



College of Public Service

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **COLORADO SPRINGS**

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Fall 2026 – Summer 2027

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Campus Closure	719.255.3346	eprep@uccs.edu
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Excel Writing and Communication Center	719.255.4770	mlcenter@uccs.edu
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Office of Information Technology (OIT)	719.255.4357	oit@uccs.edu
International Student Services	719.255.7218	international@uccs.edu
Kraemer Family Library	719.255.3296	circdesk@uccs.edu
Parking and Transportation	719.255.3528	parking@uccs.edu
Registrar (Records & Registration)	719.255.3361	admrec@uccs.edu
Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center	719.255.4444	hlthcntr@uccs.edu
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CONTACTS	ii
Department Chair and Program Director	ii
Faculty	ii
Staff Contacts	ii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of Handbook	1
The College of Public Service	1
College of Public Service Mission Statement.....	2
The Master of Public Administration Degree Program	2
Master of Public Administration Program Mission Statement.....	2
Accreditation	3
Administration	3
2. APPLICATION AND ADMISSION.....	4
Prerequisites	4
Application Materials	4
Admission Calendar	5
Admission Status	5
Readmission of Inactive, Withdrawn, and Suspended Students	5
3. MPA PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	6
General Requirements	6
Course Requirements	6
Core Courses	6
Elective courses.....	7
Internship Requirements	7
Independent Study.....	8
Culminating Experience: Capstone Seminar or Thesis	8
MPA Online	12
4. MPA/MASTER OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE (MCJ) DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	12
General Requirements	12
Course Requirements	13
MPA Core Courses	13

MCJ Core Courses	13
Research Methods	13
Elective courses.....	13
Internship/Field Study.....	14
Independent Study (elective credit only)	14
Culminating Experience	14
5. MPA/MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	14
General Requirements	15
Course Requirements	15
All courses are 3 credit hours unless otherwise noted.....	15
MPA Core Courses	15
MA in Sociology Core Courses	16
Research Methods	16
Elective courses.....	16
Internship (additional requirement for pre-service students)	17
Independent Study (elective credit only)	17
Culminating Experience	17
6. ACCELERATED MASTER’S PATHWAY (AMP) BA IN POLITICAL SCIENCE TO MPA DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	18
Eligibility Requirements	19
Application Process.....	19
Declare Intent	19
Application to the MPA program.....	20
General Requirements	20
Course Requirements	21
7. ACCELERATED GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT	22
Eligibility Requirements	22
Application Process.....	22
Declare Intent	22
Application to the Graduate Certificate Nonprofit Management program	23
General Requirements	23
Course Requirements	23
8. STUDENT SUCCESS	23

Advising	24
Student Resources	24
Financial Resources	25
Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society	26
Student Conduct and Response to Significant Situations or Events	26
Student Code of Conduct	27
Student Academic Ethics Code	27
CARE Team	27
9. ACADEMIC POLICIES	28
Governing Catalog	28
Time Limit	28
Typical Course Load	29
Grading Policies	29
Acceptable Grades	29
Retroactive Grade Changes	30
Standards of Performance	30
Incompletes, Withdrawals, and Repeating Courses	30
Incompletes	30
Drops and Withdrawals	31
Last Day to Withdraw	31
Repeating Courses	32
Transfer Credit	32
Application of Graduate Credit Earned at Another School or University	32
Credit Earned at UCCS CPS before Admission into MPA program	32
Course Validation Process	32
MPA Graduation Procedures	34
Student Academic Complaints and Appeals	34
MPA Student Academic Complaints and Appeals	34
Campus Level Student Code of Conduct and Academic Ethics Code Violations	36

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Handbook

Welcome to the Master of Public Administration program at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) College of Public Service.

This Handbook will acquaint you with the policies and procedures of the College of Public Service (CPS) and Master of Public Administration (MPA) program to facilitate your progress toward applying for the program and earning the Master of Public Administration degree. Please read this handbook carefully and consult your faculty advisor with any questions. It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the MPA and CPS Academic Policies as well as the [Graduate School Policies and Procedures](#). All students are bound by these requirements as stated in the [UCCS Academic Catalog](#) and expanded upon in this handbook.

Please be aware that the policies and procedures described here are subject to change and can be affected by changes in the policies of UCCS and the Graduate School. Check the [Academic Catalog](#) and [CPS's website](#) for the most up-to-date information.

The College of Public Service

The College of Public Service (CPS) provides undergraduate and graduate professional education to current and aspiring leaders in public administration and public service, public finance, public and non-profit management, social and public policy, criminology and criminal justice, homeland security, and social work. All CPS programs and degrees are connected through real-world application, theory, and partnership networks to help prepare students across a variety of public service sectors with the cutting-edge knowledge, skills, and experience needed to succeed.

The College of Public Service offers the following graduate degree programs:

- Master of Public Administration (MPA)
- Master of Criminal Justice (MPA)
- Master of Public Administration/Master of Criminal Justice (MPA/MPA) dual degree
- Master of Public Administration/Master of Arts in Sociology (MPA/MA SOC) dual degree
- Master of Social Work (MSW)

CPS graduate students can also pursue a more limited course of study, earning graduate certificates in:

- Criminal Justice
- Grant Writing, Management, and Program Evaluation

- Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- National Security Intelligence
- Nonprofit Management
- Public Administration Leadership and Management

All these certificates may be earned simultaneously with a degree program.

CPS undergraduate programs may be found on the [website](#). The Bachelor of Arts in Political Science to MPA Accelerated Master's Pathway (AMP) is described in Section 6 of this handbook.

College of Public Service Mission Statement

The mission of the UCCS College of Public Service is to improve the quality of life for people and their communities, here and abroad, through collaborative governance, public service innovation, community engagement, and research.

To accomplish this mission, we strive to

- Improve the quality of public, nonprofit, social work, criminal justice, and national security systems.
- Educate leaders to meet societal challenges with compassion, vision, analytic rigor, and practicality.
- Foster critical thinking and decision-making, effective and confident communication, creative problem-solving, knowledge management, and global citizenship.
- Create, build, and maintain connections with current, past and future students and all the communities we serve.
- Ground our decisions and actions in integrity, diversity, collaboration, and excellence.
- Support and model civil public discourse, citizenship, responsibility, and respect.

The Master of Public Administration Degree Program

The MPA program prepares students to take leadership roles in the public and nonprofit sectors. The multidisciplinary degree program is designed to provide graduate professional education for students interested in public service careers. The program also provides education and training for those already employed in the public or nonprofit sectors to enhance their skills and advance their careers. The MPA curriculum integrates theory and practice to give public and nonprofit managers and policy makers the knowledge and skills necessary to manage organizations, to formulate and implement policies, and to analyze policies and make recommendations for improvement.

Master of Public Administration Program Mission Statement

The Master of Public Administration program provides high-quality graduate education for current and future leaders in public, nonprofit, and private sector organizations, here and abroad, to prepare them for excellence in public service.

To accomplish this mission, we strive to meet the following goals:

- Advance public service through improving the quality leadership of public, nonprofit, national security, and emergency management and criminal justice systems.
- Teach students from diverse backgrounds to work collaboratively to meet societal challenges ethically, with compassion, vision, analytic rigor, and practicality.
- Foster strategic leadership skills: critical thinking and decision-making, effective communication, creative problem-solving, knowledge management, multi-sector understanding, and global citizenship.
- Support and model civil public discourse, citizenship, responsibility, and respect.
- Facilitate a process of lifelong learning that evolves and adapts to the changing nature of the field and continuous development of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required.

Accreditation

The UCCS MPA degree is accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration's (NASPAA) commission on Peer Review and Accreditation. Graduates of the MPA program are assumed to have the following competencies, as enumerated by NASPAA.

The ability:

- to lead and manage in the public interest;
- to participate in, and contribute to, the policy process;
- to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment;
- to articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective;
- to communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.

Administration

The MPA department chair is the key administrative officer for the program and serves as the central contact for questions regarding MPA policies. The MPA Committee provides faculty governance and guides the program. It is comprised of the MPA department chair, the MPA program director and core MPA faculty and staff. Additional input on the MPA program is provided by the MPA Student and Alumni Advisory Board.

2. APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

Prerequisites

Applicants should have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with grades sufficiently high to indicate ability to pursue graduate work, typically a cumulative undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 or better. MPA applicants may have an undergraduate degree in any field.

Application Materials

Detailed requirements for applying to the College of Public Service may be found on [CPS's website](#). In general, applicants must submit the following:

- [Online Graduate School Application](#)
- Written goal statement that includes 500-word responses to each of the following three prompts below. When writing your three application statements, please ensure you are personalizing each response and not using ChatGPT or other AI software to write the content and substance of your submission. Use of AI software is subject to automatic denial of one's application.
 - What are your career aspirations and how can your academic experience contribute to your career goals?
 - What is relevant in your professional or academic background that contributes to your anticipated success in your masters' experience?
 - Please provide an example of how your personal characteristics helped you overcome a specific challenge.
- \$60 non-refundable application fee
- Official transcripts from all previously attended institutions (both undergraduate and graduate level work) are required for admission review. Please view the Graduate School Admission's page for information on [how to send official transcripts](#).
- Current resume

The MPA program does not require a GRE test score for admission.

NOTE: Those applying to dual degree programs must meet the application and admission criteria for each program. Please note that required application materials may differ from those of the MPA program.

Current UCCS undergraduate students applying to the BA in Political Science to MPA Accelerated Master's Pathway (AMP) may have different application procedures and requirements. Please refer to Section 6 in this Handbook for information.

English as a second language (ESL) students may apply after obtaining a minimum score of 80 on the TOEFL or 6.5 on the IELTS exams. If the applicant's scores do not meet these minimums, the program may take additional steps to assess English proficiency.

Admission Calendar

Admission to the MPA program is made on a rolling basis, and applicants are notified as soon as an admission decision is made, approximately two weeks following the receipt of a completed application. Application deadlines are as follows:

MPA and MPA/MPA dual degree

- Fall semester: August 1 (Priority)
- Spring semester: December 1 (Priority)
- Summer semester: May 1 (Priority)

If you miss the deadline, please contact the College of Public Service at cps@uccs.edu.

MPA/MA in Sociology dual degree

- Fall semester: April 15
- Spring semester: November 15

Students who find they are not able to enroll during the semester for which they were accepted may defer enrollment for up to two semesters (including summer) by emailing CPS's Graduate Student Services Specialist at cps@uccs.edu.

Admission Status

When an applicant meets all the qualifications for admission, they are normally admitted with regular graduate status.

In cases where a prospective student shows potential but does not meet the minimum qualifications for admission, the program's admissions committee *may* decide to admit the student on provisional status. Such cases only occur when elements of the application suggest the student may perform successfully in the program. Those admitted on provisional status must complete one course from PADM 5001, 5002, or 5006 with a grade of B or higher within two semesters of admission to the College of Public Service. Failure to meet the provisional criteria will result in dismissal from the program.

Readmission of Inactive, Withdrawn, and Suspended Students

Occasionally, students find it necessary to interrupt their coursework for one or more semesters. An extended interruption, however, may result in the student being placed on inactive status. Students who do not enroll in any classes during the semester for which they were admitted and

students who have not registered for classes for three consecutive semesters (including summer), are placed on inactive status and will be required to reapply. Students who need to take a leave of absence from their program for one semester are required to complete a [Leave of Absence](#) form, available on the Graduate School website. If additional leave is needed, the student will be required to submit a new Leave of Absence form as leave is only approved one semester at a time.

A dismissed student is eligible to reapply for admission no sooner than one year after dismissal. Approval or rejection of this application rests with the MPA program director.

3. MPA PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The UCCS MPA is distinctive in that it may be acquired entirely online, through in-person and hybrid classes, or in combination. The majority of students take a combination of online, in-person, and hybrid courses during their MPA program. MPA faculty teach in multiple modalities and maintain equally rigorous expectations.

General Requirements

To earn an MPA degree, a student must:

- Complete a minimum of 36 credit hours of graduate coursework as outlined in the course requirements with a total grade-point average of B (3.0) or better;
- Complete an additional three credit hours of internship (if required); and
- Earn grades of B- or better in all courses, including the final capstone or thesis course(s) counted toward the degree.

Course Requirements

Core Courses

All MPA students must successfully complete the following required courses:

PADM 5001	Introduction to Public Administration and Public Service <i>Students are expected to complete PADM 5001 within the first two semesters of enrollment.</i>	3 credit hours
PADM 5002	Organizational Management and Behavior	3 credit hours
PADM 5003	Research and Analytic Methods <i>PADM 5003 should not be taken in the first semester of study.</i>	3 credit hours
PADM 5004	Budgeting and Finance	3 credit hours
PADM 5005	The Policy Process and Democracy	3 credit hours
PADM 5006	Ethics and Leadership	<u>3 credit hours</u>

Total: 18 credit hours

Course descriptions may be found in the [Academic Catalog](#).

Elective courses

Students must complete 12-15 credit hours of electives (number of hours depends on student's selection of Capstone or Thesis for their culminating experience. CPS offers a wide variety of electives. Some are offered on a routine basis; others may be a one-time offering.

Students may choose to focus these elective hours around an area based on their interests and career goals and/or earn one or more graduate certificates concurrently with the MPA degree. Available graduate certificates include: Nonprofit Management; Criminal Justice; National Security Intelligence; Homeland Security and Emergency Management; Grant Writing, Management, and Program Evaluation; and Public Administration Leadership and Management. Additional information on these certificate programs, including required courses, may be found on [the CPS website](#).

Where appropriate, students may include specialized courses offered by other UCCS departments and colleges of the university, with prior written approval of the MPA program director and in accordance with the transfer credit guidelines. Any master's-level course in the criminal justice, sociology, or social work department does not need permission from the MPA program director; however, students wanting to take sociology or social work courses may need to get permission from those departments prior to enrolling.

Internship Requirements

The MPA program includes professional experience among the requirements for degree completion. Pre-service students—those without at least one year of professional experience in a public administration-related field (e.g., government, nonprofit, national security, homeland security, or emergency management)—are required to complete a 3-credit internship course, bringing the total credit hours required for the degree to 39.

Students are notified upon admission whether an internship is required for completion of program requirements. Should a student gain at least one year of professional experience during their tenure in the program, they may submit the [Graduate Internship Waiver Request Form](#) that will be reviewed by the MPA Program Director.

Students must have completed at least 9 credit hours of coursework in the program to enroll in Internship. A minimum of 240 hours of supervised work is required to earn 3 hours of credit. Internships are graded as Pass/Fail.

PADM 6910 is not available for in-service students who are not required to complete an internship. Those in-service students who are interested in similar professional development

opportunities may be able to construct an Independent Study (PADM 9500), developing a plan tailored to meet their individual needs best.

Internship Guidelines

Internship guidelines are set forth in the [MPA Student Internship Handbook](#). Internships are designed to meet the needs of the student, host agency, and the MPA program. The work period may be for an academic semester or during the summer, and specific work schedules and student responsibilities are arranged with the internship agency before the internship starts. Internships may be either process or project-based and may be either paid or unpaid.

Internship Application and Administrative Procedures

Students should contact the MPA Internship Coordinator at least one semester prior to their planned enrollment to discuss internship intent, goals, and opportunities.

Students are responsible for identifying potential internships. The CPS office can facilitate this process, but final responsibility for securing an internship lies with the student. Students may initiate contact with organizations and may also contact their advisors and other faculty who may have expertise and contacts in the specific area of interest for suggestions concerning internships. However, students should not commit to placement before coordinating with the MPA Internship Coordinator. Permission numbers are required to enroll in the Internship course to ensure conditions have been met.

Independent Study

Students interested in pursuing a specific line of study or inquiry not covered through the regular course offerings may choose to take PADM 9500: Independent Study with a faculty member. Students should first consider what area of study they would like to pursue and discuss the topic with a willing faculty member who has expertise in the area. Pending faculty agreement, the student must submit the [Petition for Independent Study form](#). With faculty assistance, students then develop a course of study that meets the requirements of the University and CPS, as well as student needs. No more than six hours of independent study credit may apply toward MPA degree requirements.

