

Trachtenberg School of Public Policy & Public Administration

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Master of Public Administration, Master of Public
Policy, and Master of Arts in Environmental and
Sustainability Policy

For Students Entering 2026-27

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Welcome to the 2026-2027 academic year at GW. As a Tberg student, you're a vital part of the Trachtenberg School community and already contributing to it by deepening your skills, knowledge, and abilities for public service. Tberg alumni are serving in roles forwarding effective policy and management and thriving in all sectors. Even now, you may be actively confronting social ills and seeking to transform society, while reflecting on what tools can equip you best to forward your professional and personal goals. We are here to help.

In this handbook, advisors, faculty, staff, alumni and fellow students can provide you with useful information. Here are a few of my favorite tips.

- Consult with a faculty advisor on your course of study to help you anticipate and prepare for opportunities and challenges.
- Meet with our career services team and get inspiration and clarity on your career dreams along with practical advice.
- Strengthen your network of alumni, faculty, staff and fellow students through TSPPPA and GW events; participation in *Policy Perspectives*; as well as other mechanisms.
- Every week, read *The Tberg Skim* and Career Services newsletter for news and invitations.
- Take time to breathe, nurture empathy, and focus on your wellness.

I wish you many successes, insights and joys on your journey this year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kathy Newcomer'.

Sincerely,

Kathy Newcomer, Ph.D.

TSPPPA Director and Professor of Public Policy and Public Administration

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Trachtenberg School Commitment to Teaching Quality

We value:

- 1) Providing outstanding learning experiences for all students;
- 2) Providing useful and timely feedback to our students on their work;
- 3) Consistently receiving and incorporating feedback from our students and alumni about ways to enhance our teaching; and
- 4) Working collaboratively with our faculty colleagues, alumni, and employers to ensure the integrity and saliency of our curricula.

We use multiple processes to obtain data to help us evaluate our courses and our curricula:

- 1) Each individual course is evaluated by all students using online forms that include both close-ended and open- ended questions;
- 2) Feedback on the curriculum and all school services and support is collected from all graduating MPA, MPP, and ESP/MA students during the capstone classes;
- 3) Capstone presentations are evaluated to assess student competencies by faculty and alumni using structured feedback forms;
- 4) The overall program is reviewed using survey findings from alumni about their experience in the program;
- 5) The School's leadership meet at least annually to consider the student and alumni feedback about the curricula;
- 6) The School's leadership meet at least annually to consider student feedback about the courses and instructors;

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Common Abbreviations

ACCY	Accounting
CCAS	Columbian College of Arts and Sciences
CISTP	Center for International Science and Technology Policy
CRN	Course Reference Number
DATS	Data Sciences
DNSC	Decision Sciences
ECON	Economics
EDUC	Education
ESIA	Elliott School of International Affairs
ESP	Environmental and Sustainability Policy
FINA	Finance
GEOG	Geography
GW	The George Washington University
GWIPP	George Washington Institute of Public Policy
HIST	History
IAFF	International Affairs
LOA	Leave of Absence
MGT	Management
MA-ESP	Master of Arts in Environmental and Sustainability Policy
MPA	Master of Public Administration
MPA Building	Media and Public Affairs Building
MPP	Master of Public Policy
PHIL	Philosophy
PPPA	Public Policy and Public Administration Class Code Prefix
PSC	Political Science
PSYC	Psychology
PUBH	Public Health
RSC	Regulatory Studies Center
SB	School of Business
SMPA	School of Media and Public Affairs
SMPP	Strategic Management and Public Policy
SOC	Sociology
TSO	Trachtenberg Student Organization
TSPPPA	Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration
WRLC	Washington Research Library Consortium
WGSS	Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration

Mission Statement

The Trachtenberg School enhances the quality of democratic governance. We equip aspiring and current public service professionals coming from wide-ranging backgrounds with the tools to analyze policy and lead and manage organizations and teams. Our faculty's scholarship informs debate on current and emerging policy and administration issues. We foster effective teaching to prepare students for active and reflective engagement in pursuit of the public interest.

Faculty

GW's Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration is distinguished by the faculty's reputation for consistently high-caliber teaching. While faculty members are active researchers and publish widely in their respective fields, they also share a commitment to excellence in teaching. The policy questions and management issues addressed in the Trachtenberg School courses are important and exciting ones. The faculty promotes intellectual exchanges designed to enliven these vital topics.



TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

THE MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

MPA Program Director

Rachel Emas

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Master of Public Administration Program Mission Statement

The Master of Public Administration program at the Trachtenberg School prepares students to lead and manage public service organizations and programs in all sectors.

Goals of the Master of Public Administration Curriculum

The MPA Program promotes its mission by working toward the following goals, such that students are able to:

- Understand how institutions, organizations, and democratic values shape policy development, implementation, and evaluation;
- Demonstrate respect, equity, and fairness in leading and collaborating with citizens, residents, and fellow public servants to promote the public interest;
- Apply ethical principles in decision-making and policy analyses;
- Think strategically, creatively, and critically to address public policy and administration problems;
- Communicate effectively both orally and in written work;
- Work collaboratively in small teams and large disparate groups;
- Collaborate with institutions in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors, as well as local, regional, national, and international organizations;
- Understand current issues shaping the public debate as well as their historical foundations;
- Understand the history, traditions, controversies, and challenges of public administration and integrate these into public service decision-making;
- Use quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate public policies and programs;
- Apply fundamental economic reasoning to public decisions;
- Understand governmental budgetary processes;
- Use financial, managerial, and budgetary concepts and systems;
- Apply organizational theory and behavior to design and manage projects, programs, and organizations;
- Integrate organization theory and behavior and knowledge of public administration to lead and motivate colleagues and stakeholders to act in the public interest.

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MPA Introduction

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree is the recognized professional degree in public administration. It is designed principally, but not exclusively, for those who are pursuing careers in public service at any level of government and/or in nonprofit organizations, national associations, public interest groups, research and consulting firms, public affairs offices of corporations, and other positions in the private sector.

The MPA degree is a 40-credit hour program designed to provide an integrated and interdisciplinary academic experience. The program consists of a nine-course core (25 credits) required for all students, a three-course or more field of study (9 to 15 credits), and up to two courses (6 credits) outside the field.

The MPA program provides a balance between offering a strong core of essential courses coupled with the freedom to select and tailor a field of study to a student's interests. This mix offers coverage of key material that everyone obtaining an MPA must learn *and* the latitude to design a custom program to address personal career needs and interests.

MPA: At a Glance

Total 40 credits

Core Courses (25 credits)

PPPA 6000 Perspectives on Public Values (*1 credit*)
PPPA 6001 Introduction to Public Service and Administration (*3 credits*)
PPPA 6002 Research Methods and Applied Statistics (*3 credits*)*
PPPA 6003 Economics for Public Decision-Making (*3 credits*)*
PPPA 6004 Managing Public Organizations (*3 credits***)
PPPA 6005 Public Budgeting, Revenue, and Expenditure Analysis (*3 credits*)
PPPA 6006 Policy Analysis (*3 credits*)
PPPA 6016 Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation (*3 credits*)
PPPA 6008 MPA/MPP Capstone Seminar (*3 credits*)

* Students who have done significant undergraduate or graduate coursework relevant to economics or statistics may be able to waive or substitute higher-level coursework for PPPA 6002 or 6003. See the waiver policy below for further details.

** Students who have significant public management and leadership experience may be able to waive or substitute higher-level coursework for PPPA 6004. See the waiver policy below for further details.

Fields of Study (minimum of 9 to 12 credits; depends on field)

Each student selects a field of study consisting of at least three courses. Others design their own individualized field through consultation and with the approval of a substantively appropriate faculty advisor.

Additional Field or Elective Courses (3 to 6 credits)

Students choose one or two graduate-level (6000+ level) courses from around the university beyond the three or four courses required for their field, in consultation with an advisor. Students may take additional classes in their field or build their skills in other areas.

A student who wishes to study a special area of interest not covered by a course at the university may elect to enroll in an independent study (PPPA 6098) for course credit with prior approval from a faculty member.

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MPA: Core Courses

Nine core courses (25 credits) are required in the MPA program. These courses cover an essential nucleus of material that everyone earning an MPA degree must master. The core advising teams of the Trachtenberg School are available to help students plan their core classes.

PPPA 6000 Perspectives on Public Values (1 credit)

Intensive and participatory course looking at the underpinnings and values necessary for a functioning democratic society. Emphasis placed on empathy and the ability to have civil discourse in order to create, analyze, pass, implement and evaluate policy and programs. Primary resources for the course may include literary fiction, narrative non-fiction and 'live' resources around D.C. Students reflect on the nature and sources of their personal values about public service and be asked to understand the perspectives of others.

PPPA 6001 Introduction to Public Service and Administration (3 credits)

Introduction to the discipline of public administration. Examines the intellectual traditions and theoretical frames of reference that inform public administration as a field of professional practice and study. Considers current and continuing challenges and controversies.

PPPA 6002 Research Methods and Applied Statistics (3 credits)

Development of skills and knowledge for conducting original research and critically evaluating empirical studies. Examines various research designs and data collection techniques. Focuses on computerizing data sets for quantitative analysis, analyzing strength of relationships, selecting appropriate statistical techniques, and testing statistical hypotheses.

PPPA 6003 Economics for Public Decision-Making (3 credits)

Presentation of the basic tools and concepts associated with microeconomic analysis. Illustrates how these tools can be useful in public decision-making.

PPPA 6004 Managing Public Organizations (3 credits)

Examination of current ideas about leadership and management from both theoretical and operational perspectives, including the values, ethics, skills, knowledge and practices needed for success. Prerequisite: PPPA 6001 or equivalent.

PPPA 6005 Public Budgeting, Revenue, and Expenditure Analysis (3 credits)

Survey course that focuses on the institutions and analytical tools associated with raising revenue and allocating/managing resources at all levels of government. Hands-on budgeting skills and guidance on communicating analysis to decision makers.

PPPA 6006 Policy Analysis (3 credits)

Development of skills to conduct and critique policy analyses. Application of methodologies used in analyzing possible consequences of specified alternatives as applied in the public policy decision-making process. Appropriate applications and limitations of policy analysis and discussion of its relationship to politics and the policy process.

PPPA 6009 Capstone Seminar (3 credits)

Synthesizes, analyzes, and integrates concepts and issues relating to the ethical, political, economic, managerial, and personal values in the field. Open only to MPA degree candidates in their final semester of study.

PPPA 6016: Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation (3 credits)

Theory and practice of program evaluation and evaluative research. Exploration of scope and limitations of current practice in evaluation, considering economic, political, social, and administrative factors. Examination of methodological considerations for design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Prerequisite: PPPA 6002 or equivalent.

