

REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)

(See also General Regulations)

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to the University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

Admission requirements

MPA 1. To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Public Administration a candidate

- (a) shall comply with the General Regulations;
- (b) shall hold
 - (i) a Bachelor's degree with honours of this University; or
 - (ii) another qualification of equivalent standard from this University or from another University or comparable institution accepted for this purpose; and
- (c) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

MPA 1A. A candidate who does not hold a Bachelor's degree with honours of this University or another qualification of equivalent standard may in exceptional circumstances be permitted to register if he demonstrates adequate preparation for studies at this level and satisfies the examiners in a qualifying examination.

Qualifying examination

- MPA 2. (a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidate's formal academic ability or his ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent.
- (b) A candidate who is required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until he has satisfied the examiners in the examination.
-

Award of degree

- MPA 3. To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Public Administration a candidate
- (a) shall comply with General Regulations; and
 - (b) shall complete the curriculum and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below.
-

Length of curriculum

MPA 4. The curriculum shall extend over two academic years of part-time study and shall include written examinations held in accordance with the regulations and syllabuses set out below.

Completion of curriculum

- MPA 5. To complete the curriculum, a candidate
- (a) shall follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed written work;
 - (b) shall complete and present a satisfactory dissertation on a subject within his approved field of study; and
 - (c) shall satisfy the examiners in all prescribed courses and in any prescribed form of examination.
-

Dissertation

MPA 6. The title of the dissertation shall be submitted for approval before the commencement of the second semester of the academic year in which the teaching programme ends and the dissertation shall be presented not later than two months before the end of the final academic year of study; the candidate shall submit a statement that the dissertation represents his own work (or in the case of conjoint work, a statement countersigned by his co-worker, which shows his share of the work) undertaken after registration as a candidate for the degree.

Examinations

MPA 7. An assessment of the candidate's coursework during his studies may be taken into account in determining the candidate's result in each written examination paper; or, where so prescribed in the syllabuses, may constitute the examination of one or more courses.

- MPA 8. A candidate who has failed to satisfy the examiners at his first attempt in not more than half of the number of courses to be examined, whether by means of written examination papers or coursework assessment, during any of the academic years of study, may be permitted
- (a) to present himself for re-examination in the course or courses of failure, with or without repeating any part of the curriculum; or
 - (b) to repeat a year of the curriculum and present himself for examination in the courses prescribed for the repeated year.

MPA 9. A candidate who has failed to present a satisfactory dissertation may be permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation within a specified period.

MPA 10. A candidate who is unable because of his illness to be present for one or more papers in any written examination may apply for permission to present himself at a supplementary examination to be held before the beginning of the following academic year. Any such application shall be made on the form prescribed within two weeks of the first day of the candidate's absence from the examination.

- MPA 11. A candidate who
- (a) is not permitted to present himself for re-examination in any written paper or any course examined by means of coursework assessment in which he has failed to satisfy the examiners and is not permitted to repeat a year of the curriculum under Regulation MPA 8; or
 - (b) has failed to satisfy the examiners in any written paper or any course examined by means of coursework assessment at a second attempt; or
 - (c) is not permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation; or
 - (d) has failed to submit a satisfactory new or revised dissertation under the provision of Regulation MPA 9
- may be required to discontinue his studies.

Examination results

MPA 12. At the conclusion of the examination, and after presentation of the dissertations, a pass list shall be published. A candidate who has shown exceptional merit at the whole examination may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidate's degree diploma.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

A. PURPOSE AND PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The degree is designed primarily for employees in public sector and subvented organizations who wish to extend their academic knowledge in the field of public administration. It is offered on a part-time basis over two academic years. To receive the award of Master of Public Administration, a candidate must complete eight courses and a dissertation. The eight courses include two compulsory courses, at least four core courses, and two courses from the lists of core courses and elective courses. In the first year of study, a candidate must satisfy the examiners in compulsory course POLI7002 and three other courses. In the second year of study, a candidate must satisfy the examiners in compulsory course POLI8017 and three other courses.