Culminating Experience: Capstone Seminar or Thesis

Capstone Seminar

All MPA students, except those pursuing the thesis option, are required to complete PADM 5361: Capstone Seminar (3 credit hours). The Capstone Seminar is taken during the last semester of the student's degree program. **All core courses must be completed before the Capstone Seminar is taken.**

Capstone Seminar cannot be taken during the summer semester or transferred in from another school or university.

For capstone projects, students work with a client in a public or nonprofit agency to identify a problem and then, using the knowledge and skills they have gained in the program, carry out a project then write and present a paper to address the problem. Projects take many different forms including program evaluations, surveys and interviews, etc. The purpose of the course is to provide students with an opportunity to integrate what they have learned and apply their knowledge and skills to a real-world problem. Further, it provides the faculty with an opportunity to assess the student's achievement of MPA core competencies.

Students choosing to complete the Capstone Seminar should complete the steps below:

- Attend a Capstone Orientation:
 - Capstone orientation is held in both the fall and spring semesters and is a required component of the enrollment process. If you are unable to attend, you must contact a Capstone instructor listed on the course schedule to discuss alternative arrangements prior to completing the Capstone Checklist. It is essential that you attend the orientation in the semester prior to the one in which you plan to enroll in the Capstone Seminar.
- Request a Degree Audit:
 - After you have attended an orientation, the semester prior to your Capstone semester, you must then request a degree audit from the Graduate Student Services Specialist. You can email cps@uccs.edu to request your audit. Once your audit is complete you can proceed with your capstone checklist.
- Complete All Steps of the Capstone Checklist
 - You'll receive your Capstone Checklist once you attend the mandatory orientation, which will be held the semester prior to enrolling in Capstone, and your degree audit is approved. When your checklist is complete, including all reader signatures, please email the checklist to cps@uccs.edu.
 - Identify a problem and pre-plan your project with a partner agency for the Capstone project.
 - Obtain agreement from a CPS graduate faculty member to serve as a second reader on the Capstone project. For this to occur, you must present your Capstone project idea to your potential second reader and seek their input.
 - Work with your second reader to draft a proposal and assess the need for IRB approval.
 - If IRB approval is required, work with the Capstone Seminar instructor, in consultation with your second reader, to submit and IRB proposal for review prior to the start of the semester in which you will enroll in Capstone Seminar.
 - Submit evidence of CITI training completion.
 - Submit completed and signed Capstone Checklist to cps@uccs.edu.
- Register for Capstone Seminar

- After your checklist is received and your eligibility has been verified, you will be issued a permission number to enroll in the Capstone Seminar.

Capstone Readers

Each student's work on the capstone is guided by three readers. All three readers must ultimately approve the project before work commences.

The First Reader

The first reader is the instructor of record for the Capstone Seminar. That instructor's role is to guide the student in selecting a project and specifying its scope, to assist the student as needed in conducting the project, and to provide extensive feedback to the student on various drafts of the project.

The Second Reader

The second reader should be a CPS faculty member with subject matter expertise in the area of the project *and* who is *not* listed as the instructor of record for PADM 5361 for the semester in which the student is enrolled. If a full-time faculty member with subject-matter expertise is not available, students may select a CPS lecturer with subject-matter expertise in the area of the project with the approval of the Capstone primary instructor. The lecturer must have a current appointment to the graduate faculty.

The Third Reader

The third reader is the client, i.e., the representative of the organization for which the student is conducting the project.

Role of Readers

Although all readers' roles may overlap a little, each provides a different type of support to the student. The first reader will have the primary responsibility for supervising the completion of the students' projects. The first reader will provide instruction on expected content and will set deadlines for the semester. The first reader determines the students' grade but will seek input from other readers to determine the final grade.

The second reader, as a subject matter expert, provides individual guidance to the student on the topics of relevant literature, research methods, and data analysis.

The third reader serves to link the student with the client organization. This reader will orient the student to the organization and its needs and provide data, if available. They will also report on the utility and professionalism of the student's work for and with the organization.

Each of the readers work together to 1) approve the student's project, 2) comment on project drafts and approve the final project report, 3) attend and participate in the oral presentation of the project, and 4) evaluate the student's work.

Thesis Option

In PADM 6950: Master's Thesis, students conduct a comprehensive review of the theoretical and research literature in the subject area of their thesis and collect original data or analyze existing data in new ways. The thesis requires 6 credit hours taken over two semesters. Students should plan for the thesis to take two semesters, and with permission from the committee, one of those semesters can include a summer semester. The thesis option is available to MPA students who have achieved an exceptional academic record and who wish to pursue independent research in greater depth than would normally be possible in Capstone Seminar. It is suited for students who intend to pursue a PhD degree or to enter a research or policy environment upon completion of the MPA degree. There is no guarantee that a student will be allowed to peruse the thesis option.

Minimum eligibility requirements for pursuing a thesis include:

- Matriculation in the MPA program
- Successful completion of all core courses
- Overall GPA of 3.5 or higher
- Demonstrated ability to pursue research work, as evidenced by two submitted research papers developed in CPS courses or elsewhere
- Preliminary identification of a thesis topic or area of interest
- Agreement from a CPS faculty member to serve as the thesis committee chair along with two additional faculty members to serve on the thesis committee. Students are encouraged to identify their thesis chair and work with that faculty member to identify the two additional faculty committee members.
- Minor exceptions to the above criteria may be made in *exceptional* circumstances

A student desiring to pursue the thesis option should meet with their faculty advisor to establish eligibility under the above criteria. After establishing eligibility, the student should identify a willing faculty member to serve as the student's thesis chair. Once the thesis chair and student have confirmations from the full thesis committee (to include 2 additional faculty), the student will complete the [thesis application form](#). Once complete, the thesis application form should be submitted to cps@uccs.edu for review and approval. Upon approval, the student will be issued a permission number allowing them to register for thesis credits.

Although the formal procedures entail working through the faculty advisor, the student is encouraged to make informal contacts with appropriate subject-matter faculty to determine interest and availability.

MPA Online

Students may complete the MPA degree entirely through online classes, an option that may be attractive for students living outside of the local area, or for those who require more flexibility in taking courses. As with all degree programs, students need to plan carefully to ensure that they are able to finish their online degree in a timely fashion. Completing the degree completely online may increase the time of completion due to course availability. All students should work diligently with their faculty advisor to plan online coursework options. In addition, online education requires technology to connect with students, faculty, and other campus experiences. Please check the [UCCS Online Student Support webpage](#) for the latest technical requirements as well as links to online student services.

4. MPA/MASTER OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE (MCJ) DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The fields of public administration and criminal justice are closely connected. The MPA program equips students with the skills needed for leadership roles in public and nonprofit management and policy analysis, while the MCJ program prepares graduates to address criminal justice policy and practice. Together, these programs provide a comprehensive education that opens doors to diverse career opportunities in public, nonprofit, and private organizations requiring expertise in both management and criminal justice. Graduates may also pursue advanced research careers or further their graduate studies. Students take the cores of both programs and choose electives that best suit their career and personal goals, completing both degrees in 54 credit hours versus the 72 credit hours it would take to complete each degree separately.

General Requirements

To earn a dual MPA/MCJ degree, a student must:

- Complete a minimum of 54 credit hours of graduate coursework with a total grade-point average of B (3.0) or better, including:
 - 9 credit hours of MCJ core coursework in criminal justice
 - 15 credit hours of MPA core coursework
 - 3 hours of research methods (CRJU 5003)
 - Culminating experience of either 3 credit hours of capstone or 6 credit hours of thesis
 - 18-24 credit hours of electives (number of hours depends on the student's selection of Capstone or Thesis for their culminating experience and internship/field study requirements). A minimum of 6 elective credit hours must be in Criminal Justice, with the remaining hours chosen from CRJU and/or PADM elective courses.

- Complete 3 credit hours of internship/field study (if required)
- Receive a grade of B- (2.7) or better in all courses, including the final capstone or thesis course(s).
- No more than 9 credit hours of independent study.