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MPA Waiver Policy

Research Methods and Applied Statistics (PPPA 6002)

PPPA 6002 is the required course covering both research methods and applied statistics. Students who have recently taken and received high marks in undergraduate statistics courses may apply for a waiver of the statistics portion of PPPA 6002, but will be required to take one of the following options (or another approved substitute):

- The research methods portion of PPPA 6002, which is typically the first seven weeks, for one credit (contact instructor for details);
- Regression Methods for Policy Research I (PPPA 6013), with instructor approval;
- Mixed Methods in Research Design (PPPA 8023), with instructor approval;
- A qualitative research methods course (EDUC 8122, PSC 8104, or SOC 6232).

Students who have recently taken and received high marks in courses (typically two or more) that cover both research methods and applied statistics may apply for a waiver to take an additional elective.

To apply for a waiver, please send the syllabi and grades of your recent courses to the MPA Program Director.

Economics for Public Decision-Making (PPPA 6003)

PPPA 6003 is the required economics course for the MPA program. Students who were undergraduate economics majors and/or have taken multiple economics courses (especially intermediate microeconomics and public finance) may apply for approval to take Microeconomics for Public Policy II (PPPA 6014) instead. To apply for a waiver, please send the syllabi and grades of your recent courses to the MPA Program Director.

Managing Public Organizations (PPPA 6004)

Students who have taken a leadership/management class before (including Coast Guard students) may waive 6004. The objectives of 6004 include to identify and clearly define a management and/or leadership problem/issue, analyze and question evidence in a rigorous manner, organize evidence to support arguments and recommendations, make decisions with imperfect/incomplete data within a clearly defined timeframe, and present concise and clear recommendations and effectively defend your positions. To waive 6004, students may send Professor Jasmine Johnson (jmcginnis@gwu.edu) or Professor Anil Nathan (anathan@gwu.edu) a previous syllabus that has similar objectives to 6004.

MPA Course Sequencing

To get the most out of your courses, it is important to take courses in an appropriate sequence with introductory courses first, followed by other core, field, and elective courses, and finally the capstone. Note that course numbers are not always indicative of the sequence. We recommend the following:

First fall semester

- PPPA 6000 **Perspectives on Public Values** (but can be taken anytime in the first year) (1 credit)
- PPPA 6001 **Introduction to Public Service and Administration** (3 credits)
- PPPA 6003 **Economics for Public Decision-Making** (3 credits)

Later semesters

- PPPA 6002 **Research Methods and Applied Statistics** (3 credits)
- PPPA 6004 **Managing Public Organizations** (prerequisite PPPA 6001) (3 credits)
- PPPA 6005 **Public Budgeting, Revenue, and Expenditure Analysis** (3 credits)
- PPPA 6006 **Policy Analysis** (3 credits)
- PPPA 6016 **Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation** (prerequisite PPPA 6002) (3 credits)

Final semester

- PPPA 6008 **MPA/MPP Capstone Seminar** (3 credits)

During their first semester, most *part-time* students (two courses per semester) take PPPA 6000, 6001, and 6003, particularly since PPPA 6003 is typically only offered during the fall semester. During their second semester, most part-time students take PPPA 6002 and 6005. Most *full-time* students (three courses per semester) take PPPA 6000, 6001, 6002, and 6003 during their first semester, and PPPA 6005, 6006, and one field course during their second semester. Students generally try to take a field course over the summer, although PPPA 6000, 6005, and 6006 are typically offered in the summer as well. The following table further breaks down typical course sequencing for full- and part-time students. **Please note that these general guidelines are not a substitute for faculty advising and should not be used as such.**

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Suggested Course Sequencing for the MPA (40 credits)

FALL MATRICULATION:					
	(1) Fall (10 credits)	(2) Spring (9)	(3) Summer (3)	(4) Fall (9)	(5) Spring (9)
FULL-TIME (3 courses per semester)	PPPA 6000	PPPA 6005	Field Course	PPPA 6004	PPPA 6008
	PPPA 6001	PPPA 6006		PPPA 6016	Field Course
	PPPA 6002	Field Course		Field Course	Field Course
	PPPA 6003				
	(1) Fall (7 credits)	(2) Spring (6)	(3) Fall (6)	(4) Spring (6)	(5) Fall (6)
PART-TIME (2 courses per semester)	PPPA 6000	PPPA 6002	Field Course (or PPPA	PPPA 6016	PPPA 6004
	PPPA 6001	PPPA 6005	6003 if not taken in	Field Course	Field Course
	PPPA 6003		the previous fall)		
			PPPA 6006		
	(6) Spring (6)	(7) Summer or Fall (3)			
	PPPA 6008	Field Course			
	Field Course				

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MPA and MPP Fields of Study

Each student selects a field of study consisting of at least three courses (9 credits), with the exception of Nonprofit Management, which is a four-course field (12 credits). Many students select one of the common fields of study listed below. Others design their own individualized field in consultation with a faculty advisor.

To declare a field, students fill out the online [Field of Study Form](#), typically at the end of their first year. It can be filled out multiple times (if switching fields or courses) and must be completed before graduation. On that form, students select a field and note their courses. When they have completed the form, they become advisees of the relevant field advising team.

Students can create self-designed fields to fit their academic interests and career objectives. For example, a student may take an approved three-course sequence in departments such as Health Policy or International Business. A student creating a self-designed field will be assigned to the most relevant advising team or they may indicate on the Field of Study Form the advisor who they have worked with to create their field.

The following fields are available to MPAs and MPPs:

- Budget and Public Finance
- Data Science (MPP students only)
- Education Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Health Policy
- Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- International Development
- Managing State and Local Governments
- National Security and Foreign Policy
- Nonprofit Management
- Politics, Policy and Administration
- Program Evaluation and Policy Analysis
- Public-Private Policy and Management
- Regulatory Policy
- Science and Technology Policy
- Social Policy
- Urban Policy

Please see the Advising and Field of Study for MPA and MPP Students section of this document or the Trachtenberg School website for complete descriptions and recommended courses for each field. Descriptions of all courses can be found in the University Bulletin at bulletin.gwu.edu.

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

THE MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM

MPP Program Director

Anil Nathan

anathan@gwu.edu

Master of Public Policy Program Mission Statement

The Master of Public Policy program at The Trachtenberg School prepares students for leading, managing, and conducting public policy analysis, evaluation, and research in all sectors.

Goals of the Master of Public Policy Curriculum

The MPP Program promotes its mission by working toward the following goals:

- Understand how institutions, organizations and democratic values shape policy development, implementation and evaluation
- Demonstrate respect, equity and fairness in leading and collaborating with citizens, residents and fellow public servants to promote the public interest
- Understand governmental budgetary processes
- Think strategically, creatively, and critically to address public policy and administration problems
- Communicate effectively both orally and in written work
- Apply ethical principles in decision-making and policy analyses
- Work collaboratively in small teams and large disparate groups
- Collaborate with institutions in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors, as well as local, regional, national, and international organizations
- Understand current issues shaping the public debate as well as their historical
- Use quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate public policies and programs

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MPP Introduction

The Master of Public Policy (MPP) degree is a recognized professional degree in the field of public policy analysis. The degree is designed principally, but not exclusively, for those who are pursuing careers in public service at any level of government. In addition, many graduates are employed in national associations, public interest groups, research and consulting firms, public affairs offices of corporations, and other positions in the private sector.

The MPP degree offered by GW's Trachtenberg School is a 40-credit hour program. GW's MPP program provides students with a solid foundation in economics, politics, and research methods as applied to policy analysis generally, and with exposure to the range of policy problems in a specific policy field selected by the student. The program consists of an eight-course core required for all students, a three-course field of study, and two elective courses.

The MPP program provides a balance between a strong core of essential courses and the freedom to select and tailor a field of study. This mix offers a balance between the coverage of general tools of policy analysis and the policy issues and analytical approaches found in each of several specific policy areas.

MPP: At a Glance

Total 40 credits

Introductory Core Courses

PPPA 6000 Perspectives on Public Values (1 credit)
PPPA 6002* Research Methods and Applied Statistics
PPPA 6007* Microeconomics of Public Policy I
PPPA 6011 Politics and Policy Analysis
PPPA 6013 Regression Methods for Policy Research I [Pre-req: 6002]
PPPA 6014 Microeconomics of Public Policy II [Pre-req: 6007]
PPPA 6008 MPA/MPP Capstone Seminar (taken in the last semester of the program)

* Students who have done significant undergraduate or graduate coursework relevant to economics or statistics may be able to waive PPPA 6002 or 6007. See the waiver policy below for further details.

Tools of Analysis (students choose two)

PPPA 6005 Public Budgeting, Revenue & Expenditure Analysis
PPPA 6015 Benefit-Cost Analysis [Pre-req: 6014]
PPPA 6016 Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation [Pre-req: 6002]
PPPA 6020 Decision Modeling for Public Policy [Pre-req: 6002]
PPPA 6021 Data Visualization [Pre-req: 6013]
PPPA 8022 Econometrics for Policy Research [Pre-req: 6013]
PPPA 8023 Mixed Methods in Research Design [Pre-req: 6002]

Fields of Study and Elective Courses (9 to 15 credits)

Students complete a policy field of at least 9 credits (some fields require more). Students can take an additional 6 credits in their field of study or use those 6 credits as electives (for instance, taking more tools courses or other courses in other fields of study).

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MPP: Core Courses

These courses are intended to provide the student with a broad set of substantive knowledge about the policy process and a set of analytical skills that can be applied generally to a wide range of policy issues and problems. The core advising teams of the Trachtenberg School are here to help students plan their core course.

