core and capstone courses (unless this requirement is waived by the program - see “Waiver of Core Course Requirements”), and a minimum of 9 semester hours in courses for an area of concentration.

Satisfactory completion means attainment of a grade of B- or better in each required course. If the grade is lower than a B-, the course must be repeated. If a B- or higher grade is not obtained the second time the course is taken, the student is dismissed from the program. (See section on “Grades in Required Courses.”) However, if a course is not used to satisfy any of the area of concentration or the core courses, and if the student’s GPA is adequate, and the Graduate College accepts the credit, then the course may count towards the 42 hours for the degree even if the grade is below a B-, as long as it is no lower than a C-.

Final Exam: Students must pass a final exam (oral and written components, (see “Final Examination”) administered by the student's final exam committee.

Curriculum

The curriculum is based on a philosophy that balances coursework and choices between public administration and public policy courses and therefore prepares a student for a profession in either or both public administration and public policy. As an interdisciplinary program, courses are offered by the School of Planning and Public Affairs and the Political Science Department, as well as from other units such as Management and Organizations in the Tippie College of Business, Strategic Communications in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, and the Larned Waterman Nonprofit Resource Center in the College of Law.

The Master of Public Affairs (MPA) degree requires 42 semester hours spread out over two years. These 42 semester hours include

8 core courses (20 s.h.)

1 internship (1-3 s.h.)

5 electives (minimum 15 s.h.)

- 9 s.h. taken within a concentration
- the remaining selected from the MPA curriculum (either area of concentration)

Public Affairs Capstone I and II (4 s.h.)

Required Courses

First Semester		Title and Instructor for 2023-24		Semester Hours	
PBAF:5120	Fall	Public Policy Process (Zuhlke)	core	3	
PBAF:6200	Fall	Analytic Methods I (Nguyen)	core	3	
PBAF:6205	Fall	Economics for Policy Analysis (Qian)	core	3	
PBAF:6208	Fall	Program Seminar	core	1	
Second Semester					
PBAF:5117	Spring	Bureau. Politics & Public Admin. (Zuhlke)	core	3	
PBAF:6225	Spring	Applied GIS for Planning & Policy Making ⁴ (Kim)	core	1,3	
PBAF:6233	Spring	Public Finance & Budgeting (Nguyen)	core	3	
PBAF:6240	Spring	Public Management (Monroe)	core	3	
Third Semester					
PBAF:6209	Fall	Public Affairs Capstone I (Kraus, Qian, Nguyen, Zuhlke)	capstone	1	
PBAF:6335	Sum./Fall	Internship ⁵	core	1-3	
		Concentration or Elective	elective	3	
		Concentration or Elective	elective	3	
Fourth Semester					
PBAF:6210	Spring	Public Affairs Capstone II (Kraus, Qian, Nguyen, Zuhlke)	capstone	3	
		Concentration or Elective	elective	3	
		Concentration or Elective	elective	3	

*Not offered 2023-2024

For the capstone project students will engage in analysis of a contemporary public policy problem plus development of recommended action steps. This will be done in tandem with the University's [Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities](#) (IISC) which has been providing public consultation to communities in Iowa for over a decade.

When a SPPA course is offered at the 4000 and 6000 level, students must register for the 6000-level course.

Students with half-time assistantships may register for no more than 12 semester hours per semester.

⁴ Applied GIS for Planning and Policy Making may be taken for 1 s.h. or 3 s.h.

- The required 1 s.h. module is introductory and takes place in the first part of the semester. Students can elect to take only this module (and register for 1 s.h.) or take the whole 3 s.h. course for more advanced contents.
- Students with GIS experience can waive out of the 1 s.h. requirement.

⁵ The internship is required. In rare cases when finding an internship that meets the SPPA requirements is impossible, a student may substitute the internship with another course. Students seeking this substitution should demonstrate their best efforts to find an internship. The substituted course must be approved by the faculty advisor and the director.

Waiver of Core Course Requirements

Core courses can be waived fully or in part for students who have completed comparable courses covering substantially the same material prior to enrolling in the public affairs program, and who received a grade of B or higher in those courses. For courses taken outside the University of Iowa, SPPA's policy is to grant waivers for core courses only in exceptional cases. However, students who believe they have a legitimate case for waiver are encouraged to request one.

To obtain a waiver of Analytic Methods I or Economics for Policy Analysis the student should arrange to take an evaluation of their knowledge of course material so that a determination can be made no later than the first week the waived course meets. Students are advised to contact the course instructor to arrange for the test and obtain details of the material covered in the test.

In the case of other core courses, the student must supply sufficient supporting materials to demonstrate that the subject matter contained in the course for which a waiver is sought has been covered with comparable rigor elsewhere. It should be emphasized that the burden of proof lies with the student to demonstrate the adequacy of previous training. Course outlines, exercises (if applicable), exams, and transcripts are the types of documentation typically required. The waiver form is available on the SPPA website and must be signed by the instructor of the core course and by the student's advisor, who will enter their recommendations.

Waiver requests should be made as early as possible, but no later than the first week of the semester during which the course would normally be taken. Should a request be denied, the student will then be able to enroll in the course before too much of the semester has elapsed. Under no circumstances will a waiver be granted after the student has completed subsequent sequential courses, or after the student has completed Public Affairs Capstone.

It should be noted that approval of a waiver exempts the student from the requirement to take a particular course, but does not reduce the 42 hours required for the degree. A student who waives a core course has the same final examination requirements as one who did not waive the particular course. (See sections on "Final Examination") Therefore, it would be prudent to assure oneself that the material has been adequately mastered before requesting a waiver.

Grades in Required Courses

A required course requirement can be satisfied either by waiver of the course or by completion of the course with a grade of B- or better. A required course for which a student received a C+ or lower must be repeated with a grade of at least a B-.

