

# **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.

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## **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.

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## **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.
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## **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.
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## **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.
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### **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.

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### **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.

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## **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.

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

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## 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 courses*

Candidates shall complete all courses from the following list.

|          |   |
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| POLI7002 | Public administration: scope and issues |
| POLI8017 | Workshop in public affairs              |
| POLI8026 | Workshop in managerial skills           |
| POLI8027 | Public administration in Hong Kong      |

### *Dissertation or Capstone project*

Candidates shall complete either Dissertation or Capstone project.

|          |                  |
|----------|------------------|
| POLI8012 | Dissertation     |
| POLI8028 | Capstone project |

### *Elective courses*

Candidates shall complete 3 or 4 courses from the following list.

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| 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                       |
| 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                            |

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.

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.

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

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### ***Compulsory courses***

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#### **POLI7002      Public administration: scope and issues**

This course provides an introduction to the study of public administration in the modern state, focusing on the interdependent and changing nature of the state, market and civil society. Perspectives include work arrangements, legal-structural configurations, and policy dynamics of both historical and current significance.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

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

This course introduces 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 be invited to teach this workshop. Topics to be covered may vary each year, and may cut across the boundaries of different subfields in public administration and policy.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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#### **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 civil society, coping with issues of public accountability, managing crises, and providing leadership in the departmental context. Distinguished practitioners will be invited to share their experiences with the students.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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#### **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 include: the public administrative system of Hong Kong; the budgetary system and public financial policy; 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. Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

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### *Dissertation or Capstone project*

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#### **POLI8012     Dissertation**

The dissertation presents the results of a student's research and should demonstrate 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

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#### **POLI8028     Capstone project**

The capstone project enables students to integrate what they have learned from the MPA programme and demonstrate their ability to analyze critical issues in public policy and management. Students will work in small groups to complete a research project. A topic is selected in consultation with relevant teaching staff by 31 January of the final academic year of study. The project is then researched, written and submitted for examination by 31 July of the final academic year of study.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### *Elective courses*

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#### **POLI7001     Human resource management**

This course examines the policies and practices of human resource management in Hong Kong from a comparative perspective. Specific topics include: staffing, training and development, performance management, and staff relations in Hong Kong government as well as recent developments in the public sector in China and abroad.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

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#### **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 covers three 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

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#### **POLI7004     Public management reform**

Over the last 10-15 years, established systems of public management have been subject to widespread and often 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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

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**POLI8001      Bureaucracy and the public**

In the age of New Public Management, 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; and (2) consider institutional design to strengthen collective capacities for achieving public purposes through public administration.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

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**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. Assessment: 100% coursework

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**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.

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**POLI8009      Policy design and analysis**

This course focuses 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.  
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

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**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

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**POLI8014      NGOs and governance**

This course examines the relationships between and among the state, 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.  
Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination

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**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 and management of information systems and resources; different types of computer-based information systems and decision support tools; and analytical potential in e-management and e-government.  
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

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**POLI8019      Comparative public administration reform**

Reform of public administration in many countries is increasingly becoming an important instrument for achieving policy goals. 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

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**POLI8020      Administrative research and programme evaluation**

This course provides an overview of methods of social inquiry employed in pursuing research projects in academic 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. 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

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**POLI8021      Organization theory and management**

This course examines the fundamental theories of (i) organizational behaviors; (ii) organizational structures; (iii) decision making processes; and (iv) organizational management with particular emphasis on public organizations. 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.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

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**POLI8022      Comparative public policy**

This course explores public policy-making as both a political process and a problem-solving process. It seeks to critically investigate and compare the ways in which policy problems are addressed in different countries. 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

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**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

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

This course aims to analyze the key issues shaping the governance of China during the reform era. It will examine the institutional and policy challenges critical to China's governance, such as leadership succession, civil service and administrative reforms, central-local relations, regional development, state-society relations, social inequality, globalization and the growing integration between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

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**POLI8025      Public administration in action**

This course offers a critical analysis of public administration in Hong Kong, with particular reference to the introduction and expansion of the Principal Official Accountability System. It examines 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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**POLI8029    Non-profit management**

This course will advance students' understanding of nonprofit management and how government could work with nonprofits in carrying out public policies or delivering public services. It will draw upon theories advanced by the scholarly community and 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

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