- PPPA 6000 **Perspectives on Public Values** (1 credit)
This intensive and participatory course looks at the underpinnings and values necessary for a functioning democratic society. Primary emphasis is placed on empathy and the ability to have civil discourse in order to create, analyze, pass, implement and evaluate policy and programs. Primary resources for the course may include literary fiction, narrative non-fiction and 'live' resources around D.C. Students will reflect on the nature and sources of their personal values about public service and be asked to understand the perspectives of others
- PPPA 6002: **Research Methods and Applied Statistics** (3 credits)
Development of skills and knowledge for conducting original research and critically evaluating empirical studies. Various research designs and data collection techniques are examined. Focus on computerizing data sets for quantitative analysis, analyzing strength of relationships, selecting appropriate statistical techniques, and testing statistical hypotheses.
- PPPA 6007: **Microeconomics of Public Policy I** (3 credits)
Introduction to economic analysis with a focus on applications for public policy. Analysis of supply and demand, and consumer and producer behavior. Examination of competitive market and deviation from that framework. This class is a pre-requisite for PPPA 6014.
- PPPA 6011: **Introduction to Public Policy** (3 credits)
The organizing theme of this course is the "policy orientation" centered on two concerns: understanding the policymaking process and serving the intelligence needs of decision makers. We will study the stages of the policymaking process and discuss the intelligence needs of policymakers at each stage. We will examine the politics of the policy orientation and its effects upon the profession of policy analysis and the possibilities for democratic governance. In addition, students will perform a data analysis exercise and construct a policy analysis project that identifies a problem, provides background, and evaluates potential solutions to a public policy problem.
- PPPA 6013: **Regression Methods for Policy Research** (3 credits)
This course emphasizes the application of basic econometric methods to the analysis of policy. Prerequisite: PPPA 6002 or equivalent.
- PPPA 6014: **Microeconomics of Public Policy II** (3 credits)
The application of intermediate microeconomic theory to the study of public policy. Topics include: models of individual choice in policy analysis, policy aspects of models of the firm, theory of market failure and welfare economics, and resource allocation decisions in the public sector. Prerequisite: PPPA 6007 or equivalent.
- PPPA 6008: **MPA/MPP Capstone Seminar** (3 credits)
Policy theory and typologies; policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation; ethics and practice in policy analysis, policy processes, content, and contexts; and policy linkages to multiple disciplines. Students conduct an analysis of a substantive policy. Open only to MPP students in their final semester of study. All other core courses must be completed prior to taking this class.

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MPP: Tools of Analysis Courses

In addition to the analytic skills incorporated in the MPP required core, MPP students should select at least two additional “tools of analysis” courses from the following list of course options:

PPPA 6005: **Public Budgeting, Revenue & Expenditure Analysis** (3 credits)

This course provides an introduction to governmental budgeting and finance. The course will survey the broad areas of public budgeting, governmental expenditure and management, and revenue analysis in the public sector. Students will learn the principles of public budgeting, budgetary accounting, the key steps of the federal budget process, the vocabulary of the field, and basic tools of tax analysis. Students will utilize Excel to perform budgetary analysis. Students who are looking to understand the public budgeting process should consider taking this course.

PPPA 6016: **Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation [Pre-req: 6002]** (3 credits)

This course reviews the theory and practice of program evaluation and evaluative research. Exploration of scope, methods, limitations, and ethics of current practice in evaluation, incorporating economic, political, social, and administrative factors. Examination of methodological considerations for design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Students who are looking to develop program evaluation skills or want to undertake policy research or monitoring and evaluation efforts at a non-profit organization, government agency, or think tank should consider taking this course.

PPPA 6015: **Benefit-Cost Analysis [Pre/Co-Req: 6014]** (3 credits)

This course links economic theory with policy analysis, using the tool commonly referred to as “benefit-cost analysis” or BCA. As a formal assessment of a policy’s costs and benefits, BCA attempts to measure and compare the economic efficiency of policy options. The goal of the course is to provide you with the conceptual foundations and practical skills you will need to be thoughtful consumers and producers of BCA. The course is typically structured around a substantial benefit-cost analysis project undertaken on a topic of the student’s choosing. Students who are looking to develop quantitative policy analysis skills, as well as those interested in regulatory policy analysis should consider taking this course. This course has a pre/co-requisite that can be waived upon the instructor’s discretion.

PPPA 6020: **Decision Modeling for Public Policy** (3 credits)

This course introduces students to practical modeling approaches (e.g., simulation, probabilistic sensitivity analysis, and optimization) used by policy analysts to explain and assess complex problems, to bound a solution space, or to determine what data is needed to support policy decisions. Students will utilize Excel to analyze policy. Students who are looking to develop practical quantitative policy analysis skills should consider taking this course.

PPPA 6021: **Data Visualization** (3 credits)

Both theoretically and practically, this course teaches students how to present quantitative information as intuitively as possible. We review the major contributors to the theory of the visual display of quantitative information, and we study at least one programming language as an example of how to implement these techniques. For their final paper, students re-do a policy paper, improving the visual display of the quantitative analysis. Students who want to learn how to communicate numbers clearly and powerfully should consider taking this course.

PPPA 8022: **Econometrics for Policy Research [Prerequisite: 6013]** (3 credits)

This course covers more advanced econometric methods in public policy research. Students will develop capabilities in more advanced empirical modeling and analysis by critically reading research, completing a series of empirical assignments and an empirical research paper. Students will strengthen their knowledge of Stata. Students who are looking to deepen their understanding of econometrics and gain practical research skills should consider taking this course.

PPPA 8023: **Mixed Methods in Research Design [Prerequisite: 6013]** (3 credits)

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This course bridges the gap between qualitative and quantitative research designs. It explores historical and philosophical foundations of mixed method research design, reviews “canonical” designs, and provides opportunities to develop and hone skills to implement mixed methods research designs. The overarching goal of this course is to provide students a foundation that will give them both the capacity and the courage to undertake and implement mixed method research designs, learn and use it in conjunction with other approaches such as experiments.

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MPP Course Sequencing

The MPP Program offers considerable flexibility in the sequence in which courses can be taken. However, core courses in economics and advanced statistics have prerequisites that must be met first. The following list highlights what you need to keep in mind when planning your schedule:

- If PPPA 6002 (Research Methods and Statistics) is needed, it should be taken in the 1st or 2nd semester.
- If PPPA 6007 (Microeconomics I) is needed, it should be taken in the 1st or 2nd semester.
- All students take PPPA 6014 and PPPA 6013 after the courses listed above have been completed.
- If students plan to take PPPA 6015, they must first complete PPPA 6014. In special cases, 6014 and 6015 can be taken concurrently or waived with permission.
- If students plan to take PPPA 6021, they must first complete PPPA 6013. In special cases, 6013 and 6021 can be taken concurrently, although it is highly recommended to first complete PPPA 6013.
- Other core, field, and elective courses can be taken in any order (noting any prerequisites for advanced field or elective courses)
- PPPA 6008 must be taken in the last regular semester (fall or spring) and all introductory core courses must be complete before taking this course.
- PPPA 6005 can be taken in almost any semester and need not be taken in the first semester or two.

Many students reserve field courses for later in the program. Please note that core courses and field courses are not consistently offered during the summer. If you have not yet decided on a field of study, careful planning in consultation with your advisor is especially recommended.

Please note that these general guidelines are not a substitute for faculty advising and should not be used as such.

MPP Course Waivers

You have the option to self-waive out of PPPA 6002 (Research Methods and Applied Statistics) and/or PPPA 6007 (Microeconomics for Public Policy I). You may also waive out of PPPA 6013 (Econometrics for Policy Research I) and PPPA 6014 (Microeconomics for Public Policy II), but you must seek permission from the program director and course instructor before any waivers are granted.

- PPPA 6002 (Research Methods and Applied Statistics): You can waive out of PPPA 6002 and enroll directly into PPPA 6013 if you have already taken coursework in both research methods (e.g., survey design, sampling techniques, research designs, focus groups) and applied statistics (up to linear regression) and feel very comfortable with that material. We encourage you to enroll in 6002 even if you have taken statistics before, especially if you are rusty or did not master the material in your previous class. Most students benefit from taking introductory statistics more than once.
- PPPA 6007 (Microeconomics for Public Policy I): You can waive out of PPPA 6007 and enroll directly into PPPA 6014 if you were an economics major/minor or you have already taken a very strong principles of microeconomics class or intermediate-level microeconomics (a level beyond principles) and feel very comfortable with that material. If you are uncertain as to which course to choose, please consult the economics instructors or the program director.
- PPPA 6013 (Regression Methods for Policy Research): You must have prior coursework that is not just econometric theory, but also has a component such where there is demonstrable evidence of applications of econometrics to policy. You must have taken an econometrics course within the last five years and received a high grade. A syllabus should be submitted to both the program director and course instructor in order to be considered for a waiver.
- PPPA 6014 (Microeconomics for Public Policy II): Your prior coursework must fit the following three criteria.
 - You have taken a sufficiently rigorous micro theory course
 - You have written a substantial paper or case study exercise that uses microeconomic theory to analyze a policy.
 - You must have taken the course within the last five years and received a high grade. You would need to submit a syllabus and a writing sample to both the program director and course instructor in order to be considered for a waiver.

If you choose to apply the waiver(s) for PPPA 6002 and/or 6007, please notify your core academic advisor at some point during your first year (see list of core advisors below). Also note that waiving a course frees you up to take another course, but the Trachtenberg School does not grant credit for the waived course.

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ADVISING AND FIELDS OF STUDY FOR MPA AND MPP STUDENTS

The faculty of the Trachtenberg School are available to help students pick classes to get the most out of their experience. Academic advising in the Trachtenberg School has three parts:

Part I: When you enroll and before you declare a field of concentration, the Trachtenberg School [Core Advising Teams](#) can help you choose and plan your core classes.

Part II: When you are ready to choose a field of study, complete the online [Field of Study Declaration Form](#), preferably during your first year.

Part III: Once you fill out the Field of Study Declaration Form, you will automatically be assigned to the relevant [Field Advising Teams](#) for the field (or the most closely related field if designing your own) for the duration of your MPA or MPP program.

Please note: Students earning an MA-ESP will have Dr. Rachel Emas as their advisor for the duration of their program. Additionally, students in the MA-ESP do not pick a field of study.

Core Advising Teams

The core advising teams of the Trachtenberg School are here to help students plan their core classes. Please get in touch with the appropriate advisor if you have questions. See the Trachtenberg School website for an up-to-date list of core advisors.

Please read the official University Bulletin and consult with your core or field advisors before making any changes in your program. The University Bulletin will serve as a guide to the governing university rules and requirements. Consultation with your advisor and/or with the field advising team will help you to avoid issues. You will also want to use DegreeMAP to monitor your courses and progress towards degree completion.

DegreeMAP

DegreeMAP is GW's online advising and degree auditing system, which provides the requirements for your program of study, applies your academic history to those requirements, and helps you and your advisor keep track of your courses, grades, and progress towards graduation.

Once you become a student at GW, you will have access to your DegreeMAP profile through the GWeb system. Instructions for how to log on and use DegreeMAP can be found at <https://registrar.gwu.edu/degreemap>.

Please log on to DegreeMAP and examine your courses and academic record each semester. Your academic advisor will also have access to your DegreeMAP page, which will make your meetings with your advisors more efficient and productive. Other benefits of using DegreeMAP include:

- Reducing confusion about degree requirements;
- Keeping better track of your progress towards your degree;
- Making better course registration choices;
- Seeing advising notes and exceptions;
- Using the term GPA calculator to project your cumulative GPA.