If a required course is repeated, it will appear twice on the student's official university transcript. The original grade and the grade for the second time the course was taken will both be included in the official GPA. If a B- or higher grade is not obtained the second time the course is taken, the student is dismissed from the program.

For purposes of meeting the requirement of 42 semester hours, the second course will replace the first. That is, assuming at least a B- is received the second time, the semester hour credit(s) for the first time the course was taken will not count towards the 42 semester hour requirement. (See "Grading and Academic Performance.")

Electives Outside of Areas of Concentration

The following courses are not part of any concentration but are good options to round out students' education. Students may want to look for those courses, which are not offered every semester.

URP:3217	Negotiation and Conflict Resolution	3 s.h.
URP:6282	Grant Writing (Mirr)	2 s.h.
URP:6330	Developing Graphic Content (Gassman)	1 s.h.
EPLS:5240	Topics in Education: Facilitating Controversial Dialogue/ Facilitator Preparation for Leaders	3 s.h.

Areas of Concentration

Public affairs students select one or more area(s) of concentration in the first semester. If a student desires a change of concentration later, it can be accomplished by submitting a new Area of Concentration [form](#) and obtaining the advisor's approval. The purpose of the area of concentration requirement is to ensure that the student develops depth in a particular substantive area of public affairs by mastering a set of elective courses that together constitute a coherent plan of study/MyPlan in that area.

There are two areas of concentration in the MPA: (1) Public and Nonprofit Management and (2) Public Policy. The course offerings and requirements for each area of concentration are described below. Note that not all of the courses listed are offered every year.

In all cases the student's plan of study/MyPlan must include at least nine semester hours of course work in the area of concentration. The student must attain at least a B- **in each course** for that course to be applied to the area of concentration requirement. Normally, not more than three hours of readings courses or independent study may be counted towards a concentration. In those cases when a student has re-taken a concentration course, both grades will be used in computing the program GPA. If a B- or higher grade is not obtained the second time the course is taken, the student is dismissed from the program. (See section on "Grades in Required Courses.")

Please note: Because courses offered by other departments were obtained at the time this manual was created, students must check course offerings on MyUI, consult with their advisors, and take care when including such courses on their plan of study/MyPlan.

Public and Nonprofit Management

This concentration focuses on the management of public and nonprofit organizations. It provides students an understanding of the principles and foundations for successful leadership, management, and communication in public and nonprofit organizations.

Students must earn nine hours towards this concentration by taking courses from the list below. Students may propose other courses not listed here, but must obtain written approval from their adviser for these courses to be counted toward the concentration. Given the range of academic units across campus that offer courses in public and nonprofit management, it is wise to plan ahead by ascertaining the timing and availability of these courses during your course of study.

Note: Students may not take both LAW 8753 and PBAF:6278, or both LAW 8755 and MGMT 4600 because these pairs of courses have similar contents.

Courses	Title and Instructor for 2023-24	Semester Hours
Nonprofit Management		
PBAF:6278 Fall & Sum.	Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness I (Dunkhase/Wilson) (Fall on-campus & online; summer online)	3
PBAF:6279 Fall	Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness II (Dunkhase; online)	3
LAW:8753 Fall	Nonprofit Organizations: Structure, Governance & Strategy (Thelen)	3
LAW:8755 Spring	Nonprofit Organizations: Advocacy, Collaboration & Fundraising	3
MGMT:4600* Spring	Nonprofit Ethics and Governance (online)	3
Public Management		
PBAF:6238* Spring	Public Human Resource Management (Mart)	3
PBAF:6241* Fall	Strategic Mgmt of Public & Nonprofit Organizations (Twedt-Ball)	3
PBAF:6282 Spring/Sum.	Grant Writing (Mirr)	2
Strategic Communication		
PBAF:3560* Spring	Public Policy and Persuasion (Schuettpelz)	3
JMC:5225 Fall	Digital Strategic Communication (Nelson; online)	3
JMC:5270* Fall	Leadership Communication (staff)	3
JMC:5220 Fall	Foundations of Strategic Communication (Krajewski; online)	3

*Not offered 2023-2024

Public Policy

This concentration focuses on public policy, including public policy analysis, the public policy process (including the political process), and policy areas such as environmental policy, education policy, housing policy, etc.

Students may propose other courses not listed here but must obtain written approval from their adviser in order for these courses to be counted toward the concentration. Given the range of academic units across campus that offer courses in public policy, it is wise to plan ahead by ascertaining the timing and availability of these courses during your course of study.

Required		Title and Instructor for 2023-24	Semester Hours
PBAF:6340	Spring	Public Policy Analysis (Qian)	3
<i>OR</i>			
PBAF:6201	Spring	Analytic Methods II (Nguyen)	3
 Courses			
Criminal Justice			
CRIM:3110	Spring	Communities and Crime (Wo)	3
CRIM:3600*	Spring	Crime and Public Policy (Wo)	3
CRIM:4120*	Fall	Environmental Criminology (Wo)	3
 Economic Development Policy			
PBAF:3570	Fall	Poverty Policy (Gerlach)	3
PBAF:6295*	Spr; odd yrs.	Economic Development Policy (Qian)	3
 Educational Policy			
EPLS:6225	Fall, odd yrs.	Higher Education Policy (Miller; online)	3
EPLS:6228*	Fall	K-12 Education Finance and Policy	3
 Environmental Policy			
PBAF:5800	Spring	Environmental Economics and Policy (Secchi)	3
PBAF:6256	Spring	Environmental Policy (Spak)	3
PBAF:6257*	Spring	Environmental Management (staff)	3
PBAF:6258	Fall	Systems and Scenario Thinking (Spak)	3
CEE:3790	Spring	Resilient Infrastructure and Emergency Response (Fosse)	3
CEE:5410	Spring	Politics of FEWS (Food, Energy and Water resources (Cwiertny; online)	3
LAW:8433	Spring	Environmental Law (Stensvaag)	3
LAW:8622*	Spring	International Environmental Law (Carlson)	3
POLI:3518*	Spring	Water Wars: Conflict and Cooperation (Huygens & Mitchell)	3
 Health Policy			
PBAF:6253*	Spring	Designing Sustainable and Healthy Cities (staff)	3
HMP:5610	Fall & Spring*	Health Policy (Kaskie)	3
HMP:5650*	Spring	Health Policy Analysis (staff)	3
HMP:6710	Spr; even yrs.	Federalism and Health Policy (Kaskie)	3