Course Requirements

MPA Core Courses

PADM 5001	Introduction to Public Administration and Public Service <i>Students are expected to complete PADM 5001 within their first two semesters of enrollment.</i>	3 credit hours
PADM 5002	Organizational Management and Behavior	3 credit hours
PADM 5004	Budgeting and Finance	3 credit hours
PADM 5005	The Policy Process and Democracy	3 credit hours
PADM 5006	Ethics and Leadership	<u>3 credit hours</u>
Total:		15 credit hours

MCJ Core Courses

CRJU 5001	Criminal Justice Systems, Policy and Practice	3 credit hours
CRJU 5002	Criminological Theory	3 credit hours
CRJU 5410	Victim Studies	<u>3 credit hours</u>
Total:		9 credit hours

Research Methods

CRJU 5003	Research Methods	3 credit hours
<i>CRJU 5003 should not be taken in the first semester of study</i>		

Course descriptions may be found in the [Academic Catalog](#).

Elective courses

In addition to completing the required courses (and the 3-credit hour internship, if required), students must complete 18-24 credit hours of electives, depending upon choice of culminating experience. CPS offers a wide variety of electives. Some are offered on a routine basis; others may be a one-time offering.

A minimum of 6 elective hours must be in coursework taught by Criminal Justice faculty (CRJU courses). Available elective courses include a mixture of specialized criminal justice and/or public administration courses, workshops, and other formats. Students may choose to focus these elective hours around a particular area based on their interests and career goals. Where appropriate, students may include specialized courses offered by other departments and colleges of the University, with prior written approval of both program directors.

Internship/Field Study

Pre-service students—those without at least one year of professional experience in a criminal justice-related field or a public administration-related field (e.g., government, nonprofit, national security, homeland security, or emergency management)—are required to complete either **PADM 6910 Internship** or **CRJU 6910 Field Study in Criminal Justice**, which replaces one elective course. Student employment is not eligible to count as relevant work experience.

The student's need for an internship / field study is determined by the MPA and MCJ program directors at the time of admission; each student is notified of this decision in their admission letter. Students for whom an internship / field study is required should work with their advisor to find a placement that satisfies all requirements.

Students must have completed at least 9 credit hours of coursework to enroll in internship / field study. A minimum of 240 hours of supervised work is required to earn 3 hours of credit.

Should a student gain at least one year of professional experience during their tenure in the program, they may submit a **Graduate Internship Waiver Request Form** that will be reviewed by the MPA and MCJ program directors.

Please refer to the [MPA Internship Handbook](#) for further questions.

Independent Study (elective credit only)

Students interested in pursuing a specific line of study or inquiry not covered through the regular course offerings may choose to take PADM 9500 or CRJU 9500: Independent Study, with a willing member of the graduate faculty. Students should first consider what area of study they would like to pursue and discuss the topic with a faculty member who has expertise in the area. Students must submit the [Petition for Independent Study form](#). With faculty assistance, students then develop a course of study that meets the requirements of the University and CPS, as well as student needs.

No more than nine credit hours of independent study credit may apply towards the dual MPA/MCJ elective requirements.

Culminating Experience

Please see information regarding the Capstone and Thesis options under Section 3: MPA Program Requirements, Culminating Experience above.

5. MPA/MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The College of Public Service in collaboration with the College of Letters, Arts & Sciences offers a dual graduate degree in Public Administration and Sociology. The Master of Public

Administration (MPA) is a generalist degree designed to prepare students for a variety of positions in public and nonprofit management and policy analysis. The Master of Arts in Sociology (MA in Sociology) provides methodological and theoretical frameworks to transcend individual experience to understand social life and is guided by a vision of social justice. The Dual MPA and MA in Sociology offers students a strong foundation to advance public service, work collaboratively to meet social challenges, and better understand key social phenomena using multiple lenses. Graduates will be equipped to hold leadership positions in public and nonprofit programs designed to ameliorate important social problems.

Students enrolled in the dual MPA and MA in Sociology program complete both degrees simultaneously in 53 credit hours, instead of the 66 credit hours required if each degree is completed separately. Students complete foundation coursework in both disciplines and have the flexibility to customize their programs by choosing elective coursework in public administration and sociology that best suits their interests and career objectives. The culminating experience (e.g., capstone or thesis) is a collaboration between the two programs. Students without significant professional experience in public service must take an additional 3-credit-hour internship.

General Requirements

The dual degree program requires a minimum of 53 credit hours, including:

- 15 credit hours of Public Administration (PADM) core courses
- 4 credit hours of Sociology (SOC) core courses
- 7-8 hours of research methods course work from SOC
- 21-24 credit hours of PADM and SOC elective courses

Students enrolled in the dual MPA/MA in Sociology program must maintain academic standards for both programs:

- A grade point average of B (3.0 on a 4-point scale) or better is required for degree candidacy
- Grades of B- or better in all PADM courses
- Grades of B or better in all SOC courses

Course Requirements

All courses are 3 credit hours unless otherwise noted.

MPA Core Courses

PADM 5001	Introduction to Public Administration and Public Service <i>Students are expected to complete PADM 5001 within their first two semesters of enrollment.</i>	3 credit hours
PADM 5002	Organizational Management and Behavior	3 credit hours
PADM 5004	Budgeting and Finance	3 credit hours

PADM 5005	The Policy Process and Democracy	3 credit hours
PADM 5006	Ethics and Leadership	<u>3 credit hours</u>
Total:		15 credit hours

MA in Sociology Core Courses

SOC 5050	Proseminar in Sociology <i>SOC 5050 must be taken in the student's first fall semester.</i>	1 credit hour
SOC 5160	Social Theory II	<u>3 credit hours</u>
Total:		4 credit hours

Prerequisites – not counted toward degree requirements

Incoming graduate students who have not taken an undergraduate course in Social Theory are also required to take

SOC 5150 Social Theory I

(1 credit hour)

Incoming graduate students who have not taken an undergraduate course in Social Statistics are also required to take

SOC 5020 Social Statistics

(1 credit hour)

Research Methods

SOC 5070	Research Methods	4 credit hours
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And one of the following advanced methods courses:

SOC 5170	Advanced Statistics and Research	4 credit hours
SOC 5180	Community and Field Research (Ethnography)	3 credit hours
SOC 5550	Sociology of the Family	3 credit hours
SOC 5950	Inequality, Crime, and Justice	<u>3 credit hours</u>
Total:		7-8 credit hours

Course descriptions may be found in the [Academic Catalog](#).

Elective courses

Students complete 21-24 credit hours of electives (number of hours depends on student's selection of Capstone or Thesis for their culminating experience).

Elective courses include a mixture of specialized public administration and/or sociology courses, workshops, and other formats. Students may choose to focus these elective hours around a particular area based on their interests and career goals:

- At least 6 elective credit hours from PADM
- At least 6 elective credit hours from SOC
- Additional 9-12 elective credit hours will be selected from either PADM or SOC, depending on the student's interests as identified in their degree plan
- Transfer credits are not permissible.

Internship (additional requirement for pre-service students)

Students are determined to be “pre-service” or “in-service” by the MPA Program Director at the time of admission. Pre-service students—those without at least one year of professional work experience in a public administration field (e.g., government, nonprofit, national security, homeland security, or emergency management) – must complete PADM 6910 Internship for an additional 3 credit hours, bringing the total credit hours required for the MPA/MA SOC dual degree program to 56. In-service students have significant relevant work experience and are not eligible to take PADM 6910.

Should a student gain at least one year of professional experience during their tenure in the program, the student can submit the [Graduate Internship Waiver Request](#) form to an internship waiver.

Pre-service students must have completed at least 9 hours of coursework to enroll in an internship. A minimum of 240 hours of supervised work is required to earn 3 hours of credit. Internships are graded as Pass/Fail.

Internship guidelines are set forth in the [MPA Student Internship Information Handbook](#). Students should contact the MPA faculty internship coordinator at least one semester prior to their planned enrollment to discuss internship intent, goals, and opportunities.

Independent Study (elective credit only)

Students interested in pursuing a specific line of study or inquiry not covered through the regular course offerings may choose to take PADM 9500: Independent Study with a faculty member. Students should first consider what area of study they would like to pursue and discuss the topic with a willing faculty member who has expertise in the area. Students must submit the [Petition for Independent Study form](#). With faculty assistance, students then develop a course of study that meets the requirements of the University and CPS, as well as student needs. No more than 12 credit hours of independent study may count towards the dual MPA/MA in Sociology (a maximum of 6 credit hours taken under PADM 9500 and a maximum of 6 credit hours taken under SOC 9500).