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The Master of Arts in Environmental and Sustainability Policy Program

ESP Program Director

Rachel Emas

rachelemas@gwu.edu

ESP Curriculum Overview

GW's Environmental Resource Policy (ESP) program offers a multidisciplinary approach to environmental and sustainability studies. The Master of Arts in Environmental and Sustainability Policy (MA-ESP) at the Trachtenberg School offers an interdisciplinary approach to environmental and sustainability studies. This STEM program prepares students to enter and excel in environmental policy careers in government, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and environmental advocacy groups.

The program curriculum is integrative, flexible, and reflects the knowledge and skills required of environmental policy leaders. The program blends theory and practical experience with a professional, client-oriented capstone project, up to three credits for relevant independent study, and a wide range of DC-based internship opportunities.

The ESP requires 36 semester hours of appropriate graduate-level course work. Course work usually takes four semesters to complete on a full-time basis, and six to eight semesters on a part-time basis. Course work is divided into 24 hours of core requirements (eight courses) and 12 hours of electives (four courses).

Students will take courses in the areas of science, law, policy, culture and ethics, economics, research, and more. Students finish the program by completing a capstone project, which provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the ability to conduct policy research as part of a small team.

Other core requirements (listed below) provide the broad intellectual base and tools necessary for making multidisciplinary environmental and resource decisions. All core courses, and most electives, are three credits.

Electives are usually selected either to broaden familiarity with environmental policy issues, or to specialize in a particular environmental or resource issue. Students have the chance to tailor the ESP program to their specific needs and interests. Elective courses can be taken in almost any department at The George Washington University, including, but not limited to, biology, chemistry, geography, international affairs, public policy and public administration, economics, political science, engineering, business administration, and public health, as well as at Consortium Schools like American University, George Mason University, and Georgetown University. Our philosophy: we want you to be able to tailor the program to your goals and will allow you to take a wide variety of courses as long as they relate to the program. All electives must be approved by the ESP Program Director prior to registration.

Program of Study

ESP: Core Courses (8 courses, 24 credits)

Foundation

PPPA 6140	Introduction to Environmental Law
PPPA 6066	U.S. Environmental Policy
or IAFF 6151	Environmental Policy

One course in physical or life sciences selected from the following:

PPPA 6101	Environmental Sciences I: Physical Sciences
or PPPA 6102	Environmental Sciences II: Life Sciences
or PUBH 6011	Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health

One course in ethics and culture selected from following or similar course selected in consultation with advisor:

PPPA 6025	Ethics and Public Values
or PHIL 6281	Environmental Philosophy and Policy
or PMGT 6428	Cultural Aspects of Global Engagement

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Economics and tools courses

PPPA 6002	Research Methods and Applied Statistics *
ECON 6237	Economics of the Environment and Natural Resources

And one additional economics and tools course selected from the following:

PPPA 6006	Policy Analysis
PPPA 6007	Microeconomics for Public Policy I
PPPA 6013	Regression Methods for Policy Research
PPPA 6014	Microeconomics for Public Policy II
PPPA 6015	Benefit-Cost Analysis
PPPA 6016	Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation
PPPA 6020	Decision Modeling for Public Policy
PPPA 6021	Data Visualization
PPPA 8022	Econometrics for Policy Research
PPPA 8023	Mixed Methods in Research Design

Capstone

PPPA 6198	Environmental Resource Policy Capstone
or PPPA 6008	MPA/MPP Capstone

If graduating in the Fall, ESP students may enroll in PPPA6008 (MPP/MPA Capstone) in lieu of PPPA6198. In such cases, however, the student should be aware that they may not be able to find a group of like-minded capstone teammates interested in doing a capstone project focused on environmental policy.

ESP Core Course Descriptions

ECON 6237 Economics of the Environment and Natural Resources: Analysis of public policy problems relating to the environment and natural resources development and management. Prerequisite: PPPA 6007.

ENRP/PPPA 6101 Environmental Science I - Physical Sciences: Basic physical sciences crucial to environmental issues, including chemistry, geology, hydrology, climate science, and cross-media interactions; land, air, and water pollution, climate change, production and consumption of energy, sea level rise, and anthropogenic changes in the cryosphere.

ENRP/PPPA 6102 Environmental Science II - Life Sciences: Basic life sciences crucial to environmental issues, including biology, ecology, environmental health and toxicology, epidemiology, agriculture, biodiversity, ecosystem services, habitat preservation, deforestation, conservation biology, nutrient cycling, and the impacts of climate change on living systems.

IAFF 6151 Environmental Policy: Examination of public policies designed to protect the human and physical environment; focus on the ways science and technology can simultaneously create new environmental problems and contribute to their mitigation and prevention.

PHIL 6281 Environmental Philosophy and Policy: Examination of philosophical frameworks for assessing policy approaches to environmental problems. Representative topics include duties to future generations, environmental justice, legal rights for natural objects, critiques of cost-benefit analysis, sustainability, risk measurement, the intrinsic value of nature.

PMGT 6428 Cultural Aspects of Global Engagement: Understanding multicultural communities and diverse institutions, customs, and practices; effective and ethical public engagement on behalf of global organizations; communicating issues and commitments to diverse audiences and the general market; engagement strategies and techniques. Restricted to graduate Students.

PPPA 6002 Research Methods and Applied Statistics: Development of skills and knowledge for conducting original research and critically evaluating empirical studies. Various research designs and data collection techniques are examined. Focus on computerizing data sets for quantitative analysis, analyzing strength of relationships, selecting appropriate statistical techniques, and testing statistical hypotheses.

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PPPA 6006 Policy Analysis: Development of skills in conducting and critiquing policy analyses. Application of methodologies used in analyzing possible consequences of specified alternatives as applied in the public policy decision-making process. Appropriate applications and limitations of policy analysis and its relationship to politics and the policy process.

PPPA 6007 Microeconomics for Public Policy I: Intermediate microeconomics with a focus on policy-relevant topics and examples.

PPPA 6013 Regression Methods for Policy Research: Multivariate research methods in policy analysis.

PPPA 6014 Microeconomics for Public Policy II: The application of intermediate microeconomic theory to the study of public policy; models of individual choice in policy analysis, policy aspects of models of the firm, theory of market failure and welfare economics, and resource allocation decisions in the public sector. Credit cannot be earned for both PPPA 6014 and SMPP 6206. Prerequisite: PPPA 6007.

PPPA 6015 Benefit-Cost Analysis: The application of microeconomic theory and welfare economics to the empirical evaluation of public policies and programs. Applied welfare economics as a framework for policy analysis; empirical measures of welfare change; techniques of benefit–cost analysis. Prerequisite: PPPA 6014.

PPPA 6016 Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation: Theory and practice of program evaluation and evaluative research. Exploration of scope and limitations of current practice in evaluation, considering economic, political, social, and administrative factors. Examination of methodological considerations for design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Prerequisite: PPPA 6002 .

PPPA 6020 Decision Modeling for Public Policy: Practical modeling approaches used by policy analysts to explain and assess complex problems, bound a solution space, or determine what data is needed to support policy decisions; using spreadsheets (specifically, Microsoft Excel) to begin modeling policy problems. Prerequisite: PPPA 6002.

PPPA 6021 Data Visualization: How graphics can be used to obfuscate, illuminate, and compel. Focusing on the programming language R, includes working with large-scale data and distilling such data into pictures that communicate. Prerequisite: PPPA 6013.

PPPA 6066 U.S. Environmental Policy: Current issues in environmental policy; biodiversity, land use including wilderness protection, climate change, environmental justice, economic growth, and ecological sustainability.

PPPA 6140 Introduction to Environmental Law: Federal environmental statutes, implementing regulations; state regulatory programs; international environmental agreements; environmental governance tools; strengths and weaknesses of legal, administrative, and private approaches to environmental threats; the role of federal courts and administrative law in environmental protection.

PPPA 6198 ESP Capstone/PPPA 6008 MPA/MPP Capstone: The capstone seminar involves team development of a project sponsored by an external entity, such as a government agency or non-governmental organization. The student team functions as an external consultant tasked with analysis of the chosen issue.

PPPA 8022 Econometrics for Policy Research: For doctoral students who wish to use econometric tools in their research. An equivalent course in introductory econometrics may be substituted for the prerequisite with permission. Prerequisites: PPPA 6013.

PPPA 8023 Mixed Methods in Research Design: The historical and philosophical foundations of mixed method research design; review of canonical designs; developing and honing skills to implement mixed methods research designs.

PUBH 6011 Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health: The connection between population health and exposures to chemical, physical, and biological agents in the environment; interconnection between dimensions of environmental systems and all living things; biological sciences as they relate to environmental impacts.

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Prerequisites

1. Complete all core courses before enrolling in the capstone course. Exceptions can be made in extenuating circumstances, but you must contact the Program Director before the start of the semester prior to the one in which you would like to take capstone.
2. PPPA 6007 is a prerequisite for ECON 6237 and must be taken during the first year.
3. Other prerequisites can be identified using the GWU Bulletin.

Skills Needed to Perform Well in the Core Science, Economics, and Statistics Courses

While the ESP coursework does not require calculus, it does require basic algebra skills. If you feel rusty on these skills, it is your responsibility to refresh your understanding. We've compiled some math refresher [links](#) from Khan Academy. (This link takes you to a page labeled for MPP students; it is equally applicable to MA-ESP students.) To evaluate your readiness, it is recommended that you complete the following [short assessment](#). This assessment should take less than an hour to complete. Your goal is to answer all questions correctly.

You are welcome to re-take the assessment as many times as you like to evaluate your skills. To re-take, use the survey link listed above.

The University requires graduate students to maintain a cumulative GPA of B (3.0) or above to maintain satisfactory academic standing.

ESP: Elective Courses (typically 4 courses, 12 credits)

ESP students take 12 credits of electives. Such classes must have a number between 6000 and 6999. With instructor and Program Director approval, an ESP student may take an upper division undergraduate course (3000- and 4000-level courses) for which there is no graduate equivalent. The instructor must agree to add readings and assignments to raise the rigor of the course to a graduate level.

The following is a sample of courses that may be appropriate electives. This is only a partial list to give you an idea of the range of available courses. Several departments offer a rotating selection of special topics courses that may be appropriate. GW's online schedule of classes has a search function that may help you find electives of interest (e.g., search on 'climate,' 'sustainability,' or 'biodiversity'). Check the university bulletin for (or ask the instructor about) prerequisites.