Housing and Community Development Policy

PBAF:3570	Fall	Poverty Policy (Gerlach)	3
PBAF:6271	Spr; even yrs.	Housing Policy (Anthony)	3
PBAF:6273	Spring	Community Dev. Through Creative Placemaking (Kraus)	3

Methods

PBAF:6201	Spring	Analytic Methods II (Nguyen)	3
PBAF:6340	Spring	Public Policy Analysis (Qian)	3

Politics of Public Policy Making

PBAF:3560	Fall	Public Policy and Persuasion (Schuettpelz)	3
JMC:5248	Fall	Strategic Political Communication (Duchene; online)	3
POLI:3102	Spring	The U.S. Congress (Smith)	3
POLI:3104	Spring	Immigration Politics (Rocha)	3
POLI:3118	Spring	Interest Groups (Smith)	3
POLI:3123*	Spring	State Politics in Iowa (staff)	3
POLI:3203*	Fall	Campaigns, Elections, and Voting Behavior (Tolbert)	3
POLI:3204*	Fall	Public Opinion (Yu)	3
POLI:3519*	Spring	Politics of Aging (Pacheco)	3

Sustainable Development

PBAF:5800	Spring	Environmental Economics and Policy (Secchi)	3
PBAF:6253	Spring	Designing Sustainable and Healthy Cities (staff)	3
CEE:4107	Spring	Sustainable Systems (Schnoor)	3
CEE:5410	Spring	Politics of FEWS (Food, Energy and Water resources (Cwiertyny; online)	3
GEOG:3420*	Fall	Sustainable and Green Building Concepts (staff)	3
GEOG:4750	Spring	Environmental Impact Analysis (Secchi)	3
GEOG:4770*	Fall	Environmental Justice (staff)	3

Transportation Policy

PBAF:6260	Spring	Transportation Policy and Planning (Spears; online)	3
PBAF:6266	Fall	Transportation, Urban Form & Sustainability (Spears; online)	3

*Not offered 2023-2024

Combined Degree Programs: Graduate-to-Graduate

Various combined-degree options are available allowing students to earn a graduate degree in public affairs and another degree in less time than would be required to obtain the two degrees independently. Courses for one degree are considered as elective credit for the other degree program.

Combined graduate-to-graduate degree options for public affairs:

- The graduate-to-graduate option is open to students in any graduate area of study at the University of Iowa
- Law: A formalized combined degree option has been established (see following pages)

Requirements

While the requirements of each combined graduate-to-graduate degree option may vary, all have key features in common. In each case a student must:

- Complete an approved area of concentration in public affairs. Work in the other academic unit does not, in and of itself, necessarily constitute a valid area of concentration (e.g., "law" is not a concentration).
- Take at least 32 hours of public affairs courses that have been previously approved to count towards the degree (except for the combined degree with law which requires 42 semester hours). Courses in other programs can sometimes be substituted for public affairs core courses. However, this does not reduce the 32-hour requirement.
- Unless otherwise specified, Capstone is required of students in combined degree programs.
- Satisfy public affairs final examination requirement.

Specific features of the formalized graduate-to-graduate programs are below. The student should verify the most recent degree requirements with the department of interest as courses and requirements in other departments are subject to change with little prior notification.

Graduate-to-Graduate Options with Other Disciplines

Even when an established combined graduate-to-graduate degree program does not exist, students can receive a master's degree in public affairs in conjunction with another graduate degree.

University policy requires that prior administrative approval be granted, and a minimum of 60 semester hours of graduate credit be completed to receive two master's degrees. However, courses taken to satisfy one unit's requirements also may be applied to meet the other unit's requirements. Some credits can be shared when one master's degree requires, or both master's degrees require, more than 30 semester hours of graduate credit. (No more than ¼ of the credits necessary for one degree may be composed of coursework taken for the other degree.) In all cases, combined degree programs require at least 60 semester hours of graduate credit and each unit's degree requirements must be met. Students should consult with their advisors, and consult the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations, Part I, [section X. G.](#)

Admission

Students will be expected to meet the admission requirements of the respective programs, including taking the requisite admission examinations and providing the appropriate admission materials. The two academic units will make admission decisions independently.

Students already admitted to another academic unit are formally assigned to that unit. Students interested in pursuing two master's degrees combined should contact the SPPA admissions coordinator. At a time when the majority of their coursework is in public affairs, students should file a Change of Status form with the Graduate Admissions Office to be formally assigned to public affairs.

Student who are first admitted to public affairs and subsequently desire to obtain a second master's degree, should contact their advisor and the admissions coordinator in the other unit. The other unit will submit a Change of Status form to confirm admission to their program, after which SPPA will either approve or deny. A Change of Status form should also be filed when students complete their coursework in public affairs. Doing so enables the student to be formally assigned to the other academic unit. For students who plan to complete all degree requirements in public affairs and in the other academic unit simultaneously, no Change of Status form is needed to assign a student to an academic unit.

Tuition

As a member of a graduate-to-graduate degree program, students may pay the greater of the two programs' tuition costs. Students are encouraged to consult the Graduate College to determine the tuition amount.

Specific features of the formalized combined-degree programs follow; however, the student should verify the most recent combined-degree requirements with the department of interest, because courses and requirements in other departments are subject to change with little prior notification.

Law-Public Affairs

Careers

Combined law-public affairs degree graduates typically obtain employment in the public or nonprofit sector as attorneys with strong public policy or management skills.