Culminating Experience

Capstone Seminar

Please see information regarding the Capstone Seminar option under Section 3: MPA PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, Culminating Experience.

Thesis Option

In PADM 6950/SOC 7000, Master's Thesis students conduct a comprehensive review of the theoretical and research literature in the subject area of their thesis and collect original data or analyze existing data in new ways. The thesis requires 6 credit hours taken over two semesters.

The thesis option is available to Dual MPA/MA in Sociology students who have achieved an exceptional academic record and who wish to pursue independent research in greater depth than would normally be possible in the Capstone Seminar. It is suited for students who intend to pursue a PhD degree or to enter a research or policy environment upon completion of the Dual MPA/ MA in Sociology program.

Minimum eligibility requirements for pursuing a thesis include:

- Successful completion of all core courses
- Overall GPA of 3.5 or higher
- Demonstrated ability to pursue research work
- Preliminary identification of a thesis topic or area of interest
- Agreement from one public administration faculty member and one sociology faculty member to co-chair the thesis committee along with agreement from one additional public administration or sociology faculty member to serve as the third member of the thesis committee. Integration of faculty from both Sociology and Public Administration is required
- Students pursuing a Master's Thesis will take both PADM 6950 Master's Thesis (3 credit hours) and SOC 7000 Master's Thesis (3 credit hours), typically during the final two semesters of the program.
- Minor exceptions to the above criteria may be made in exceptional circumstances.

A student wishing to undertake the thesis option applies formally through their faculty advisor to establish eligibility under the above criteria. After establishing eligibility, the student should recruit three faculty members to serve on the student's thesis committee -- one public administration faculty member and one sociology faculty member to co-chair the committee and one public administration or sociology faculty member to serve as the third thesis committee member -- and then complete the [thesis application form](#). Before students are allowed to enroll in PADM 6950 or SOC 7000 Master's Thesis, they must complete the required approval processes for both the MPA and the MA in Sociology.

6. ACCELERATED MASTER'S PATHWAY (AMP) BA IN POLITICAL SCIENCE TO MPA DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The College of Public Service in collaboration with the College of Letters, Arts & Sciences offers a unique opportunity for highly qualified undergraduate Political Science majors to begin pursuing the Master of Public Administration (MPA) while simultaneously completing the Bachelor of Arts

(BA). Accelerated Master's Pathway (AMP) students may count up to 9 credit hours of eligible graduate-level Political Science courses toward both their BA and MPA degrees, allowing them to complete both degrees in an accelerated time frame.

The BA in Political Science enables students to understand and write about political and legal questions of governance of global, national, regional, and local significance. The Master of Public Administration prepares students to take leadership roles in the public and nonprofit sectors. The MPA degree is multidisciplinary and designed to provide graduate professional education for individuals who wish to prepare themselves for administrative and/or policy careers in public, nonprofit, national security intelligence, homeland security and emergency management, and criminal justice systems. The BA in Political Science to MPA AMP helps students cultivate self-awareness and understanding of their local, national, and global impact, and be prepared to participate effectively in a society that encompasses diverse political experiences, perspectives, and realities. Graduates will be prepared to take leadership roles in the public and nonprofit sectors.

Eligibility Requirements

Admission into the BA in Political Science to MPA AMP is competitive. Students must meet the following criteria:

Both current UCCS and new transfer students are eligible to apply after meeting the following criteria:

- Current UCCS student with junior class standing or higher who has completed at least 30 credit hours at UCCS
- Cumulative CU GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Declared Political Science major who has Completed at least 15 credit hours in the Political Science major
- Meet the standards and admissions requirements for the BA in Political Science and MPA programs, as outlined in the UCCS Academic Catalog (which may include higher standards than those listed above and/or additional criteria).
- Completion of a 1-page (double spaced, 1-inch margins) essay outlining the student's career goals.

Application Process

Declare Intent

The AMP student declaration process is described [on the Graduate School website](#). Interested students should meet with their undergraduate academic advisor, as well as contact the Political Science

Department Chair and MPA Program Director about eligibility and career goal fit before completing the [intent application](#). The intent application needs to be approved by both political science and public administration. After the intent application is approved, the student's undergraduate advisor will ensure a subplan is placed on the student's undergraduate account. Approval of the intent application means a student is *currently* eligible for the accelerated master's pathway. If the student continues to be eligible, they will be able to apply to the MPA program as an Accelerated Master's student during their final year in the BA in Political Science degree program. For students with a cumulative 3.5 GPA or higher, the MPA application is streamlined and applicants will only need to complete the writing prompts, as letters of recommendation and additional transcripts are not required.

- AMP students may start in Fall, Springs, or Summer semesters.
- Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. Applications are due at least one week prior to the semester start date.
- **Retroactive approval is not permissible.**

This intent application does not admit the student into the MPA graduate program.

Application to the MPA program

During the student's senior year, they can apply to the graduate program using the [online graduate school application](#) and supporting materials as detailed in Section 2 of this Handbook.

The application is streamlined for students with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher; these students need to complete the writing prompts and additional transcript submission is not required.

General Requirements

The BA in Political Science program requires completion of a minimum of 120 credit hours, including:

- A minimum of 36 credit hours in the discipline, of which 30 credit hours must be with a grade of C or better
- At least 21 credit hours must be in upper-division courses (3000+ level)
- All students must take an exit exam and complete a portfolio before graduation

To earn an MPA degree, a student must:

- Complete a minimum of 36 semester hours of graduate coursework with a total grade-point average of B (3.0) or better.
- Students without at least one year of professional experience in a public administration field (e.g., government, nonprofit, national security, homeland security, or emergency management) must complete an additional 3 credit hours of internship, bringing the total

number of required credit hours to 39. Student employment is not eligible to count as relevant work experience.

- Receive a grade of B- (2.7) or better in all courses, including the final capstone or thesis course(s).

Dual credit courses counting toward both the BA and MPA degrees must be from the approved list below; students must earn a grade of B or better in those courses.

Students accepted into the AMP pathway may apply to the Master of Public Administration in the final year of their BA in Political Science program.

Course Requirements

Please refer to the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science sections of the [Academic Catalog](#) for specific course requirements. The BA in Political Science to MPA AMP allows students to count up to 9 credit hours toward both the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and the Master of Public Administration degrees.

In order for credits to be double-counted, the following conditions must be met.

- Dual credit courses must be from among the following list of approved courses:

PSC 5025	Congressional Processes
PSC 5080	The U.S. Electoral Process
PSC 5230	United States in World Politics
PSC 5280	International Political Economy
PSC 5451	Environmental Law
PSC 5460	Administrative Law
PSC 5470	Constitutional Law
PSC 5480	Civil Rights and Liberties
- Dual credit courses must be completed with a B or better
- Dual credit courses must be taken for graduate credit (5000+ level)
- Students must be admitted to the AMP prior to taking the dual-counted courses.

Retroactive approval is not permissible.

9 credit hours of graduate level Political Science coursework subject to the above conditions will be counted toward the 12-15 credit hours of required electives for the MPA degree. **All other MPA requirements remain as described in Section 3 of this Handbook.**

7. ACCELERATED GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

Thriving nonprofit organizations are an essential component of community well-being. The Accelerated Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management provides the knowledge and skills to lead and manage nonprofits effectively. Aspiring nonprofit leaders will gain fundamental skills; those already in the field will expand their ability to engage in strategic decision-making; and nonprofit board members will gain knowledge to enhance their capacity to govern philanthropic innovation.

Eligibility Requirements

The Accelerated Graduate Certificate program allows high achieving students to pursue existing bachelor's and the Nonprofit Management Graduate Certificate program in an accelerated manner.

Both current UCCS and new transfer students are eligible to apply after meeting the following criteria:

- Current UCCS undergraduate student with junior or senior standing
- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Any declared major is eligible

Application Process

Declare Intent

The Accelerated Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management student declaration process is described on the [College of Public Service website](#). If the student meets the requirements outlined above, they should fill out the [declaration intent form](#) for review. *This intent form does not admit the student into the Nonprofit Management graduate certificate program.*

Juniors and seniors accepted to the Accelerated Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management take up to two of the four graduate-level certificate courses before completing their bachelor's degree program. The certificate courses taken as an undergraduate can count toward the bachelor's degree as general elective credit and toward the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management requirements. Upon completion of the bachelor's degree, students can complete the remaining graduate certificate courses as degree-seeking graduate students.

