



School of Urban Affairs &
Public Policy

M.P.A. vs. M.A. Program Comparison

Applicants often ask about the differences between the Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) and Master of Arts in Urban Affairs and Public Policy (M.A.) programs. The programs have similar goals but they differ in focus, curriculum and requirements. On almost all dimensions, however, there is overlap across the programs

	M.P.A.	M.A.
Purpose	Prepares graduates for careers in public affairs/public service in government, nonprofit, and private sectors	Prepares graduates for careers in public affairs/public service in government, nonprofit, and private sectors
Focus	Administration and management	Policy, planning, and research
Required Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar in Public Administration • Human Resources in Public & Nonprofit Organizations • Administrative and Employment Law • Leading Organizations in Public & Nonprofit Sectors • Economics in Public & Nonprofit Sectors • Financial Management in Public and Nonprofit Sectors • Management Decision Making in Public & Nonprofit Sectors • Quantitative Analysis in Public & Nonprofit Sectors • Information Technology Skills for Planning and Administration • Current Issues in Public Administration • Management Policy Brief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary Issues in Urban Affairs • Research Methods & Data Analysis <p>And two of the following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Theory and Urban Policy • Issues in Land Use and Environmental Planning • Urban Analysis and Policy Alternatives <p>Plus, courses in concentration area. (Areas defined below.)</p>
Internship	Required	Recommended
Areas of Concentration/ Specialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonprofit Management • Public Management • Policy & Program Development (Faculty Coordinated) • Student Designed Specialization (With Approval of Faculty Advisor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Development & Nonprofit Leadership • Energy & Environment and Equity • Historic Preservation • Urban and Regional Planning • Or, area of specialization designed by student and faculty advisor.
Capstone Writing Requirement	Management Brief (1 credit) or Thesis (6 credits)	Analytical Paper (AP) (3 credits) Or Thesis (6 credits) Historic Preservation students must complete a thesis.

	M.P.A.	M.A.
National Rankings (2008 US News and World Report)	The School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy ranked 41 st in the nation. The Urban Policy/City Management ranked 10 th (tied with Syracuse University). The nonprofit management specialization ranked 16 th in the nation out of over 100 programs.	
Accreditation	NASPAA-accredited	Not applicable. (Accreditation is not available in Urban Affairs.)
Credits Required	42	36
Time Required	Full-time study: 21 months Part-time study: Varies (a part-time Career Enhancement Option available)	Full-time study: 21 months
Faculty	Interdisciplinary; co-offered with Department of Political Science & International Relations	Interdisciplinary; many joint faculty appointments, e.g., Geography & Museum Studies
Research	Research Assistantships are reviewed and considered for new students depending on the availability of funds.	Research Assistantships are reviewed and considered for new students depending on the availability of funds.
Research Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute for Public Administration (IPA) • Center for Community Research and Service (CCRS) • Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) • Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR) • Delaware Education Research and Development Center (DERDC) • Disaster Research Center (DRC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Community Research and Service (CCRS) • Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD) • Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) • Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR) • Institute for Public Administration (IPA) • Delaware Education Research and Development Center (DERDC)