Admissions

Students are expected to meet the admission requirements of the respective programs, including taking the requisite admission examinations and providing the appropriate admission materials. The two academic units make admission decisions independently. Typically, students apply to admission to the MPA program during their first or second year of study in the JD program.

Detailed application processes are described on the respective academic unit websites:

JD: <https://law.uiowa.edu/admissions/apply-iowa-law/juris-doctor-jd>

MPA: <https://sppa.uiowa.edu/future-students/mpa/apply>

GMAT Waiver:

The MPA Program will consider the LSAT as a replacement for the GRE for current University of Iowa JD students under the following conditions:

- Minimum 3.00 undergraduate GPA; and
- Student is in good standing in the College of Law.

LSAT Waiver:

An LSAT waiver is available through the Kinnick Law Program. In order to be eligible to apply through the Kinnick Law Program, the student must be:

- a current undergraduate student at the University of Iowa,
- a current graduate student at the University of Iowa in another degree program, or
- an applicant to a graduate degree program at the University of Iowa who wishes to combine the other degree with the JD.

Additionally, the student or applicant must have:

- at least a 3.5 GPA (through six semesters of undergraduate academic work) or be in the top ten percent of the undergraduate class, and
- a score, not more than five years old, in the top 15th percentile of the ACT, SAT, GMAT, or GRE, and have never taken the LSAT.

For additional details, see <https://law.uiowa.edu/admissions/kinnick-law-program>

Approval as a Combined Degree Candidate:

- In order to be classified as a combined degree candidate, a JD student must obtain the approval of the Dean of the College of Law or the Dean's Designate (currently, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs).

Credit Acceptance

The College of Law applies 12 semester hours of courses from the MPA required courses toward the 88 semester hours requirement for the JD.⁶ Pursuant to the College of Law's policy on distance education courses, online courses may not be counted toward the JD unless the College of Law faculty

⁶ The requirement for students matriculating in the JD program before August 2020 is 84 semester hours

first approves the course's academic content, the method of course delivery, and the method of evaluating student performance. The MPA Program applies 9 semester hours of JD coursework taken after admission to the MPA program toward required electives. This agreement provides students with reduced credit hours when compared to completing both degrees independently.

JD Requirements	MPAff Requirements
<p>88 semester hours total required for graduation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 semester hours counted from MPA <p>Of the 88 semester hours required for graduation, the following general additional requirements must be satisfied:</p> <p>All required first-year courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 64 semester hours of Faculty Instruction Courses At least 6 semester hours of experiential coursework At least 4 upper-level writing units, of which at least 2 must be faculty-supervised Professional Responsibility and Constitutional Law II <p>See Graduation Requirements for the J.D. Degree, <i>Iowa College of Law Academic Policies and Procedures, II.</i>, for additional requirements and limitations.</p>	<p>42 semester hours total required for graduation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 semester hours counted from JD <p>Of the 42 semester hours required for graduation, the student will complete 33 semester hours that are unique to the MPA (12 courses):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 core courses (20 s.h.) 1 internship (1-3 s.h.) Public Affairs Capstone I and II (4 s.h.) Remaining semester 6-8 s.h. from electives

Combined total minimum amount of credit earned is 109 semester hours.

Conferral of the Combined JD/MPA Degree

Pursuant to College of Law policy, unless the student withdraws from one of the programs of study, a combined degree candidate may not receive the JD until completing the requirements for both the JD and MPA degrees.

Sample Plans of Study for JD/MPA Combined Degree

The following sample plans of study is provided as an example only. Students may elect to take intersession courses that may count toward degree requirements. College of Law policies limit the maximum number of semester hours that a student may enroll in that count toward the JD.

Sample Plan of Study

	JD Hours	MPAff Hours	Total
Year 1 Fall	15 sh	0 sh	15 sh
Year 1 Spring	16 sh	0 sh	16 sh
Year 2 Fall	15 sh	0 sh	15 sh
Year 2 Spring	15 sh	0 sh	15 sh
Year 3 Fall	0 sh	12 sh	12 sh
Year 3 Spring	0 sh	12 sh	12 sh
Year 4 Fall	9 sh	3 sh	12 sh
Year 4 Spring	6 sh	6 sh	12 sh
<i>Unique hour total</i>	<i>76 sh</i>	<i>33 sh</i>	<i>109 sh</i>
<i>Double-counted hours</i>	<i>12 sh</i>	<i>9 sh</i>	<i>130 sh</i>
Total	88 sh	42 sh	130 sh

At the end of the fourth year of study, students will have completed 88 sh toward the JD degree and 42 sh toward the MPA degree, including double-counted courses. Students must complete a combined total of no less than 109 sh to earn both degrees.

Cost

In keeping with the Office of the Executive Vice President & Provost Tuition Assessment Policy, the JD program will be designated as the primary program of study due to it being the higher tuition rate. Session based exceptions are processed via an assessment override. In those semesters, the College of Law will submit a program override request to the Registrar's Office two weeks prior to the generation of the first U-Bill. During the override session, the student maintains their primary degree enrollment classification (the JD), but their tuition group is lowered to the MPA program rate.

Therefore, JD/MPA combined degree students pay JD tuition **during the first six spring/fall semesters in which they are enrolled as full-time students after matriculation into the JD program**, and MPA program tuition (via override) for any subsequent semesters after the first six spring/fall semesters through completion of both degrees. Students enrolling in summer coursework pay JD tuition if enrolling in any courses that counts for credit towards the JD. Students enrolling in summer coursework that counts for credit toward the MPA degree but not the JD degree pay MPA program tuition. In these cases, the tuition assessment override must also be applied. Students should be advised to inform the College of Law Registrar to ensure the override is applied. Students enrolling in intersession courses will pay the tuition of the program for the semester associated with the intersession period (again, an override may be necessary). As of 2020, August intersession courses are associated with the fall semester and January, March and May intersession courses are associated with the spring semester. For example, if a student is enrolled in a March intersession course during the student's primary year of MPA studies, the student pays MPA tuition. Overrides must always be approved and applied to ensure accurate tuition assessment since the JD remains the primary program of study across the entire period of degree completion. On the rare occasion when a student matriculates into the MPA first, an individualized tuition assessment plan must be approved by the College of Law, School of Library and Information Sciences, and the Graduate College.