All graduate certificates offered by the College of Public Service meet the Department of Education regulations for certificate programs. In addition, students are eligible to apply for financial aid.

After the intent application is approved by the MPA program, the student's undergraduate advisor is notified and the student is allowed to take courses from the approved list that will count in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Again, students must be admitted to the Accelerated Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management prior to taking the dual-counted courses. ***Retroactive approval is not permissible.***

Application to the Graduate Certificate Nonprofit Management program

During the student's senior year, they can apply to the Nonprofit Management graduate certificate program using the [online graduate school application](#) and providing supporting materials as indicated in the application.

General Requirements

The graduate certificate consists of four courses totaling 12 credit hours of graduate coursework. In the accelerated program, up to two courses (six credit hours) can double count toward undergraduate general elective credit hours and the graduate certificate requirements. A grade of B- or better is required in each course counting toward the certificate.

- Upon acceptance into the Accelerated Nonprofit Management Graduate Certificate program and as an undergraduate student, complete up to two of the four required Accelerated Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management courses. (A permission number is required for registration.)
- Upon graduating from their undergraduate program, the student will apply to the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management program as a degree-seeking graduate student to complete the remaining two to three Nonprofit Management graduate certificate courses.

Course Requirements

PADM 5110 Strategic Nonprofit Management

PADM 5140 Nonprofit Financial Management

PADM 5150 Philanthropy, Fundraising, and Earned Revenue Strategies

PADM 5160 Leading Innovation in Nonprofits and Social Enterprises

8. STUDENT SUCCESS

Advising

Advising within the College of Public Service is a primary responsibility of the Graduate Student Services Specialist and the assigned faculty advisor.

Students are encouraged to initially meet with the Graduate Student Services Specialist to work through initial course selection, program questions, and preliminary degree planning. Upon admission to the MPA program, students are assigned a faculty advisor based on their interest area. Students can change their faculty advisor at any time. Faculty advisors are experts in their fields and can advise students on how to successfully navigate the degree program, pursue professional networking within the field, make decisions about the capstone/thesis, and think about career planning. Students are encouraged to reach out to their advisors throughout their program to discuss degree progress and career planning. The best practice is to meet with our advisor once a semester.

International students are additionally supported by the [International Affairs Office](#), which assists them with other issues such as visa requirements.

Communication

The college uses two primary methods to communicate with current students:

- Program-specific student Hubs in Canvas
These provide a central location for sharing announcements, information, and opportunities.
- Student email lists
Ideal for targeted outreach to enrolled students.

Students are expected to check both their program's Canvas hub and UCCS email account regularly to stay informed.

Student Resources

The College of Public Service and MPA program value student success. Resources exist at the Program, College and Campus levels to assist students in many areas. CPS faculty and staff are available to help match resources to needs. MPA students who believe they could benefit from academic support are encouraged to reach out to their instructors and/or faculty advisor. All MPA students are invited and encouraged to attend informational and developmental opportunities provided by the College of Public Service and others.

Many campus-level student resources exist. Below are links to some of the most frequently used academic, financial, social, and health resources available to MPA students.

[Kraemer Family Library](#) provides a wealth of physical and virtual information and services. Norah Mazel is the [Kraemer Family Library liaison for CPS](#), and can be reached at nmazel@uccs.edu.

Effective communication – written and verbal – is an important component of the MPA program. Fostering effective communication is part of our mission. The [Excel Writing and Communication Center](#) is a valuable partner in assisting students of all skill levels to improve writing ability. The center also offers presentation practice and feedback, tutoring for creating presentations, and facilitation for small groups.

Programs, resources, and verification of benefits are provided by the Office of [Veteran and Military Affairs](#).

[International Affairs](#) provides international student and scholar services and works with education abroad programs.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with [Disability Services and University Testing Center](#) for accommodation requests.

The Multicultural Office for Student Access, Inclusiveness and Community ([MOSAIC](#)) supports and creates opportunities that assist all UCCS students in developing a sense of community and place on campus, with an emphasis on supporting and advocating for students from underrepresented communities. There are numerous [clubs and organizations](#) that exist on campus that welcome students to participate.

Both physical and [mental health services](#) are available via the Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center. If you or someone you know has the potential for personal and/or psychological matters to complicate or interfere with your efforts or academic success, please reach out for anonymous screenings or services.

Professional development and career guidance and opportunities are coordinated via the [T. Rowe Price Career and Innovation Center](#). Students and alumni can use [Handshake](#) to search for and find relevant career opportunities.

Financial Resources

The cost of a degree program will vary based on several factors such as residency status, number of credit hours taken per semester, online course fees, etc. Costs may be estimated using the Bursar Office's [Estimate Your Bill](#) tool.

The MPA program qualifies as a [Western Regional Graduate Program](#). Residents of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming are eligible to pay a reduced tuition rate which is currently equal to in-state tuition for this program. The benefit is automatically applied to qualified students' tuition bill based on their legal residency.

Financial assistance is available to support students who could not attend CPS without aid. The primary source of information about need-based student financial assistance as well as scholarships and other non-need-based aid is the [UCCS Office of Financial Aid, Student Employment and Scholarships](#). Additional information on financial assistance programs may be obtained through the [Graduate School](#).

The College of Public Service offers scholarships and a limited number of graduate assistantships or research assistantships to students.

Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society

Pi Alpha Alpha is the global honor society for public affairs and administration. Each spring, MPA students are invited to join Pi Alpha Alpha if they have met the following criteria:

- Have finished at least 50% of their MPA courses
- Have maintained a minimum 3.7 GPA in their graduate coursework

The purpose of Pi Alpha Alpha membership is to formally honor current MPA students who demonstrate their commitment to public service through their personal persistence and outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in public affairs and administration. Pi Alpha Alpha recognizes its members' commitment to fostering integrity, professionalism, and effective performance and in promoting the advancement of quality in the education and practice of the art and science of public affairs and administration. Members can denote membership on their resume, which signals degree completion with distinction. As with other academic honoraria, there is a national induction fee.

Student Conduct and Response to Significant Situations or Events

The College of Public Service and MPA program subscribe in full to the university's expectations for student conduct and academic integrity.

UCCS has several mechanisms in place to respond to student crisis situations or to incidents or behaviors involving students that threaten campus life. Crisis situations may be accidental, occur without warning, or be intentional and meant to cause harm to students or the campus community. The Office of the Dean of Students maintains a [list of relevant policies and codes](#) that every student should read and become familiar with, including but not limited to:

- Student Code of Conduct
- UCCS Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Protected Class Discrimination Harassment
- Student Academic Ethics Code Policy

- Student Academic Disruption Procedure

Student Code of Conduct

All students are expected to know and follow the [UCCS Student Code of Conduct](#). This document addresses expectations of students as well as prohibited conduct. A portion of the Code appears here:

It is the duty of all students involved in the conduct process to participate honestly and conscientiously throughout the conduct process. Students are expected to read this Code, make a timely report of an incident, and file all necessary complaints through the Office of the Dean of Students.

Student Academic Ethics Code

Students are also expected to know and follow the [Student Academic Ethics Code Policy](#), which says that “Students shall observe complete honesty in all academic matters to include course requirements, classroom activities, research, and scholarship.” Violations of the code include but are not limited to:

- Committing the act of plagiarism
- Using unauthorized materials or receiving unauthorized assistance during an examination or in connection with any work done for academic credit
- Giving false or misleading information regarding an academic matter
- Rendering unauthorized assistance to another student by knowingly permitting him or her to see or copy all or a portion of an examination or any work to be submitted for academic credit
- Falsifying material relating to course registration or grades, either for oneself or for someone else
- Accessing or altering any academic record by any means without authorization
- Turning in same or similar work for multiple courses without permission from faculty to do such

Utilize the guidelines provided in each instructor’s syllabus regarding expectations for citation, use of or exclusion of assisted technology, including but not limited to agentic, predictive, or generative AI applications in course assignments or related program professional development or other experiential work for academic credit. Instructions can use monitoring tools to check for academic integrity in work turned in for academic credit.

