

# **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**

**MPA1** 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.

**MPA1A** 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**

- MPA2**
- (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**

- MPA3** 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**

**MPA4** The curriculum shall extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study and shall include written examinations held in accordance with the regulations and syllabuses set out below.

- MPA5** 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 or capstone project 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 and Capstone Project**

**MPA6** A candidate shall complete a dissertation or capstone project in accordance with the regulations set out in the MPA. Programme. The title of dissertation or capstone project shall be submitted for approval by 31 January of the final academic year of study and the dissertation or capstone project shall be submitted by not later than 31 July of the final academic year of study. The candidate shall submit a statement that the dissertation or capstone project represents his own work after registration as a candidate for the degree.

---

### **Examinations**

**MPA7** 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.

**MPA8** 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.

**MPA9** A candidate who has failed to present a satisfactory dissertation or capstone project may be permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation or capstone project within a specified period.

**MPA10** 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.

**MPA11** 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 capstone project ; or
- (d) has failed to submit a satisfactory new or revised dissertation or capstone project under the provision of Regulation MPA 9

may be required to discontinue his studies.

---

### **Examination results**

**MPA12** A list of candidates who have successfully completed all the degree requirements and are to be awarded the Master of Public Administration shall be published. Candidates who have shown exceptional merit at the whole examination may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diplomas.

# SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)

---

## 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. To receive the award of Master of Public Administration, a candidate must complete eight courses and a dissertation or capstone project. The eight courses include four compulsory courses, and four courses from the list of elective courses. In each semester, a full-time candidate shall enrol in not more than four courses and a part-time candidate shall enrol in not more than two courses. In the first semester of study, a candidate must satisfy the examiners in compulsory courses POLI7002 and POLI8027. In the second semester of the final academic year of study, a candidate must satisfy the examiners in compulsory courses POLI8017 and POLI8026.

### Compulsory Course List:

POLI7002	Public administration: scope and issues
POLI8017	Workshop in public affairs
POLI8026	Workshop in managerial skills
POLI8027	Public administration in Hong Kong
POLI8012	Dissertation <u>OR</u>
POLI8028	Capstone project

### Elective Course List:

POLI7001	Human resource management
POLI7003	Public policy: issues and approaches
POLI7004	Public management reform
POLI8001	Bureaucracy and the public
POLI8002	Ethics and public affairs
POLI8003	Financial management
POLI8004	Government and law
POLI8005	Government and the economy
POLI8006	Policy-making in China
POLI8007	Policy problems in Hong Kong
POLI8008	Public administration in China
POLI8009	Policy design and analysis
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
POLI8022	Comparative public policy
POLI8023	A selected topic in public management
POLI8024	China's governance in the reform era
POLI8025	Public administration in action
POLI8029	Non-profit management

The compulsory 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 or capstone project, individual candidates are to select in consultation with relevant staff of the Department suitable topics to research and write on.

---

## **B. SYLLABUSES**

### **POLI7001 Human resource management**

This course addresses public service human resource management in and beyond Hong Kong from a variety of perspectives. It appreciates the key significance of aligning people, systems and action in government and governance. The alignments are forged within contexts and traditions and, more specifically, are bound by laws, policies and practices. They involve the appointment, promotion, motivation, remuneration and performance of people, subject to leadership, change and reform. Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

### **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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

### **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. Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination

---

### **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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

### **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.  
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

**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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

---

**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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

**POLI8004 Government and law**

This course examines the legal regulation of governmental powers at the constitutional and administrative levels. Topics include: the constitutional development of Hong Kong under ‘One Country Two Systems’ and the Basic Law; principles of constitutional and legal interpretation; constitutional protection of human rights under the Basic Law and the Bill of Rights; the nature of judicial review of administrative actions; exercise of discretionary powers by administrative officials; principles of judicial review and their application in actual cases.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

**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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

**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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

**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.

Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination

**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 is a “how to” course, focusing on conceptual and analytical skills and techniques required for understanding, and suggesting solutions to, policy problems. It examines four major components of public policy analysis – problem definition, policy design, policy assessment, and policy argumentation. Particular attention will be given to policy design, and the relevance and application of institutional analysis to the design of policy options.  
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

**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.  
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

**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.  
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

**POLI8012      Dissertation**

The dissertation presents the results of a student’s research which demonstrates a sound understanding of the field of study and appropriate research methods. A dissertation topic is selected in consultation with relevant teaching staff of the Department by 31 January of the final academic year of study. The dissertation is then researched and written and submitted for examination by 31 July of the final academic year of study.  
Assessment: 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.  
Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination

### **POLI8017      Workshop in public affairs**

This course provides an opportunity for students to learn the latest developments in the study of public affairs in a workshop format emphasizing intensive learning, hands-on training, as well as active participation of the students. Distinguished visiting scholars will also be invited to contribute to the teaching of this workshop. The topics to be covered may vary each year, but they will cover critical issues in governance and the management of public affairs that form the knowledge base necessary for our students to become effective public managers in an ever-changing environment. These topics can also cut across the boundaries of different subfields in public administration and policy, such as policy process, policy analysis, public management, organization theory, nonprofit management, public budgeting and finance, and program evaluation.