- EMSE 6200 Policy Factors in Environmental and Energy Management
- EMSE 6220 Environmental Management
- EMSE 6225 Air Quality Management
- EMSE 6230 Hazardous Waste Management and Cleanup
- EMSE 6235 Water Quality Management
- EMSE 6240 Environmental Hazard Management
- EMSE 6245 Analytical Tools for Environmental Management
- EMSE 6260 Energy Management
- ENRP/PPPA 6101 Environmental Sciences I
- ENRP/PPPA 6102 Environmental Sciences II
- GEOG 6220 Climatic Change
- GEOG 6243 Urban Geography
- GEOG 6244 Urban Sustainability
- GEOG 6245 Water Resources Policy and Management
- GEOG 6293 Arctic Systems
- GEOG 6304 Geographical Information Systems
- IAFF 6138 Climate Change & Sustainable Development
- IAFF 6158 Climate Change and Energy Policy

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- IAFF 6186 Environmental Security
- IAFF 6358 Energy and Environmental Policy in Latin America
- IAFF 6378 Oil: Industry, Economy & Society
- PSUS 6138 Planning Resilient & Low-Carbon Cities
- PUBH 6004 Environmental & Occupational Health in a Sustainable World (2 credits)
- PUBH 6130 Sustainable Energy & Environmental Health (2 credits)
- PUBH 6199 Global Climate Change & Air Pollution: Science, Impacts & Solutions (2 credits)
- SMPP 6210 Strategic Environmental Management

ESP Course Sequencing

Below is a sample plans for sequencing your coursework, assuming you start the program in the Fall and take courses full-time. Other sequences may also be feasible. If you have any questions, be sure to consult the Program Director as early as possible in your graduate program.

Year 1	
Fall	Spring
PPPA 6002	PPPA 6140
Policy course (PPPA 6066 if selected) OR Elective	Policy course (IAFF 6151 if selected) OR Elective
PPPA 6007 Microeconomics (if limited economics background)	Culture and Ethics course (or Science course)
Year 2	
Fall	Spring
Science course (or Culture and Ethics course)	PPPA 6198 or PPPA 6008
ECON 6237	Elective
Elective	Elective

Graduate Certificate in Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

Because of the importance of geospatial reasoning to many environmental and natural resource management issues, ESP has partnered with GW's Geography Department to offer our MA students the opportunity to earn a graduate certificate in geographical information systems. To do so, students in the ESP program must use all four of their electives toward the GIS Certificate. No additional coursework is necessary; all 12 credits are counted towards both the MA and the Certificate. For more information about the Certificate, visit <https://geography.columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-certificate-geographical-information-systems>.

If you are interested in the GIS Certificate, careful course planning is essential. Please contact the ESP Program Director before registering for classes. In addition, you will need to obtain permission from the GIS Program Director before entering the program.

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Frequently Asked Questions about the ESP MA Program

How is the capstone project structured?

You can look at the capstone seminar page of the TSPPPA site for the most up-to-date details: <https://tspppa.gwu.edu/capstone>. During the seminar, students work in a small team of 3-6 classmates to design and implement substantial analytic projects for external clients such as government agencies or nonprofit organizations. The pro bono projects result in a written report and a formal presentation of research results to both the external client and Trachtenberg School community. Orientation sessions are held in the prior semester to help students get organized.

Is a thesis required?

No, the work produced as part of the capstone course (PPPA 6198 or PPPA 6008) substitutes for a traditional thesis. If you would like to also do a research-oriented thesis, you may do so if you can find a GW Professor willing to supervise your work. If so, you would enroll in an independent study course as one of your four electives. You would still need to complete the capstone course.

Can I complete the MA-ESP in less than two years?

Probably not, because of the sequencing of core courses and their prerequisites. If, however, you waive one or more core courses, take courses in the summer, and/or opt to take PPPA6008 in lieu of PPPA6198, you may be able to accelerate somewhat your progress through the program. Careful planning is essential, and you should consult with the ESP Program Director as soon as possible to assess the feasibility of an accelerated program.

How many classes should I take each semester?

Most Trachtenberg School courses are 3 credits each. Full-time students should take 9 credits per semester, while part-time students should take 6 credits per semester.

Full-time students are normally able to manage their coursework and a part-time job or internship (up to 20 hours/week). Students who are working full-time should enroll as part-time students.

There is no need to declare your status as full- or part-time officially and you may switch at any time.

Can graduate credits I took at another university transfer into the ESP program and count towards my degree?

You may request to transfer in a maximum of 9 credits from other accredited institutions. Transfer credits are only available for graduate-level courses taken within two years prior to entering the ESP program, for which you received a grade of B or better. Contact the ESP Program Director about your request during your first semester. Plan to submit syllabi for the classes that you hope to qualify for transfer credit.

Can I take a class offered at another university in the area?

Yes. GWU is part of a Consortium of Washington-area universities that includes University of Maryland, Howard University, University of D.C., George Mason University, American University, Catholic University, Gallaudet University, and others. A complete list of Consortium schools can be found at: <https://www.consortium.org>. If there is a course taught at one of the Consortium schools, but not offered at GWU, you may take it at that institution and receive credit for it towards your degree. You may take a maximum of 9 credits at Consortium schools.

1. Contact the instructor of the course to make sure they are okay with admitting you to the class.
2. Contact the ESP Program Director to discuss your plan to take a consortium class. All electives must be approved by the ESP Program Director prior to registration.

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3. Download and complete a consortium registration form from the GW Registrar's website.
4. Arrange to get the ESP Program Director's signature. From there, the form requires the Dean's signature and submission to the Office of the Registrar at Colonial Central.

You pay the GWU tuition rate for courses taken under the Consortium arrangement through the regular procedure. The deadline for Consortium registration is generally the end of the first week of classes. For more information about registering for consortium classes, go to <http://registrar.gwu.edu/consortium#gw>

As an international student, how do I register for an internship?

International students may register for ENRP 6097: Practicum in Environmental Resource Policy. This zero-credit class allows international students to take on an unpaid internship through a registered course that is part of their degree program. Please note that the MA-ESP is designated by the Department of Homeland Security as a STEM degree (i.e., focused on science, technology, engineering, or math). Accordingly, international students may be able to extend the duration of their post-graduation visa. Contact GW's International Services Office for more information.

Can I do an independent study?

You can earn credit by doing independent research. Independent study credits must be approved in advance by the ESP Program Director. Independent research is done in collaboration with a GWU professor, and may consist of either a directed readings course, or direct involvement in ongoing research. Your instructor for independent study must provide a report of your activities and performance at the end of the semester.

Can I do study abroad for credit?

Possibly. You must consult with the Program Director prior to studying abroad. No credit will be given retroactively for study abroad programs. Be aware that many organizations offer one-to-three-week experiential 'courses' related to the environment during winter and summer breaks. As a general rule, you should not sign up for such programs expecting to earn GW graduate credits. There may be exceptions, but again, you must consult with the Program Director in advance.

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Combined Degree Programs

The Trachtenberg School offers opportunities to combine a Trachtenberg School program with another GW degree program. The programs are:

Combined Masters and Graduate Certificate Programs

- MPA and graduate certificate in Budget and Public Finance
- MPA and graduate certificate in Nonprofit Management
- MPA and graduate certificate in Regulatory Policy and Practice
- MPP and graduate certificate in Budget and Public Finance
- MPP and graduate certificate in Nonprofit Management
- MPP and graduate certificate in Data Science
- MPP and graduate certificate in Regulatory Policy and Practice
- MS-ESP and graduate certificate in Geographical Information Systems
- MA-ESP and graduate certificate in Regulatory Policy and Practice

Combined BA/Masters Level Degrees

- BA in Criminal Justice/MPA
- BA in Political Science/MPA
- BA in Human Service and Social Justice/MPA
- BA in Political Science or Economics/MPP
- BA in Environmental Studies/MA-ESP

Combined Masters/Doctorate Degrees

- Combined MPA/JD or MPP/JD program

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GENERAL FAQS

Who is my Lead Student Services Coordinator (LSSC)? When and why should I (not) contact them before my faculty advisor?

The Trachtenberg School Lead Student Services Coordinator is:

Gregory Nelson

202-994-6662

ganelson@email.gwu.edu

You should first contact the LSSC any time you need to file official forms with the University, such as Registration Transaction Forms or any of the various kinds of petitions. Generally, the LSSC is more readily available than your program director or faculty advisor. In most cases, you will be able to go to the School's website or stop by the LSSC's office and get the appropriate forms without waiting or making an appointment. Not all paperwork needs to go to your advisor or to the program director and the LSSC will likely know the official process or chain of command for each situation better than most faculty members. Also, the LSSC can ensure that a copy of any paperwork you file with the program or University remains in your student file. Finally, many of the questions you may have, such as what courses are being offered during which semester, can be answered quickly and easily by the LSSC.

On the other hand, you should not contact the LSSC for academic advising. While the LSSC knows the general schedule and sequence of classes, only your faculty advisor or program director is qualified and authorized to give academic advice or offer curricular guidance. You should not make any changes to your program of study or course sequencing plan without first consulting your advisor.

What is the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) and how does it relate to me?

The Trachtenberg School is a school within the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences. Therefore, all Trachtenberg School students are bound to the rules and regulations established by CCAS policy as well as official University policy.

How do I register for classes?

Registration for classes is conducted primarily via the GWeb system (<http://gweb.gwu.edu>), except for Consortium courses or classes requiring departmental or instructor approval. After registering, you may continue to adjust your schedule on-line through the end of the priority registration period. You can find detailed registration information in the current semester's Schedule of Classes (<https://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/>) and on the Office of the Registrar's web site (<https://registrar.gwu.edu/faqs#registration>).

The class I want to take is "restricted to majors" or "closed." Can I get into the course anyway?

In either of these cases, you will not be able to register for that course through GWeb.

If a PPPA course in which you are interested is full or requires permission, please contact the TSPPPA Lead Student Services Coordinator to be placed on a list. If a non-PPPA course is full or requires permission, please contact the instructor of the course or the relevant administrator in the course's department. If you are having trouble finding the relevant instructor or department administrator, please contact the TSPPPA Lead Student Services Coordinator for assistance.

What is petitioning, and when must I petition?

Petitioning is the means by which you may formally request that you be granted special consideration, such as taking a leave of absence, withdrawing from a course after the deadline, or requesting that a University fee be waived. CCAS Petition forms are available on the Trachtenberg School website.