Capstone

KEY INFO

- Projects are two semesters
- Projects are identified through IISC (default)
- Projects are group-based, with 2-4 students per group (default)
- In rare circumstances, students can receive approval to complete individual capstone projects. This requires a formal application process and approval from faculty advisors, the SPPA director, and confirmation from a community partner.

Note about the impact of insufficient grade in Capstone

Given that the capstone builds upon the core curriculum, students are expected to have completed (with a grade of B- or better) all but one first-year core course (not counting the internship) prior to enrolling in Public Affairs Capstone.

The 1 semester hour fall course in MPA Capstone is “pass/fail”. Students who receive a “fail” in PBAF:6211 are not allowed to take PBAF:6210. Instead, they must retake PBAF:6211 in the following fall term. If they earn “pass”, they may then take PBAF:6210 in the following spring term. If the student receives a C+ or lower in PBAF:6210 they must repeat both PBAF:6211 and PBAF:6210 the following year. If the student does not earn a “pass” on the retaken PBAF:6211 or a B- or better on the retaken PBAF:6210, they will be dismissed from the program.

OVERVIEW

MPA students typically complete their Capstone project for the Master of Public Affairs degree during their last two semesters in the program.

In this project-based course, students work for, and in conjunction, with a project partner (or “client”), with faculty supervision, and produce a professional-quality deliverable.

Capstone projects focus on management and/or policy topics. Projects can be applied to non-profit organizations, local, county, state, federal and/or international public agencies (or to interagency processes), and to any public affairs topic.

Capstone projects are typically completed in small groups (2-4 students).

All Capstone projects must have a Project Partner, unless rare special circumstances apply. Potential projects are identified through the IISC community partnership model, as well as other IISC and SPPA connections with state and local agencies.

Students are presented with multiple potential projects, and rank projects according to their preferences. Groups will be determined by the primary course instructors.

In rare circumstances, students can receive permission to work on a self-identified individual Capstone project (see below).

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

MPA students work on an individual or group Capstone project, typically in their final two semesters of the program. This is an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge they have acquired through

their curriculum to a real-life situation, to “learn by doing” and to hone their analytical, communication and implementation skills.

The capstone outcome is a professional product, or deliverable, that demonstrates the knowledge, critical thinking, and production skills learned throughout the student’s MPA graduate program.

The main learning objectives are:

1. **Application of learning to a “real-world” problem-solving situation:** Students draw from their training in public policy and public and nonprofit organizations management. “Management” in this context includes financial management (e.g., budgeting), information management (e.g., information technology), performance and human resources management. “Public policy” in this context include the design, adoption and implementation of policies that seek to promote the public good and serve the public interest as a whole, or distinct populations or publics (including social, environmental, and economic policies).
2. **Competencies in the core courses and sustainability:** Students demonstrate analytic insight, skills and abilities learned in core courses, as well as general knowledge of administration, leadership, and organizational theory and practice. Students demonstrate understanding of how public management and public policy topics are interconnected, and ability to promote social, economic and/or environmental sustainability.
3. **Competencies in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice:** Students demonstrate understanding and ability to analyze existing conditions, policies, practices, problems and data from a DEIJ perspective, and ability to develop and advocate for creative solutions to address differential impacts and outcomes.
4. **Problem Solving:** Students demonstrate the ability to apply problem-solving processes, technologies, systems approaches, and collaborative and innovative thinking to identify solutions. Students apply qualitative and quantitative analysis to decision-making processes.
5. **Communication Skills:** Students demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively and to design, write, and produce professional-quality documents.
6. **Self-Management Skills:** Students demonstrate the ability to work independently and creatively, meet deadlines, and collaborate positively and productively with colleagues, project partners and faculty mentors. For group projects, students demonstrate the ability to work effectively as a member of a team.

CRITERIA FOR PROJECT SELECTION

MPA Capstone projects can focus on government and/or nonprofit management, public policy and programs design, implementation and evaluation in a wide range of social, economic and/or environmental areas.

The projects are designed to evaluate existing policies and/or to propose new policies/actions related to any or several of these broad goals:

- Promote environmental, social and/or economic sustainability
- Reduce injustices and promote equity, inclusivity and/or diversity
- Enhance the economic efficiency and resilience of public/nonprofit agencies and programs
- Improve communities’ wellbeing, sense of place, health and resiliency

- Implement best practices in public management and/or public policy
- Strengthen governance ethics, capacity and effectiveness

PROJECTS RELATED TO IISC

Every year, IISC manages multiple community engagement projects. MPA Capstones projects are intended to match the educational and career interests of MPA students, typically by focusing on local government, local nonprofit organizations (e.g., working on housing, economic development, health, renewable energy), or issues and policies that impact local communities (e.g., wellbeing, access to services, employment, poverty, sense of place, justice and inclusion, natural disasters, resilience).

A few examples of MPA capstone activities include:

- Analyze the actual and/or potential impact of federal, state, county and city policies, programs and/or practices on IISC communities;
- Propose policies, programs, legal/regulatory, governance changes to promote local sustainability, resilience, diversity, equity and inclusion in IISC communities;
- Work with public/nonprofit organizations in IISC communities that require public/nonprofit management and/or policy work (e.g., grant writing, program development, organizational management).

COURSE STRUCTURE/APPROACH

In consultation with Capstone project partners and faculty mentors, students conduct and report on a major project that synthesizes and applies knowledge and skills learned in program courses. The project builds on knowledge and skills acquired in core and specialization courses.