CARE Team

The [CARE \(Campus Assessment Response and Evaluation\) Team](#) will assess and coordinate responses to significant campus situations and events involving University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) students, which require intervention in order to assist the community and its members to return to a more homeostatic state of functioning. These events may include: death

or significant trauma, problematic student situations involving medical or psychological concerns, and campus emergency situations that directly affect the well-being of students. The CARE Team has the authority to respond and coordinate intervention to all student crisis incidents with the concurrence of the Chancellor. Issues of inappropriate student conduct are referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. Allegations of criminal wrongdoing will be referred to Public Safety. Allegations of sexual harassment and/or discrimination shall be referred to the Office of Institutional Equity in accordance with university policy.

9. ACADEMIC POLICIES

University of Colorado policies govern the CU system and include Regent laws and policies, Administrative Policy Statements, and other university-wide requirements. UCCS-specific policies and procedures are nested beneath these university-wide policies as necessary to govern the unique needs of this campus. All of these policies may be found on the [website of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance](#). Additionally, the [UCCS Graduate School policies and procedures](#) govern academic matters for graduate students. Some of the more frequently referenced policies are presented in this Handbook, together with specific guidance that governs students within the College of Public Service and MPA Program.

Governing Catalog

The [Academic Catalog](#) that governs a student's graduation requirements is the one in effect at the time of the student's most recent admission into the college of their degree program.

Time Limit

Students must complete their degree no later than six years after the starting date of the first class counted toward degree requirements, *even if that course is taken as a non-degree seeking student*. A student who fails to complete the degree in the six-year period must file a petition for extension with the program director and have it approved by the Graduate School Dean. The petition, giving reasons why the student should be allowed to continue in the program, must be endorsed by the program director. The program director must approve applying any course to the degree that was taken more than six years prior to the semester of graduation, and all such courses must be validated by special examination and a [course validation form](#) must be approved by the program and Graduate School. Courses that have been validated will be eligible for use towards graduation for six years. If the student takes longer than that from time of validation to complete the degree, a new course validation will be required.

Although the MPA program requires intensive commitment, it does not require full-time study, and many CPS students take courses on a part-time basis. All core courses are offered in the classroom, online, and in hybrid formats, alternating delivery modes so that each course is offered in multiple formats every year (at a minimum). Electives may be offered in the classroom,

online, or in intensive or hybrid formats. Students in the MPA program should generally expect to complete the degree in not less than two and no more than six years; the average completion time is about three years.

Typical Course Load

CPS students typically enroll in three (one course) to six (two courses) credit hours each fall and spring semester. Graduate students are considered full time when taking five or more credit hours during fall or spring semesters or three or more credit hours during the summer semester.

Grading Policies

Grades offered in CPS courses, with the exception of PADM 6910: Internship, which is offered on a pass/fail basis only, are based on an A to F scale, with each letter grade representing the following standard narrative description:

- **A** = Work beyond the level of a typical graduate student; exemplary work. (An A equals 4 grade points, an A- equals 3.7 points; there is no A+ grade.)
- **B** = Work typical of a graduate student; indicates student has attained the knowledge and skills intended for the course. (A B+ equals 3.3, a B equals 3.0, and a B- equals 2.7 points.)
- **C** = Performance is below graduate-level expectations. (A C+ earns 2.3 grade points, a C yields 2.0).
- **D** = Substandard performance in all aspects of the work of the course; inadequate comprehension of assigned reading material. (D equals 1.0 grade point).
- **F** = Level of performance demonstrably below that expected of a graduate student; little or no indication that the student can succeed in a graduate program.

Acceptable Grades

Students must receive a grade of B- or better in all courses applied toward the degree. In order to remain in good academic standing and to receive the degree, a student is required to maintain at least a B (3.0) grade point average, which includes all work required for the MPA degree while taken at UCCS (classified and unclassified) and may differ from the University grade point average.

A student who receives a grade below B- in a course may repeat that course once, with the approval of the MPA program director, provided the course has not been previously applied toward a degree. The grade received in a repeated course may substitute for the original grade, and only the latter grade will be used in calculating the student's MPA grade point average required for graduation. However, all grades received during the student's graduate school experience will appear on the student's transcript and will be used in calculating the student's UCCS grade point average.

The calculation of a student's *program* grade point average (GPA) shall be based on all coursework applied to the degree, including any courses taken as a non-degree seeking student.

(NOTE: Courses taken in non-degree status are not included in the calculation of graduate school cumulative GPA on the official transcripts but are included in the calculation of the program GPA as conducted by CPS staff for graduation purposes.)

Retroactive Grade Changes

Students are not permitted to request grade changes for courses in which a final letter grade (other than an Incomplete) has been received except as a result of instructor error or as otherwise warranted through the academic grievance process. A student may not enter an agreement with an instructor to retroactively change a final letter grade based on work completed by the student after the course has ended.

Standards of Performance

In order to be in good standing, students must have an overall GPA of 3.0 or better in all coursework. A grade of B- or better is required in all courses. The academic performance of each student will be reviewed at the end of each semester. A student who has attempted 9 or more semester hours at UCCS (to include 'I' and 'IP' grades) in the Graduate School and whose UCCS graduate program grade point average of awarded grades falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation for one academic year; additionally, any student receiving a grade of F in any course is automatically placed on probation. Students placed on probationary status are notified via their UCCS email account, the official means of communication.

After a student has been placed on probation, they have one academic year, to raise their GPA to 3.0. Failure to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 in the time period outlined will result in dismissal from the program.

A dismissed student is eligible to apply for readmission one year after removal from the program. Approval or rejection of this application rests with the MPA program director.

Incompletes, Withdrawals, and Repeating Courses

Incompletes

A grade of Incomplete may be granted when a student has successfully completed a substantial portion of the course (75% or more) *and* is prevented from completing the class by circumstances beyond their control. The course instructor has discretion as to whether to grant an Incomplete, and students should be aware that not all faculty will do so. If the instructor agrees to grant an Incomplete, the student must make arrangements to complete the remaining coursework with the original instructor within one year, although instructors may impose a shorter completion deadline at their discretion, which should be in writing. The [incomplete grade contract](#) should be filled out and provided to the Graduate Student Services Specialist for record. The student may not "sit in" on the class in subsequent semesters.

Once the coursework is completed, the instructor will change the Incomplete grade to a letter grade. The Incomplete notation will appear along with the final grade on the student's transcript. If the coursework is not completed within a year, the Incomplete will automatically change to an F. Incompletes for the capstone seminar are rarely granted and only in exceptional circumstances.

Drops and Withdrawals

Deadlines for dropping a course are set by the Office of the Registrar. Students are responsible for knowing the drop and add deadlines and procedures published in the [Course Information Center](#).

Students will be allowed to drop and add of their own accord through census date (the 12th day of classes of the regular semester or the 6th day of classes of the summer term). Courses that meet less than the full 16-week term in fall and spring and 8 weeks in the summer have special pro-rated drop and add deadlines.

There are no refunds on individual courses dropped after the course census date.

Students must initiate a drop and follow the appropriate procedures. Students who fail to do this and do not complete the coursework will be issued a letter grade of "F" for the course.

Last Day to Withdraw

The **Last Day to Withdraw** is the last day students can withdraw from a course in their myUCCS portal. Students can withdraw from a course until 11:59pm (MST) on this date. After this deadline, students must obtain specific approvals to withdraw from a course.

After this deadline, students must obtain approvals from either the instructor of the course and/or the academic dean (of the college the course is in) to withdraw (rules differ per college). Students must submit a [Late Withdrawal Form](#) with all required information. Forms are then routed to appropriate approvers for a decision. Students must monitor their email for any further required action and final decision. See the 'Course / Partial Withdrawals' section below.

If a student is requesting approval to withdraw from *all* courses after this deadline, they are requesting a complete semester withdrawal. These students must get approval from the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) (Main Hall 201) by completing a Complete Semester Withdrawal Request Form. See the 'Complete Semester Withdrawals' section below.