People also use the term petitioning to refer to a request to transfer non-degree credits into the program. In order to transfer non-degree credits, you must meet with your advisor **during your first semester of study as a matriculated student** to fill out the appropriate paperwork. You will be required to present a syllabus

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or similar type of course description to your advisor for any transfer request to be considered. If the course work is approved for credit toward your degree, your advisor will complete and submit the necessary transfer request form to the Academic Dean of CCAS. You also must submit official documentation (transcripts) for the course work you want to transfer to the Academic Dean in CCAS. No credits will be transferred without official transcripts.

For all cases, your LSSC should be the first person you speak with regarding the process of “petitioning” the Trachtenberg School or CCAS for special consideration. They will direct you to the appropriate form(s) to complete. All petitions must be signed by the appropriate program director(s) before being forwarded to the CCAS Dean’s Office.

How do I get more information about a course?

First, check the course description in the University Bulletin. Go to the Schedule of Classes <http://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/>, select the semester and Main Campus, select the department, find the class, and click on the course number. You should also feel free to contact the instructor for a copy of the syllabus so that you can make sure a class is right for you. Find the class in the Schedule of Classes, and find the name of the instructor. You may be able to find his or her email address on the department listing. You can also use the online university directory at <http://my.gwu.edu/mod/directory/>. Be sure to sign in to my.gwu.edu so that you can get full contact info

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May I take courses outside of the Trachtenberg School?

Yes, provided that those courses are a part of a special field of study approved by your advisor or are elective courses. Substitutions for courses in any standard field of study are also permitted. Your request must be approved by your advisor before registering for these courses.

How can I take courses at other area universities?

You can take courses at other area universities through the Washington Area Consortium of Universities. Students may take Consortium courses that do not duplicate courses already offered at GW. Consult your advisor before registering for any course through the Consortium. Registration in Consortium courses must be requested on a Consortium Registration Form, available on the [registrar's consortium](#) web site.

How can I borrow books from other area libraries?

You may also borrow books from any other Consortium member library through the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC). Most of the time, GW students can simply request publications from WRLC member libraries through [ALADIN](#) (the GW on-line library reference system) and pick them up at the [Gelman Library](#) Circulation Desk. Materials that are not available in any of the Consortium member libraries need to be requested in person at the Gelman Library through Interlibrary Borrowing Services. A publication containing schedule information and the location for each participating library, including on-site access to those libraries, is available at the Gelman Library Circulation Desk as well as on-line at.

In addition to Consortium resources, students may use the DC Public Library System, the Library of Congress, and federal agency libraries. The Martin Luther King Library (9th and G Streets, NW) is the main library of the DC Public Library System. In order to borrow materials, students must apply for a public library card. The Library of Congress and most federal agency libraries allow only on-site use of materials.

When must I select a field of study?

It is not necessary to declare a field early in the program, especially since you may take mainly the core courses during your early semesters. Students can use their program of study form to declare their field of study. Students can also change their field with the program of study form, and need to meet with the appropriate field advisor before changing fields. (Because the ESP program does not include fields of study, this requirement is not applicable to ESP/MA students.)

Can I easily switch from the MPA to the MPP or vice versa?

In the first year of your program, if you realize that you desire enrollment in the other master's degree, you must submit your request to the Lead Student Services Coordinator. The Director of the program in which you seek enrollment (MPA or MPP) will review your application materials and make an admissions decision. If you are admitted to the program, you must meet with an advisor immediately to determine your coursework. Transfers in and out of the ESP/MA program are handled on a case-by-case basis. If you're interested, start by consulting the ESP Program Director.

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Publication

GW University Bulletin

CCAS Graduate Student Handbook

On-line location

<http://www.gwu.edu/~bulletin>

<https://columbian.gwu.edu/academic-policies>

Taking Courses in the Washington Area Consortium of Universities

With advisor approval, students may include courses taken through the [Washington Area Consortium of Universities](#) in their program of studies. Registration in Consortium courses is governed by University policies concerning Consortium registration. Students interested in taking a Consortium course must consult with their advisor before registering for the course.

General Advice

Plan ahead! Careful attention to program planning and course sequencing is necessary to avoid scheduling conflicts, especially later in the program. Most core courses are not offered during the summer, and most field courses are offered only once a year. The Schedule of Classes is [online](#) and contains the most current information on scheduling for the upcoming semester. The School uses the student blogs and weekly emails to communicate changes as well.

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APPLYING TO THE PhD IN PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

Students with a completed Masters degree normally transfer 24 credits into the 72 credit-hour PhD program. However, MPA and MPP students within the Trachtenberg School are able to transfer in up to 30 credits.

MPP students, who will have completed 2 core courses that are required in the PhD (PPPA 6013 and PPPA 6014), are generally able to transfer the maximum number of credits, which is 30. MPA students can consider taking those two courses as electives. In other cases, if the MPA field of concentration aligns with the field selected in the PhD, it may also be possible for them to transfer the full 30-credit maximum. ESP/MA students interested in the PhD program should consult the Doctoral Program Director for applicable requirements.

Students considering applying to the PhD program should review the Doctoral Handbook, available on our website, when selecting field and elective courses. While typically only doctoral students are allowed to enroll in PhD core courses, some other doctoral seminars may be open to Masters students based on petition to the Doctoral Program Director.

It is also possible to apply for the PhD before completing either Masters degree. For further information, contact the Doctoral Program Director (tspppaphddir@gwu.edu)

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GW AND COLUMBIAN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES POLICIES

The following policies of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) and The George Washington University are presented as they apply to the Master's degrees offered through the School of Public Policy and Public Administration. Not all CCAS and University policies appear on the following pages and all students are responsible for knowing both official CCAS policies (published in the CCAS Graduate Student Handbook) and official GW policies (published in the GW Graduate Bulletin). Furthermore, in case of any disagreement, CCAS and University policies, as stated in the Bulletin, override the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration.

Columbian College requires all master's candidates, both full-time and part-time, to complete all academic requirements within a maximum of four calendar years from admission to candidacy. The MPA and MPP degrees require satisfactory completion of a minimum of 40 credit hours of approved graduate course work. The ESP/MA degree requires satisfactory completion of a minimum of 36 credit hours of approved graduate work.

All students must file an Application for Graduation early in the semester in which they intend to graduate by the date indicated in the academic calendar.

Transfer of Credits

A student who is a degree candidate in Columbian College of Arts and Sciences may request transfer of post-baccalaureate, graduate-level course work taken outside the University or Columbian College. No more than one-quarter of the semester hours of graduate course work required for a degree may be approved for transfer (up to 10 hours in a 40 hour program, for instance). Please note that this policy applies to all post-baccalaureate, graduate-level course work, including credits earned on a non-degree basis at GW.

Students who wish to transfer credits into their program should consult their program director as early as possible and arrange for the appropriate Trachtenberg School program to petition CCAS via the appropriate form.

For a transfer of credit to be approved, all of the following conditions must be met:

- The course work must have been taken at an accredited college or university.
- The Trachtenberg School must approve it as appropriate to the student's program of studies.
- It must have been taken within the past two years.
- It must not have been applied to the completion of requirements for another degree.
- The student must have received a grade of "B" or better.
- An official transcript showing completion of the course work must be on file in the CCAS office before the request can be considered.

Once enrolled as CCAS degree candidates, students are not permitted to transfer course work taken outside the University, except under extraordinary circumstances (petitions must be made, in advance, through the Trachtenberg School to the CCAS Graduate Office).

The full CCAS policy on transfer credits is located at <https://columbian.gwu.edu/transfer-credit>.

Grading Policy

Policies regarding grades and scholarship requirements are outlined in the [GW Graduate Handbook](#).

No student will be permitted to graduate with a GPA of less than 3.0. If a course is repeated for credit, all grades received for the course remain on the record and are included in the GPA. Students are advised that courses numbered less than 6000 may never be taken for graduate credit. With the permission of the student's program director and the instructor, courses numbered between 2000 and 6000 may be taken for graduate credit (it is expected that the instructor will provide additional work to make it a graduate level course).

The primary point of contact for all course-related grading issues is the course instructor. GW uses the following grading system for graduate course work:

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Grade	Quality Points	Included in GPA?	Value
A	4.0	Y	Excellent
A-	3.7	Y	
B+	3.3	Y	
B	3.0	Y	Good
B-	2.7	Y	
C+	2.3	Y	
C	2.0	Y	Minimum Pass (Graduate)
C-	1.7	Y	
F	0.0	Y	Fail
AU	-	N	Audit
I	-	N	Incomplete
W	-	N	Authorized Withdrawal
Z	-	N	Unauthorized Withdrawal

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CCAS Policy on Incompletes

An instructor may assign a grade of “I” (Incomplete) only if all the following conditions are satisfied:

- The student contacts the instructor to request an Incomplete grade before the date when the course grades must be reported (i.e. within 72 hours of the final exam).
- The student has completed all but a small part of the assessed work for the course.
- The student’s prior performance and attendance in the course is satisfactory.
- The student has provided the instructor with a satisfactory explanation for his/her inability to complete the required work (such as health problems or some other circumstances beyond the student’s control).
- A [written contract](#) is set up and signed by the instructor and student that details the following:
 - The date by which this work must be completed (Note: *The CCAS default is by the end of the following semester, but the maximum time must be within one calendar year of the scheduled course final exam date.* Incompletes that have not been completed within a year will be automatically converted to grades of F by the Registrar’s Office).
 - Exactly what work remains to be completed
 - How this work is to be graded and how it will be incorporated into the student’s previously completed work in order to determine the course grade

If the work is completed by the agreed-upon date, the instructor will submit the new grade to CCAS via a grade-change form. The grade will be factored into the student’s Grade Point Average in the usual way. If the work is not completed by the agreed-upon date, the instructor should submit a grade determined on the basis of the work that the student has submitted.

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Registration and Work Load

Students are required to register each fall and spring semester. Registration during the summer is optional (but recommended). Failure to register requires that a student apply for readmission.

Leave of Absence

Students who are temporarily unable to continue their program may request a Leave of Absence (LOA). The student makes the request of their department via the [LOA Form](#) and, if the department agrees to the request, the petition will be forwarded to the CCAS Dean's Office for review. Pending approval, CCAS will register the student for the leave of absence. Students on LOA will lose many of their privileges including access to the library. Note that no more than three semesters LOA is allowed over the total period of the program. Students may register for classes normally upon return.

Continuous Enrollment

Students who have not yet completed all their required course work (and are not on LOA) must register for at least three credit hours per semester. Students must register for at least six hours per semester to be considered a half-time student, and at least nine hours to be considered full-time. Students who register for too few courses to be considered half- or full-time may have problems with their student loans and, if from outside the U.S., their student visas. Special permission is required for a student to register for more than fifteen hours in the fall or spring semesters or more than six hours in a single summer session. Students who wish to register during the summer semester should consult their academic advisor for a list of available courses. Students who are employed for more than 20 hours per week are advised register for no more than six credit hours per semester.