Capstone projects have both conceptual and applied components:

- The conceptual components include a review of the relevant literature and state-of-the-art practices (e.g., based on books, legal documents, research articles), and in-depth explanations and applications of relevant theory(ies) to project. This conceptual component answers the question: “What do experts in the field say about relevant topics?”
- The applied components describe current practices, policies and potential gaps (e.g., using data analysis, regulatory reviews, interviews, public engagement), engage in creative problem-solving, and propose feasible management and/or policy strategies to solve real problem(s). This prepares students for professional development and career advancement. This applied component answers the question: “How can the problem be solved through improved public/nonprofit policy and management?”

Regular meetings with project partners and faculty mentors is essential for project success. Student teams working on IISC projects meet regularly with project partners and faculty mentors (at least monthly), to discuss progress and receive mentorship.

For Capstone projects managed as individual projects, the student, project partners, and faculty mentor will arrange a meeting schedule. The student and faculty mentor should meet at least 3 times with project partners (recommended 4-6 times):

- at the outset to identify the problem, set project goals, scope, contents, general methodology, and deliverables;

- to provide guidance throughout the semester; and
- at the end of the semester for the final presentation.

STUDENT (WORKING IN GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALLY) COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Memorandum of Understanding:** The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the student team and the project partner organization specifies the project scope, schedule, deliverables and the role of the project partner in helping to complete the project.
- **Project Plan:** The team proposes a plan setting forth a schedule by which the project is to be completed, the specific tasks to be completed, the estimated number of hours for each task, deadlines, task distribution among group members, possible bottlenecks, potential sources of data and information, etc. The plan should contain interim deliverables and benchmark dates, and the key questions that have to be answered to complete the project.
- **Two Presentations** to faculty and project partners:
 - A scoping presentation at the end of the first month of the second semester.
 - A final presentation at the end of the semester.
- **Poster:** A poster showing project purpose and outcomes (it may be submitted for a regional or national conference).
- **Final Report:** The final project report should generally contain the following 5 sections:
 - Section 1: Introduction (topic, significance, context, application, goals, DEIJ dimensions)
 - Section 2: Background (literature and/or theories, including relevant DEIJ topics)
 - Section 3: Methodology (data collection and analysis, experiment, creative work)
 - Section 4: Findings
 - Section 5: Recommendations
 - Section 6: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice impact statement

SELF-IDENTIFIED INDEPENDENT CAPSTONE AUTHORIZATION

If IISC projects do not meet students' professional development needs, they may complete an individual Capstone project more closely aligned with their policy and management interests.

Prior to enrolling in the course, students must discuss their plan with a faculty mentor, and follow up with a pre-application letter to their faculty mentor and the SPPA Director. The pre-application letter must include:

- Name of faculty mentor
- Proposed project partner(s) (i.e., project partners)
- Brief description of the project (goals, deliverables)
- Explanation of how this project is important to the student's professional development

Once the pre-application is approved, students must seek formal support from their project partner, and submit a detailed proposal “Application for the Individual Capstone Experience” to their faculty mentor and the SPPA Director. To facilitate IISC planning, this application needs to be submitted to the SPPA Director at least 90 days prior to the beginning of the semester during which the capstone occurs.

The Application for the Individual Capstone Experience must include:

- Name of faculty mentor
- Project partner(s) (i.e., clients)
- Project proposal: Completed in consultation with the faculty mentor and project partner(s), the proposal presents the project goal(s), project partner(s), overall plan for completion, general methodological approach, and deliverables.
- Faculty mentor approval and signature indicating their commitment to supporting the project

The faculty mentor submits the completed application to the SPPA Director for final approval at least **90 days prior** to the beginning of the semester during which the capstone occurs. Once it is approved, SPPA Director informs IISC director.

Upon approval of the application, the student must submit a completed and signed Memorandum of Understanding at least **60 days** prior to the beginning of the semester during which the capstone occurs.

Once the project is approved, the student is expected to work independently, with periodic contact with project partner(s) and faculty mentor to report on progress on the plan, discuss potential roadblocks, and decide on best strategies to advance project goals.

Project costs (e.g., travel) may become the responsibility of the student if the project partners cannot cover those costs.

Internships

Internships are designed to give students practical experience through on-the-job training. Internships provide students with two special opportunities:

- To obtain “real world” public or non-profit management or public policy experience
- To reflect critically on the work setting, the activity, and public affairs’ curricular links to those activities.

Students are eligible to receive course credit toward the degree in public affairs by:

- obtaining advisor approval before the internship begins
- completing an appropriate internship, working at least 240, 160 or 80 hours
- receiving an evaluation from their supervisor of “good”, “very good”, or “excellent”
- submitting a satisfactory internship paper before the due date

Approval

Students must have the internship details approved by their advisors beforehand. The [Internship Approval form](#) should be completed by the student and sent to the advisor for their approval and signature before the advisor uploads it to MAUI.

Appropriate Internships

Students should seek internships in which their work efforts will be substantive and related to their degree in public affairs (i.e., scanning, receptionist, or carrier services are typically **not** acceptable internship arrangements). An internship cannot be done prior to beginning the program, except in extenuating circumstances.

In some unusual circumstances, a student may discover that an internship that was expected to be “substantive” turned into something less meaningful. If this is the case, the student should contact their advisor immediately (or the SPPA director, if the advisor is unavailable) and discuss the issue. Efforts will be made by the student and the advisor with the employer to improve the quality of the internship work experience.

Paid and unpaid internships are eligible for course credit. When a summer internship is unpaid, students may wish to apply to the [Kenneth J. Cmiel Internship Funding program](#), offered through the UI Center for Human Rights. The program offers funding to be used towards travel and living expenses. Deadline to apply for summer funding is typically early April.

An internship is generally required. In cases when finding an internship that meets the SPPA requirements is not possible, a student may substitute the internship with another course. The student may be required to provide evidence of genuine efforts in pursuing an internship opportunity. The substituted course must be approved by the faculty advisor.