Compulsory Course List:

POLI7002.	Public administration: scope and issues
POLI8017.	Workshop in public affairs

Core Course List:

POLI7001.	Human resource management
POLI7003.	Public policy: issues and approaches
POLI7004.	Public management reform
POLI8003.	Financial management
POLI8008.	Public administration in China
POLI8009.	Policy design and analysis

Elective Course List:

POLI8001.	Bureaucracy and the public
POLI8002.	Ethics and public affairs
POLI8004.	Government and law
POLI8005.	Government and the economy
POLI8006.	Policy-making in China
POLI8007.	Policy problems in Hong Kong
POLI8010.	The state and urban policy
POLI8011.	A selected topic in public policy
POLI8014.	NGOs and governance
POLI8018.	Management information systems
POLI8019.	Comparative public administration reform
POLI8020.	Administrative research and programme evaluation
POLI8021.	Organizational theory and management

The compulsory and core courses will be offered every year. The elective courses listed above will not necessarily be offered every year; from time to time, depending on the exigencies of staffing, additional courses may be offered while the above courses may be offered in different years of study. Candidates should consult the Department to find out which courses are being offered in any one year.

With regard to the dissertation, individual candidates are to select in consultation with relevant staff of the Department suitable topics to research and write on.

A final mark for each course will be determined by taking into consideration the student's coursework performance which will account for up to 40-60% of the final mark except where specified otherwise.

B. SYLLABUSES

POLI7001. Human resource management

The course examines the policies and practices of HRM in the public sector in Hong Kong from a comparative perspective. Specific topics include: staffing, training and development, performance management, and staff relations in the Hong Kong government. The course also reviews recent HRM developments in the public sector in China and overseas.

POLI7002. Public administration: scope and issues

This course provides an introduction to the study of public administration in the modern state. It does this by focusing on the interdependent and changing nature of the state, market and civil society. Various perspectives are adopted concerning work arrangements, legal-structural configurations, and policy dynamics. These perspectives have both historical and current significance. They are supported with reference to relevant ideas and theories, as well as to actual developments in Hong Kong and elsewhere.

POLI7003. Public policy: issues and approaches

This course introduces students to the study of public policy by reviewing the main theoretical approaches in the field and examining key policy issues in Hong Kong. The course will cover three main areas: (a) the basic concepts used in analyzing the policy process and the political and institutional contexts of policy making; (b) the major theoretical approaches to the study of policy making, policy implementation and evaluation and (c) case studies of important policy issues in Hong Kong.

POLI7004. Public management reform

Over the last 10-15 years, established systems of public management have been subject to widespread and often quite radical reform. This has involved the adoption of various strategies of decentralisation, corporatisation and privatisation, resulting in numerous mixes of public and private activity in which partnerships, contracts and other means of forging relationships are of considerable significance. Such strategies have far-reaching consequences for the governance of modern society. They are examined in this course from an international and comparative perspective.

POLI8001. Bureaucracy and the public

Government is an instrument of the public for acting collectively. In the age of New Public Management, however, the distinctiveness and the identity of the “public” seem to have been largely lost. This course seeks to (1) “rediscover the public” in public administration by evaluating the plausible conceptions of the public in relation to the bureaucracy as, for example, customers, constituents, rational choosers of public services, and citizens; and (2) consider institutional design to strengthen collective capacities for achieving public purposes through public administration.

POLI8002. Ethics and public affairs

This course focuses on the normative aspects of public policy and public administration. Using concepts and arguments which are mainly derived from moral philosophy, the course examines the ethical justifications for, and the moral implications of, the policy choices and conduct of public officials. The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the ethical basis of public policies. The second part is a study of public service morality. Instead of providing straightforward prescriptive answers, the course aims at highlighting the moral complexities of modern political and administrative life.

POLI8003. Financial management

This course examines the nature, processes, causes and effects of budgeting as a fiscal instrument to enhance economic growth, as a mechanism for the allocation of scarce resources, and as a management tool for executive planning and financial control.

POLI8004. Government and law

This course examines selected aspects of the provinces, processes and products of constitutional, statutory and contractual decision-making in government. Topics include: the nature and significance of constitutional and political structures, rights and obligations, with reference especially to the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights; the means by which statutes and ordinances are created and interpreted; the exercise of legal power in the form of a right to impose requirements, levy fees, determine entitlements, and enter into contracts; and the need for decisions and action to be subject to various forms of review.

POLI8005. Government and the economy

The course surveys the objectives pursued by government in managing the economy, the means employed in pursuit of those objectives, and theories concerning government's economic behaviour.

POLI8006. Policy-making in China

This course focuses on the public policy-making system in China and includes an examination of policy-making in specific sectoral areas, such as industry, agriculture and foreign policy.

POLI8007. Policy problems in Hong Kong

This course concentrates on the policy-making process in Hong Kong, with particular reference to pressure groups, public opinion and the allocation of resources. Use is made of case studies of the formulation, implementation and effects of economic and social policies.