Students must graduate within their CCAS program deadline of 4 years, Students who have exceeded their CCAS program deadline must petition to continue a further semester and. A student who has not registered for a Fall or Spring semester must apply to CCAS for readmission to their program.

Dropping, Adding, and Withdrawing from Courses

Any changes in course enrollment made after the end of the registration period must have the approval of the instructor involved, the program graduate advisor, and the CCAS Graduate Office, and must be made by the stated deadline (see below). Registration transaction forms are available at <https://registrar.gwu.edu/registration-forms>. Tuition will be adjusted according to the schedule of refunds at <https://studentaccounts.gwu.edu/tuition-refund-policy>.

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Tuition

Public Administration and Public Policy courses are typically three credits. The following fees have been adopted for the 2026-27 academic year. Fees can be expected to increase incrementally in subsequent years.

Tuition: \$2091 per credit hour

Additional fees for 2026-2027 are included at <https://studentaccounts.gwu.edu/graduate-tuition-CCAS-FY26>.

Academic Standing Requirement

Students are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) in all course work. A student who receives a C in a class is still in good academic standing as long as his/her cumulative grade point average is above 3.0. Students earning a cumulative grade point average below 3.0 in all course work taken following admission to a graduate program will be placed on probation. Students have one probationary semester in which to rectify this situation. Failure to do so will result in termination from the program.

Graduation

Degrees are conferred in January, May, and August, although the May commencement ceremony is the only one for the academic year. *It is necessary to be registered during the semester in which the student intends to graduate.*

An Application for Graduation must be filed early in the student's final semester by the date noted in the academic calendar and all applicable fees must be paid. CCAS will pass on instructions regarding graduation instructions. Procedures are located at <https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduation>. If you have further questions, please contact the TSPPPA Lead Student Services Coordinator.

English Language Requirements for International Students

The University sets the minimum English proficiency scores for admission. Schools and programs may set higher scores. The minimum scores are as follows:

- **Academic IELTS:** an overall band score of 7.0 with no individual score below 6.0
- **TOEFL:** 100 (old test) or 5 (new test)
- **PTE Academic:** 68

Beginning Fall 2020 we will start accepting **Duolingo** scores for students unable to access TOEFL or IELTS testing due to COVID-19. Minimum score of 110 on the DET.

To be considered for a Graduate Assistantship, the minimum required scores are:

- **Academic IELTS:** an overall band score of 7.0 with no individual band score below 6.0
- **TOEFL:** 600 on paper-based or 100 (old test) or 5 (new test)
- **PTE Academic:** 68
- **Duolingo:** 120

English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

All international applicants who are required to submit English proficiency scores are required to take an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course in their first semester. The only exception to this rule is that EAP is waived for students with a TOEFL score of 100 or higher, or an IELTS overall band score of 7.0 with no individual score below 6.0, or Duolingo scores of 120 or higher. The course that students must take (EAP 6110 or EAP 6111) is noted in their admission letter.

Students entering in the Fall semester have the option to arrive on campus early and take EAP in the Summer. This is a great opportunity for students to adapt to their new environment without the pressure of a full-time workload in the Fall. The Office of Summer Sessions provides an orientation and various events throughout the city during the summer. Students also have the option of living on campus during this time.

Advanced English Studies Program (AES)

If the program permits, applicants for Fall admission with English-language test scores that are lower than the stated minimums may qualify for the full-time [Advanced English Studies Program](#) (AES). AES is designed for academically qualified international graduate students with TOEFL scores ranging from **74-79, with no individual score below 16, or an overall IELTS of 5.5, with no individual band score below 5.0**. The AES program is offered only in the Summer (second session).

The program includes:

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- 8 credits: two integrated skills courses (3 credits each) and two academic skills workshops (1 credit each)
- Weekly “Casual Conversation @ GW” session and Friday workshop series to support socialization into a U.S. academic community
- Students who successfully complete the program matriculate into a graduate program in Fall semester, including either EAP 6110 or EAP 6111.

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Student Integrity Policies

Students are required to adhere to University policies regarding academic integrity.

All members of the community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Incoming students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures of doing research, writing papers, and taking examinations.

Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels.

The University Code of Academic Integrity is located online on the [Conflict Education and Student Accountability](#) and web site.

Academic Misconduct/Dishonesty and the Honor System

The GW Division of Student Affairs publishes a Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities. That official statement includes the Code of Student Conduct and the Code of Academic Integrity. Common examples of academically dishonest behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) *Cheating* - intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise; copying from another student's examination; submitting work for an in-class examination that has been prepared in advance; representing material prepared by another as one's own work; submitting the same work in more than one course without prior permission of both instructors; violating rules governing administration of examinations; violating any rules relating to academic conduct of a course or program.
- 2) *Fabrication* - intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any data, information, or citation in an academic exercise.
- 3) *Plagiarism* - intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.
- 4) *Falsification and forgery of University academic documents* - knowingly making a false statement, concealing material information, or forging a University official's signature on any University academic document or record. Such academic documents or records may include transcripts, add-drop forms, requests for advanced standing, requests to register for graduate-level courses, etc. (Falsification or forgery of non-academic University documents, such as financial aid forms, shall be considered a violation of the non-academic student disciplinary code.)
- 5) *Facilitating academic dishonesty* - intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

All members of the community are responsible for preventing academic dishonesty from occurring and are expected to be familiar with the Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities.

These rights and responsibilities are available online at <https://students.gwu.edu/cesa>.

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REGISTRATION ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Registration for classes is conducted primarily via the GWeb system (<http://gweb.gwu.edu>), except for Consortium courses or classes requiring departmental or instructor approval. After registering, a student may continue to adjust his/her schedule on-line through the end of the priority registration period. Detailed registration information can be found in the current semester's [Schedule of Classes](#) and on the Office of the [Registrar's web site](#).

Schedule Adjustments

(Late Charges, Refunds, Dropping, and Adding Courses)

Detailed information on late registration fees, tuition refunds, and withdrawals is published on the [Registrar's](#) web site. In general, in order to avoid late fees or having less than 100% of tuition charges refunded, courses must be dropped or added within the first two weeks of classes. However, because the dates and penalties incurred for late registration change each semester, students should always refer to the information posted on the Registrar's web site for the semester in question.

Courses to be added or dropped after the respective final deadlines require a CCAS Student Petition and Registration Transaction Form. Both forms are on the [CCAS forms website](#); the petition is to be signed by the program director; and the forms are to be submitted to the CCAS Dean's Office together.

Closed Courses

If a PPPA course in which you are interested is full or requires permission, please contact the TSPPPA Lead Student Services Coordinator to be placed on a list. If a non-PPPA course is full or requires permission, please contact the instructor of the course or the relevant administrator in the course's department. If you are having trouble finding the relevant instructor or department administrator, please contact the TSPPPA Lead Student Services Coordinator for assistance.

Course Waivers

Students may first petition the lead instructor of a course or the relevant program director for waivers of courses (without credit) based on prior course work. Waivers may be granted for either undergraduate or graduate course work that is equivalent in coverage and rigor to courses required for the MPA, the MPP, or the ESP/MA. Course waivers based on previous work experience will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Courses waived do not reduce the number of credits necessary to complete the degree; rather, other courses taken can be applied toward the field or elective requirements.

Students must submit requests for core course waivers to the lead instructor of the course and their program director. Courses waived do not require the substitution of upper-level courses. Contact your academic advisor or see the program sections of this handbook for courses eligible to waive. All requests for course waivers should be accompanied by the syllabus from the course completed as well as official corresponding transcripts.

Requirements for Course Waivers

Program core course requirements may be satisfied by evidence of successful completion of comparable work at a regionally accredited or recognized foreign college or university under the following circumstances:

- 1) A minimum grade of "B" is required in all courses presented for waiver consideration. Grades of "B-", "Passing", or "Credit" will not qualify.
- 2) The course work must clearly have covered the same material.
- 3) Courses must have been taken within five years prior to enrollment in the program.
- 4) Supporting documentation for core course waivers must be submitted prior to the start of the program as requests will not be considered after the start of classes.

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Independent Study

A student who wishes to study a special area of interest not covered by a course in the curriculum may elect to enroll in an independent study for course credit—with prior approval of the faculty member with whom the student would like to study. The course number for independent study is 6098 in the respective program:

PPPA 6098:

Independent Research

1-3 credits

Supervised reading in selected fields within public administration and public policy. Student is responsible for identifying a project (e.g., expansion of a previous research paper), and securing agreement from a faculty member, who is both interested and able to support your topic as well as available for the commitment related to overseeing such a project. This must occur prior to seeking permission from the department.

Once an agreement has been reached, students complete a [Registration Transaction Form](#), which requires departmental approval (i.e., instructor of record) prior to processing by the CCAS Dean's Office and Registrar. The supervising faculty member works with the instructor of record to enter a grade after the work has been completed.

To get department approval, please have a detailed plan of a work schedule (including hours) and deliverables to be evaluated for grading. Note that a 3 credit independent study involves 112.5 hours of work in a semester. A 2 or 1 credit independent study involves the appropriate fraction of the above amount.

May be repeated once for credit.

Consortium Program

The George Washington University is a member of the [Consortium of Universities of the Metropolitan Washington Area](#). The Consortium consists of ten universities that coordinate the use of their respective facilities. Other member universities are American University, Catholic University of America, Corcoran College of Art + Design, Gallaudet University, George Mason University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Howard University, Marymount University, National Defense Intelligence College, National Defense University, Southeastern University, the University of the District of Columbia, Trinity University, and the University of Maryland.

Students may take courses at any one of these institutions with the approval of their faculty advisor and program advisor. Students must be in good academic standing and may enroll in up to nine hours of approved courses through the Consortium. Approval will not be granted to take courses that are offered at the GW campus during the same semester. Students register and pay tuition at GW for all Consortium courses. Course fees are paid to the visiting institutions. [Consortium registration procedures](#) are online.

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ORGANIZATIONS AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Networking can offer valuable personal and professional contacts. Although developing a variety of social and professional contacts is not a substitute for skill, talent, and experience, it is an essential part of any effective strategy for pursuing a professional career.

Pi Alpha Alpha

Pi Alpha Alpha is the national honorary society for academic programs in public administration and public policy. Each April, the GW chapter inducts outstanding students who are near the end of their degree program. Students who have attained at least a 3.70 grade point average and who finish in the top 10 percent of their class are invited to nominate themselves. Selection is made by the Nominations Committee and is based on students' academic achievements and their contributions to public and community service.