Course Credit

The internship can be satisfied through employment with a relevant agency, firm, or organization for the equivalent of **at least** eight weeks at a three-quarters time fraction (240) hrs. (for the full 3 s.h. credit) during the student's period of affiliation with SPPA (including summers).

Students who cannot find an internship offering at least 240 hrs. of work have the options of completing a minimum of:

- 160 hours for 2 s.h.
- 80 hours for 1 s.h.

It’s important to note that taking the internship for less than 3 s.h., will require making up the extra 1-2 s.h. through other coursework in order to meet the required total of 42 s.h. for graduation.

Students typically register for the course, PBAF:6335 Internship, during the semester just following their internship* (or, in the case of an internship done during the student's final semester in the program, concurrent with the internship).

***International students** must register for the internship in the semester they are doing the work. Check with International Students and Scholars Services to learn about the registration requirements.

If a public affairs student is employed full-time (30 hours per week or more) in a professional position related to their area of study, they may receive course credit for the work without pursuing a separate internship. An Internship Approval form must be signed by the student's advisor to assure the work meets the requirements needed to receive course credit. The requirement of an evaluation by the student's supervisor is waived. An internship paper must also be written, after at least 240 hours of work have been completed, in order to receive the 3 s.h. of course credit.

Students may not register for PBAF:6335 more than once.

Supervisor Evaluation

In addition, each student must have their supervisor complete an evaluation of the student's performance. The "Employer's Report on SPPA Intern" is available on the SPPA website. The completed evaluation form, signed by the supervisor, needs to be submitted to the SPPA administrative office for review by the student's advisor at the same time the internship paper is submitted. If the supervisor reports that the student's internship was evaluated as fair or poor, then the grade for the class will be "unsatisfactory" and the student will not receive credit for the internship.

The workflow of the form is as follows:

1. At the beginning of the internship, student gives the "Employer's Report on SPPA Intern" form to their employment supervisor.
2. Upon completion of the internship, the employer mails the form back to the SPPA administrative services coordinator.
3. The student and their advisor receive an email from the administrative services coordinator notifying them the form has arrived and that they need to meet.
4. The evaluation form is uploaded by the advisor to the student's electronic advising file.
5. The advisor reviews the evaluation **and** the original Internship Approval Form from the electronic advising file before or while meeting with the student.
6. Internship Approval Form - The advisor signs to finalize the process and then uploads it to MAUI as well.
7. Employer Evaluation Form - The advisor and student **also** sign and the advisor uploads the form to the student's file (MAUI) before the deadline (see front cover for the deadline date).

Internship Paper

At the end of the internship, the [Internship Credit Approval form](#) and a paper about the internship must be submitted to a student's advisor, who may accept, reject, or require changes to the paper. In certain cases, subject to the consent of the advisor, the paper may be submitted to another faculty member for review (usually because of the faculty member's interest in or experiences with the student or the internship provider). Although the precise form of an internship paper may vary with the nature of the internship, in general the paper should contain the following elements:

1. **A description of the internship:** the employer, the student's position in the organization, and the tasks performed or the project on which the student worked;
2. **A critical discussion of the public policy or administrative process and the organization:** In this section, the student should think critically about such matters as: the work s/he performed, the purpose of the work performed, where and how it fits in the organization's mission; the structure of the agency/organization, the relation of the agency

or the project to local politics and community involvement; and, the method of policy development. This section should be reflective, thoughtful, critical, yet constructive.

3. **The value of the experience as it relates to the student's individual development** and the potential value of such an internship for other students in public affairs.

Internship papers should be typed and double-spaced. They should be written clearly and concisely, avoiding unnecessary detail. An appropriate length is between 5 and 10 pages.

Internship papers are due to advisors on the date specified on the inside cover of this manual. For example, for a summer 2023 internship, a student would typically register for PBAF:6335 during the fall 2023 semester and submit the internship paper by October 1 (although earlier submission is desirable). Students must submit their "Internship Credit Approval Form" to their advisor along with their internship paper.

The student's faculty advisor will review the internship paper. If the paper needs revision, the student has two weeks to submit the revisions. If a satisfactory internship paper is not submitted, a grade of "unsatisfactory" will be posted and the student will not receive credit for the internship experience. To finalize the process for receiving internship credit, the advisor completes the Internship Credit Approval form and then uploads it to MAUI.

MPA Undergraduate-to-Graduate (U2G) Degrees

[Undergraduate-to-Graduate](#) (U2G) degree options are available allowing students to earn a graduate degree in public affairs and an undergraduate degree in less time than would be required to obtain the two degrees independently. This is because courses for one degree are considered as elective credit for the other degree program. Typically, both degrees can be completed in five years.

This is a **universal** U2G. It is open to **students in all undergraduate majors** at the University of Iowa.

Admission and Eligibility

Because all University of Iowa undergraduate majors provide excellent preparation for the Master's degree in Public Affairs (MPA), any University of Iowa undergraduate student may apply to the MPA U2G program

Students should apply no later than May 1 or December 1 in the second semester of their third (junior) year.

Admissions requirements for MPA U2G:

Completion of 80 s.h. of undergraduate work. Transfer students need to have completed 30 s.h. of work at the University of Iowa.
A minimum grade point average of 3.25 or above.
Statement of Purpose
Three letters of recommendation
Undergraduate students at University of Iowa are assumed to meet the English proficiency requirement.
Resume or CV
GRE scores are encouraged but not required.

Applications will be reviewed by the SPPA Admissions Committee whose recommendations are forwarded to UI Graduate Admissions for final approval.

Tuition

U2G students are assessed undergraduate level tuition and fees during their first year of the U2G program (students' 4th or senior year), and until the bachelor's degree is conferred. Students are encouraged to consult the Graduate College to determine the tuition amount.