POLI8008. Public administration in China

This course examines the context of public administration in contemporary China; party and state institutions; public personnel management; and the formulation and implementation of public policy. Assessment: 100% coursework.

POLI8009. Policy design and analysis

This course has two focal points. The first is on policy design and, in particular, on the relevance and application of institutional analysis to the design of policy options. A basic assumption is that policy analysis is largely a matter of problem-solving; therefore, the design of problem-solving mechanisms and procedures affects the extent to which problems are coped with. The other focus of the course is on various tools and techniques of policy determination and evaluation.

POLI8010. The state and urban policy

This course focuses on the role of the state in the urban environment. Theories of the state and specific social planning issues are discussed, as are the social, political and economic constraints on the formulation and implementation of urban policy.

POLI8011. A selected topic in public policy

This course concentrates on advanced topics in public policy and is offered from time to time as resources permit.

POLI8012. Dissertation

The dissertation is a core part of the M.P.A. degree. A dissertation topic is selected in consultation with relevant staff of the Department by the end of the first semester of the first year. The dissertation is then researched and written over the next 18 months and submitted for examination by 30 June of the second year of study. (100% coursework)

POLI8014. NGOs and governance

This course examines the relationships between and among the state, the market and civil society with particular reference to the work of those not-for-profit organizations and associations which are normally referred to as NGOs. It focuses on the legal-structural dimensions of NGOs and the ways in which they operate in the production, provision, ownership, regulation and facilitation of various goods and services. It recognizes that the activities of NGOs are frequently central to the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policies in both domestic and international arenas.

POLI8017. Workshop in public affairs

This course adopts an internationally-oriented, hands-on approach to the analysis of selected critical topics in modern governance and the management of public affairs. The topics will include, for example: risk management and the management of crises and disasters; the management of the environment through the adoption of various command, compliance and incentive based systems of regulation and enforcement; the facilitation and regulation of international trade in an era of WTO expansion; and the changing nature of public enterprise and associated strategies of privatization. Distinguished visiting scholars will make a significant contribution to the offering of this course. (100% coursework)

POLI8018. Management information systems

The course examines key principles and practices of information systems and a range of analytical approaches concerning the needs of modern management. Topics include: the organizational foundations of information systems and the management of information resources; different types of computer-based information systems and decision support tools; and research opportunities and analytical potential in e-management and e-government.

POLI8019. Comparative public administration reform

Reform of public administration in many countries is increasingly becoming an important instrument for achieving policy goals. Different countries, however, take different approaches to reforming their public sectors. A comparative analysis of reform directions allows us a better understanding of governance systems internationally. The course will examine the institutional arrangements and relational factors between civil service, politicians, and civil society in a selected number of countries.

POLI8020. Administrative research and programme evaluation

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of methods of social inquiry employed in pursuing research projects in academic – including at dissertation level -- and policy settings. Both the conceptual and empirical dimensions of the subject are explored. On the empirical side, considerable attention is accorded to qualitative methods which feature prominently in administrative research. The policy-related component is focused on methods of public programme evaluation commonly relied upon to determine the need for government intervention and its effectiveness.

POLI8021. Organization theory and management

This course will examine the fundamental theories of (i) organizational behaviors; (ii) organizational structures; (iii) decision making processes; and (iv) organizational management with particular emphasis on public organizations. The objectives of this course include (i) how each theory explains and predicts the behavior of organizations and individuals; (ii) how organizational structures and processes affect organizational effectiveness; (iii) how organizations interact with their environments in the course of generating decisions that influence political, economic, and social outcomes; and (iv) how organizations can improve their managerial performance. To substantiate the validity of theories, emphasis is placed on the application of theory to various organizational settings including public and nonprofit organizations, and the local, state and federal levels of bureaucracies. At the end of the course, students will have obtained the ability to develop critical perspectives on the modus operandi of organizations and to formulate problem-solving mechanisms under complex decision-making situations.

Additional Elective Options

Subject to departmental approval, a candidate may select no more than two elective courses from among the following:

All courses (except compulsory ones) from Master of International and Public Affairs programme

(offered by the Department of Politics and Public Administration)

SOCI7001. Criminal justice: process and politics

SOCI8003. Law and society

(offered by the Department of Sociology)

SOWK6016. Comparative social administration

SOWK6134. Current social policy issues

(offered by the Department of Social Work and Social Administration)

URBP6130. Methods and techniques in transport planning

URBP6131. Transport policy and planning

(offered by the Centre of Urban Planning and Environmental Management)