The annual induction dinners are noted for outstanding guest speakers representing a variety of public service careers. Previous speakers have included: Arthur Fleming, former Chair of the Civil Rights Commission; Abner Mikva, U.S. Congressman and Legal Counsel to the President; Parris Glendening, Governor of Maryland; Carmen Turner, General Manager of Metro; Constance Newman, former Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management; Paul Light, PEW Charitable Trust; Douglas Duncan, County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland; and David Walker, Comptroller of the United States.

The faculty advisor for Pi Alpha Alpha is Professor Christopher Carrigan.

Trachtenberg School and GW Activities

The Trachtenberg School honors its graduates with a reception held in May. An end-of-semester holiday party is often held in December.

Trachtenberg Student Organization (TSO)

The Trachtenberg Student Organization (TSO) is a cornerstone student organization that has served the Trachtenberg School community in various forms since 1977. Throughout the year, the organization hosts a variety of programs that enhance the Trachtenberg School student community. From professional development events to volunteer and social events, TSO offers a wide range of programmatic activities. We are excited about welcoming you into the Trachtenberg School community and encourage you to join this dynamic organization.

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Social Events

Happy hours, outdoor sports, and other events help promote the social character of the school and its students. TSO Social Coordinators plan diverse events including the annual student-faculty retreat, trips to D.C. United, Nationals, and Capitals games, Kennedy Center group venues, and the annual Fall Ball and Spring Fling.

Volunteer Activities and Community Involvement

The TSO Committee for Community Engagement provides students with volunteer opportunities to get more involved in the D.C. community. We organize one group service opportunity per month for students, faculty and staff. Our Volunteer Coordinators also contact members about both one-time and on-going service events for those who wish to get more involved on their own. Group volunteer activities in the past have included everything from helping serve food at a soup kitchen to spending a day working on a house for Habitat for Humanity.

Policy Perspectives

[Policy Perspectives](#), The George Washington University Journal of Public Administration & Policy, is one of the few policy journals in the nation published by graduate students of public administration and public policy. The journal and newly added blog provide an opportunity for MPA, MPP, MA/ESP, and Ph.D. students to publish research based on their studies at George Washington University and to offer their perspectives on public policy and its management. Policy Perspectives is distributed nationwide to libraries, policy institutions, researchers, and alumni.

There are numerous other student organizations on campus available for those with specialized interests. For a listing of all university student organizations, visit <https://studentlife.gwu.edu/directory-student-organizations>.

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PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

All public administration and public policy students interested in careers in public service are strongly encouraged to join ASPA, the leading professional association in the field of public service. ASPA works to advance excellence in public service and assert the dignity and worth of public service. ASPA operates through a network of local chapters. DC area residents can participate in the National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC), the Northern Virginia Chapter, and the Maryland Chapter. Application forms are available here online. Student fees are \$50. Information on ASPA and/or NCAC may be obtained by calling their offices (202-393-7878) or online at <https://www.aspanet.org/>.

Full members receive:

- 1) *Public Administration Review*: The leading journal for scholarly research in public administration, published six times a year.
- 2) *Public Administration Times*: The newspaper, published every three weeks, with current developments relevant to the field and ASPA chapters. Included is a section called “The Recruiter,” which lists available career opportunities.
- 3) Announcements regarding attendance and participation in the annual national conference.
- 4) Member discounts on publications and group insurance eligibility.
- 5) The right to hold office and vote on ASPA affairs.

For nominal additional fees, ASPA members may:

- 6) Join any of the seventeen professional sections, including the National Young Professionals Forum, Women in Public Administration, Budgeting and Financial Management, and Natural Resources and Environmental Administration.
- 7) Join any additional active ASPA chapters. Those who join the National Capital Area Chapter of ASPA will receive the monthly newsletter, “Capitol Currents.” In addition, individuals belonging to NCAC may participate in:
 - a) The annual NCAC conference;
 - b) Monthly seminar/luncheons with distinguished guest speakers;
 - c) Specialized seminars, forums and training programs;
 - d) Activities for university students, including the Annual Student Consortium Conference.

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Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)

All public policy and public administration students interested in careers in policy research and analysis are encouraged to become active in APPAM, the premier professional association for public policy researchers and analysts. APPAM is committed to building a community of scholars and policy professionals, as is reflected in its mission statement and goals:

APPAM is dedicated to improving public policy and management by fostering excellence in research, analysis, and education.

APPAM promotes its mission through activities that include:

- A multidisciplinary annual research conference that attracts the highest quality, research on a wide variety of important current and emerging policy and management issues, and is structured to encourage substantive interaction among participants.
- A peer-reviewed multidisciplinary journal that publishes the highest quality, research on public policy and management.
- A dedication in all activities to respecting and enhancing racial, ethnic, gender, disciplinary, and other forms of diversity among participants in all of the Association's activities.
- The involvement of policymakers, practitioners and scholars in the Association's governance and the Fall Conference.
- Initiatives that include and foster participation in the Association among students interested in public policy and management.

Membership fees are reduced for students who do not work. Membership benefits should be confirmed with APPAM directly. They may include a one-year subscription to the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, access to GrantLink (an on-line information service for funding opportunities in social science and public policy) and reduced registration fee at the fall research conference. Members also have the option of subscribing to the *Journal of Human Resources* at a substantial discount.

All students of public policy analysis and research are strongly encouraged to attend the APPAM fall research conference held in Washington, DC every other year. APPAM's annual fall research conference has become a preeminent venue for the presentation and discussion of applied public policy research, attracting 1000 participants for 150 panel sessions across three days of meetings in late October-early November each year.

For more information about APPAM, please visit their web site, www.appam.org.

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UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The George Washington University is a member of the Association of Research Libraries. The library collections of the University, housed in the Melvin Gelman Library (the general library of the University), in the Jacob Burns Law Library, and in the Paul Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library, contain some two million volumes. University appropriations supplemented by endowments and gifts provide research materials in the social sciences, the humanities, the sciences, and business. Gifts from many sources have enriched the collections, including a large National Endowment for the Humanities grant to strengthen the University's humanities holdings. The libraries hold over 18,000 serials.

Students, faculty, and staff of The George Washington University (except medical and law students) may borrow directly from the main campus libraries of six other academic institutions in the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC). Students may also obtain books and journal articles on interlibrary loan from other libraries in the area and throughout the United States.

ALADIN is the electronic library resource of WRLC and contains the combined on-line catalog of the seven member universities with more than 4.3 million records, as well as a rich array of electronic databases, indexes, and full texts. ALADIN can be accessed from numerous computers in the libraries as well as remotely from on and offcampus.

Information concerning the use of the libraries may be obtained from the GW Information System, Gelman home page, and at library service desks. Individual and class instruction in the use of the library and orientation to library facilities are given by librarians upon request as well as through print, media, and computer-assisted instruction. The libraries strive to fulfill the curricular and research needs and interests of the students. Through computerized searches of bibliographic databases, students identify and locate desired research materials not easily found through more traditional methods. The staff assists all members of the University in using the rich resources of the DC area and the unusual opportunities they offer for extensive research.

Gelman Library
2130 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20052
(202) 994-6845
<https://library.gwu.edu/>

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Additional Contact Information

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences: Graduate Student Services

801 22nd Street, NW

Phillips 118

Phone: (202) 994-6210

<https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-students>

Student Services Hub

Student Financial Assistance, Student Accounts, Cashier, Registrar

800 21st Street, NW

University Student Center, Ground Floor

Phone: (202) 994-9000

<https://studentserviceshub.gwu.edu/>

Financial Assistance: finaid@gwu.edu

Registrar: registrar@gwu.edu

Student Accounts: sao@gwu.edu

Disability Support Services: dss@gwu.edu

Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships

1922 F St NW

Suite 421

Washington DC, 20052

Phone: (202) 994-6822

Email: gradfell@gwu.edu

www.gwu.edu/~fellows

Division of Student Affairs

800 21st Street, NW Suite 204

Phone: (202) 994-6555

<https://studentlife.gwu.edu/>

GWorld

University ID card, dining services

800 21st Street, NW

Lower level, G05

Phone: (202) 994-1795

<https://gworld.gwu.edu/>

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

International Services Office (ISO)

2127 G Street NW

Phone: (202) 994-4777

<https://internationalservices.gwu.edu/>

GW Information Technology

Phone: (202) 994-4948

<https://it.gwu.edu/>

Lerner Health & Wellness Center

2301 G Street NW

Phone: (202) 994-1532

<https://campusrecreation.gwu.edu/>

Multicultural Student Services Center

800 21st Street, NW

Fifth Floor East

Phone: (202) 994- 6772

<https://mssc.gwu.edu>

Transportation and Logistics Services

Phone: (202) 994- PARK (7275)

<https://transportation.gwu.edu/>

Schedule of Classes

<https://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/>

Student Health Service

University Student Center, Ground Floor

800 21st Street, NW

Phone: (202) 994-5300

<https://healthcenter.gwu.edu/>

Center for Interfaith and Spiritual Life

University Student Center

Phone: (571) 553 2482

Email: cisl@gwu.edu

Gelman Library

2130 H Street, NW

Learning Commons Suite 221

Phone: (202) 994-3765

<https://writingcenter.gwu.edu/>

TRACHTENBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Other Online Resources

GWeb: Course Registration	http://banweb.gwu.edu
Blackboard	http://blackboard.gwu.edu/
GWorld Student ID Card	http://gworld.gwu.edu/
MyGWU	https://my.gwu.edu/
University Directory	http://my.gwu.edu/mod/directory
Public Transportation (Metro)	www.wmata.com

University Policy on Equal Opportunity

The university is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) employer committed to maintaining a non-discriminatory, harassment-free, diverse work and education environment. The university does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics or on any other basis prohibited by applicable law in any of its programs, activities, or employment practices. For more information on this policy and its purpose, please read the [Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement \(PDF\)](#).

Inquiries may also be directed to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or the applicable state or local agency (for example, the D.C. Office of Human Rights).

To request disability accommodations, students should contact the Office of Disability Support Services at (202) 994-8250 or dss@gwu.edu. Employees and other members of the university community should contact the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Human Resources Policy Compliance at (202) 994-1393 or eeo@gwu.edu.

This handbook is offered as an aid to advising and planning by students and faculty advisors. The MPA, MPP, and ESP/MA programs are governed by the rules of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences and The George Washington University. Students are responsible for consulting their program director, the Columbian College Graduate Student Handbook, and the University Bulletin. For official statement of applicable policies, the University Bulletin may be found at <http://www.gwu.edu/~bulletin> and the Columbian College's Handbook at <https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-students>.

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