Funding

- While they are in their senior year, students remain enrolled as undergraduate students, and are eligible to keep their undergraduate financial aid.

- In their second year in the SPPA program, they are enrolled as graduate students, and are eligible for financial aid through SPPA and the Graduate College. (Funding is competitive and allocation is primarily based on GPA in SPPA courses).

Requirements

While the requirements of each U2G degree option vary, all have several key features in common. In each case a student must:

- Complete an approved area of [concentration](#) (either public and nonprofit management or public policy) in public affairs. Work in the other academic unit does not, in and of itself, necessarily constitute a valid area of concentration.
- Unless otherwise specified, a capstone is required of students in combined degree programs.
- Satisfy public affairs' final examination requirement

Advising

While an undergraduate, U2G students will have an MPA advisor-typically the director of undergraduate studies -in addition to those assigned as an undergraduate. The undergraduate advisor is able to approve students for registration, however it is important to also consult with the MPA advisor in order to assure the student is meeting the requirements for both programs and is able to graduate in a compressed timeline. Additionally, the MPA advisor's approval is needed to grant the special permission required to register for MPA courses while an undergraduate. After completing the undergraduate degree(s), U2G students will be advised by an MPA advisor only.

Courses

U2G students **may only apply a maximum of 15⁷** (for MPA students) semester hours of graduate courses completed prior to receiving their undergraduate degree (i.e., in their first year in SPPA) towards their master's degree. **This means that if a student completes additional grad-level courses or program requirements prior to conferral of the bachelor's degree, any credit in excess of 15 sh for MPA will not be counted toward the minimum number of semester hours required (i.e., 42 sh for MPA) to earn the degree. Put another way, students must complete at least a minimum of 27 sh additional toward the grad degree after bachelors conferral.**

The 16 semester hours of cross-counted courses are selected from the following MPA core courses (descriptions available in the [General Catalog](#)).

Required		Title and Instructor for 2023-24	Semester Hours
PBAF:5117	Spring	Bureau. Politics & Public Admin. (Zuhlke)	3 s.h.
PBAF:5120	Fall	Public Policy Process (Zuhlke)	3 s.h.
PBAF:6200	Fall	Analytic Methods 1 (Nguyen)	3 s.h.
PBAF:6205	Fall	Economics for Policy Analysis (Qian)	3 s.h.
PBAF:6208	Fall	Program Seminar (Qian)	1 s.h.
PBAF:6225	Spring	GIS for Planning and Policy Making (Spears)	1 s.h.
PBAF:6233	Spring	Public Finance and Budgeting (Nguyen)	3 s.h.
PBAF:6240	Spring	Public Management (Monroe)	3 s.h.

Specific features of the universal U2G program follow; however, the student should verify the most recent combined-degree requirements with the department of interest, because courses and requirements in other departments are subject to change with little prior notification. Course descriptions are available in the [General Catalog](#).

⁷ A request to increase the maximum to 16 s.h. is pending with the Graduate College as of August, 2023.

MPA U2G Universal Sample Plan of Study

Coursework and Timeline

Year 1

Undergrad. coursework yearly total	<u>30 s.h.</u>
Undergrad. cumulative total	30 s.h.

Year 2

Undergrad. coursework yearly total	<u>30 s.h.</u>
Undergrad. cumulative	60 s.h.

Year 3

Apply to U2G

- Must complete 80 semester hours of undergraduate coursework to apply to U2G
- GPA of 3.25 or higher

Undergrad. coursework yearly total	<u>30 s.h.</u>
Undergrad. cumulative	90 s.h.

Year 4

Take up to 16 s.h. to be cross-counted; complete bachelor's degree requirements

Pay undergraduate tuition rate until bachelor's degree is confirmed

Fall year 4:

PBAF:5120 Public Policy Process	3 s.h.	
PBAF:6200 Analytic Methods I	3 s.h.	
PBAF:6205 Economics for Policy Analysis	3 s.h.	
PBAF:6208 Program Seminar	1 s.h.	
Undergrad. courses needed to complete degree	<u>6 s.h.</u>	
Semester total	16 s.h.	
Undergrad. cumulative		106 s.h.
PBAF total		10 s.h.
Grad. cumulative		10 s.h.

Spring year 4:

Submit request for graduate assistantship funding to SPPA administrative coordinator (typically in March) for funding in Year 5.

PBAF:5117 Bureau. Politics & Public Admin.	3 s.h.	
PBAF:6233 Public Finance and Budgeting	3 s.h.	
Undergrad. courses needed to complete degree	<u>9 s.h.</u>	
Semester total	15 s.h.	
Undergrad.		15 s.h.
Undergrad. cumulative		121 s.h.
PBAF total		6 s.h.
Grad. cumulative		16 s.h.

Bachelor's degree conferred

Year 5

Complete graduate coursework
 Pay graduate tuition rate and become eligible for graduate assistantship

Fall year 5:

PBAF:6209 Public Affairs Capstone I	1 s.h.	
PBAF:6335 Internship	3 s.h.	
PBAF concentration or elective	<u>9 s.h.</u>	
Semester total	13 s.h.	
PBAF total		13 s.h.
Grad. cumulative		29 s.h.

Spring year 5:

PBAF:6210 Public Affairs Capstone II	3 s.h.	
PBAF:6225 Applied GIS for Planning & Policy Making	1 s.h. ⁸	
PBAF:6240 Public Management	3 s.h.	
PBAF concentration or elective	<u>6 s.h.</u>	
Semester total	13 s.h.	
PBAF total		13 s.h.
Grad. cumulative		42 s.h.

Master of Public Affairs conferred

⁸ Applied GIS for Planning and Policy Making may be taken for 1 s.h. or 3 s.h.

- The required 1 s.h. module is introductory. Students can elect to take only this module (and register for 1 s.h.) or take the whole 3 s.h. course for more advanced contents.
- Students with GIS experience can waive out of the 1 s.h. requirement.