Assessment: 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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

### **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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

### **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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

### **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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

### **POLI8022      Comparative public policy**

This course explores public policy-making as both a political process and a problem-solving process. Public policy is often a chaotic confluence of science, politics, and economics represented by diverse actors. Government, civil society and markets all have roles to play in the formulation and implementation of public policy. This course seeks to critically investigate and compare the ways in which policy problems are addressed in different countries (e.g., how actors interact in defining problems, setting goals and prescribing solutions, etc.). In so doing, we will develop an understanding of how and why policy problems persist, as well as the policy instruments and institutions that have evolved in response.

Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination

---

### **POLI8023      A selected topic in public management**

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

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

### **POLI8024      China's governance in the reform era**

In spite of China's sustained economic growth since 1978, the Chinese government is still coping with the many legacies of the socialist system during its transition to a more marketized economy and affluent society. China's opening up to the outside world and its growing integration with the world economy further pose new challenges in its pursuit of political order amid rapid social and economic transformation. This course aims to analyze the key issues shaping the governance of China during the reform era. After surveying the major changes of the Chinese political and administrative systems since 1978, this course will examine a set of institutional and policy challenges critical to China's governance, such as leadership succession, civil service and administrative reforms, central-local relations, uneven regional development, state-society relations, social inequality, globalization and the growing integration between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

### **POLI8025      Public administration in action**

This course offers a critical analysis of public administration in Hong Kong, with particular reference to the introduction and impending expansion of the Principal Official Accountability System. It will examine the principles of public governance, the unique features of the HKSAR Government including its relations with the Mainland authorities and its participation in regional and international affairs. It will also look at the strengths of, and the challenges faced by, the government and the public service, including the Administrative Service. The primary focus of the course is to examine and analyze policy issues from a practical perspective. Current events and policy topics that are of major relevance to public governance will be selected for analysis and discussion in each session.

Assessment: 100% coursework



## **POLI8026      Workshop in managerial skills**

The purpose of the course is to enable students to develop practical managerial skills in public administration, including the skills required for handling the media, harnessing the civil society, coping with issues of public accountability, managing crises, and providing leadership in the departmental context. Distinguished practitioners, in not only the public sector but also the nonprofit, quasi-governmental, and private sectors, of the various skills identified as crucial to a successful public manager in the current Hong Kong context will be invited to share their experiences with the students. Students will be required to familiarize themselves with relevant literatures concerning particular managerial issues, and to compare and contrast the theory and the practice of managing these issues in public organizations. Through active participation and interaction, students will acquire the ability and the experience of applying what they have learnt in the classroom to the real world context.

Assessment: 100% coursework

---

## **POLI8027      Public administration in Hong Kong**

This course will provide an overview of some of the major issues in public administration and public policy in Hong Kong. Topics that will be covered include: the public administrative system of Hong Kong, the budgetary system and public financial policy, especially how they prescribe the contexts for public policymaking, ministerialization and its impact on executive leadership and the relationship between politics and administration, the recent trends of public sector reform and alternative modes of service delivery, especially the role of the nonprofit sector, and local governance and civic engagement.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

---

## **POLI8028      Capstone Project**

The Capstone Project in the Master of Public Administration is a group-based learning-in-action project. It addresses and proposes possible solutions to a contemporary issue in public administration in Hong Kong. Its underlying purpose is to ensure that students grasp the essentials of applied research and analysis in a selected area of public affairs.

Each project is undertaken by a group of 4 or 5 students. Project supervision is provided by a member of staff in the Department of Politics and Public Administration.

The issue addressed in the project could be an issue identified by a government or non-government organisation in consultation with the project supervisor and approved by the Director of the MPA. Where this is the case, the organisation essentially hosts the project, providing support to the group by facilitating access to relevant people and information.

Alternatively, the issue could be one selected by the group in consultation with the project supervisor and approved by the Director of the MPA.

Each group is to work on its project throughout the final year of the MPA programme.

Assessment: 100% coursework

---

## **POLI8029      Non-profit management**

This course will help students to advance students' understanding of nonprofit management and how government could work with nonprofits in carrying out public policy or delivering public services. It will not only draw upon theories advanced by the scholarly community, but also provide case studies for in-depth analysis of key themes in nonprofit management, such as legal framework and institutional environment, governance, public and nonprofit partnership, accountability, contracting, strategic planning, and leadership.

Assessment: 100% coursework

### **Additional Elective Option**

Subject to departmental approval, a candidate may select no more than one course from the core and elective course lists of Master of International and Public Affairs (MIPA) programme offered by the Department of Politics and Public Administration. The course from MIPA will be counted as an MPA elective.

---