Important: Any request after the last day to withdraw is not guaranteed and is reserved for students who have extenuating circumstances. *If* approved, courses are assigned an official notation of 'W' and no refunds are given.

Important: The Main Campus Semester 'last day to withdraw' deadline is what is referenced most often. Although the majority of scheduled courses are in the Main Campus Semester session, students have the option to register for courses that are in different sessions within a semester. It is the student's responsibility to know each of their course's session and last day to withdraw deadline. See the 'Drop/Withdrawal Deadline Overview' section above.

Repeating Courses

A student who receives a grade below B- in a course may repeat that course once, with the approval of the MPA program director, provided the course has not been previously applied toward a degree. The grade received in a repeated course may substitute for the original grade and only the latter grade will be used in calculating the graduate program GPA required for graduation. However, all grades received during the student's graduate school experience will appear on the student's transcript and will be used in calculating the student's University GPA. These and other [UCCS Graduate School policies](#) may apply.

Transfer Credit

Application of Graduate Credit Earned at Another School or University

Up to nine graduate-level (semester equivalent) credit hours of relevant coursework completed at another accredited institution or at a UCCS unit other than the College of Public Service may be applied toward the MPA degree. To be eligible for transfer, courses cannot be more than 5 years old from the request for transfer credit, have an earned grade of B or above, and have not been applied toward another degree. In order for a course to substitute for a core class, the course must have been completed at a NASPAA-accredited school. Should a transferred course become six or more years old before the student finishes the degree requirements, it will no longer count toward the degree unless revalidation criteria apply. All transfer work must be approved in writing by the MPA program director. Students should request transfer of credits immediately after admission.

Credit Earned at UCCS CPS before Admission into MPA program

A maximum of 12 graduate-level credit hours taken as an unclassified (nondegree) student at the UCCS College of Public Service may be applied toward the MPA degree. No credit applied to another degree may be applied to the MPA. Courses must have an earned grade of B or above and have been taken within five years of the request for application of credit. Should a course become six or more years old before the student finishes the degree requirements, it will no longer count toward the degree unless revalidation criteria apply.

Course Validation Process

If a student is unsatisfied with the outcome of the validation review, they may appeal the decision to the public administration department chair. If the department chair is serving as the consulting faculty member, the appeal should be made to the Associate Dean in the College of Public Service. Appeals must be made in writing the same semester the validation occurs.

The student's written appeal must describe in detail the reason the decision should be reconsidered. The Chair (or Associate Dean) may contact the student for more information as well as the appropriate faculty member and MPA director to get a written response on objections or questions raised by the student. When a decision has been made, a written statement will be provided to the student.

MPA Graduation Procedures

All master's students **must apply for graduation** during the semester in which they anticipate graduating by completing the [steps outlined on the Graduate School website](#). Do not procrastinate, as deadlines are early in the semester. An email will be sent out at the start of each semester with a list of due dates and forms that need to be completed by the strict deadline.

- Students should meet with the Graduate Student Services Specialist the semester before they graduate to review their degree audit and determine which requirements remain for graduation.
- Students must complete and submit an [application for admission to candidacy](#) by the specified deadline.
- Students must apply for graduation using the [online diploma card](#) in the student portal.
- Students who would like to participate in the commencement ceremony (optional) should register at the [commencement website](#), where additional information about the ceremony may be found as well.

Students who have completed all the requirements for the MPA degree can apply for candidacy and graduation in the fall, spring, or summer semesters. Students who complete their degree requirements in the summer may participate in graduation ceremonies in the fall. No graduation ceremony is held in the summer.

Students on the graduation list who find they cannot complete the program requirements before graduation should notify the Graduate Student Services Specialist as soon as possible. They may then reapply for graduation in a subsequent semester.

Student Academic Complaints and Appeals

MPA Student Academic Complaints and Appeals

Formal procedures by which a currently enrolled student may seek to remedy academic complaints within the College of Public Service are described below. Student appeals are challenges to academic actions or decisions, including but not limited to actions such as an academic grade or evaluation of a student's work in a course, seminar, or other academic forum; a decision with respect to a student's academic standing in a program or at the college; unjust treatment by a faculty member in a class; or actions related to thesis or capstone procedures.

Step One: Informal Resolution

The student is strongly encouraged to first attempt to informally resolve the grievance through discussion with the faculty member(s) involved.

Step Two: Filing the Grievance

If the student is unable to resolve the dispute with the faculty member(s), they should file a written grievance with the MPA program director. Absent unusual circumstances, the grievance should be filed within 30 days after the student learns of the event that gives rise to the grievance.

The written grievance may be filed via e-mail or delivered directly to the MPA program director. The grievance should clearly state the basis for the complaint and the remedy requested, and should include any evidence that supports the grievance, such as course syllabi, assignments, and statements from other students.

Students should be aware that grades and other evaluations of student work are traditionally within the jurisdiction of individual instructors, and are not likely to be changed absent evidence that the faculty member 1) determined the grade based on considerations other than student performance; 2) substantially differed from previously announced criteria or procedures in determining the grade; or 3) violated university or college policy in determining the grade. The student bears the burden of proof on these allegations.

Step Three: Investigating the Grievance

The MPA program director will acknowledge receipt of the grievance, forward a copy to the faculty member(s) involved, and begin the investigation of the circumstances of the grievance. They may request additional information from the student and faculty member(s) involved.

If the grievance involves the need for substantial academic expertise in a particular field in order to assess whether there is a basis for the grievance, the program director may appoint a panel of faculty members with expertise in the area to investigate the grievance and recommend a decision to the program director.

In the event that the MPA program director is involved in the grievance, they shall refer the investigation of the grievance to the Associate Dean of the College of Public Service for investigation pursuant to the rules of the Graduate School.

Step Four: Decision by the MPA Program Director

Within 30 days of the grievance's filing, the MPA program director shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the grievance to the student and the faculty member(s).

Appealing the Decision of the MPA Program Director to the Department Chair

If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MPA Program Director, the student may appeal to the Department Chair within 14 business days of notification of the Program Director's decision, following the same procedure specified above. The Department Chair shall then

review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MPA Program Director in deciding the disposition of the appeal, and any other materials they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 business days of receiving the student's appeal of the Program Director's decision, the Department Chair shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the appeal to the student, the faculty member(s), and the MPA Program Director.

Appealing the Decision of the Department Chair to the Associate Dean

If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MPA Program Director and the Department Chair, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean of the College of Public Service within 14 business days of notification of the Associate Dean's decision, following the same procedure specified above. The Associate Dean shall then review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MPA Program Director and Department Chair in deciding the disposition of the appeal, and any other materials they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 business days of receiving the student's appeal of the Department Chair's decision, the Associate Dean shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the grievance to all of the parties involved.

Appealing the Decision of the Associate Dean to the Dean

If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MPA Program Director, Department Chair, and Associate Dean, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Public Service within 14 business-days of notification of the Associate Dean's decision, following the same procedure specified in Step Two above. The Dean shall then review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MPA Program Director, Department Chair, and Associate Dean in deciding the disposition of the grievance, and any other they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 business -days of receiving the student's appeal of the Associate Dean's decision, the Dean shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the grievance to all the parties involved.

Campus-Level Appeals

Grade appeals are decided within the College of Public Service; the dean has final jurisdiction. If a resolution to the problem identified in the student's appeal on other academic issues cannot be reached on the department or college level, the student may submit a written appeal to the dean of the Graduate School according to [Article V of Graduate School Policies and Procedures](#).

Campus Level Student Code of Conduct and Academic Ethics Code Violations

As described in Section 7 of this Handbook, all students enrolled in credit or non-credit courses at UCCS are bound by the [UCCS Student Academic Ethics Code Policy](#) and the [UCCS Student Code of Conduct](#).

Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct is to maintain the general welfare of the university community. The university strives to make the campus community a place of study, work, and residence where people are treated, and treat one another, with respect and courtesy.

Students are expected to read this Code, make a timely report of an incident, and file all necessary complaints through the Office of the Dean of Students.

Student Academic Ethics Code Policy

Any individual who has a good faith belief that a Code violation has taken place should immediately report the circumstances to the faculty member of the course involved or to the program director/chair of the department where the course is offered.

Students are expected to read this Code, and follow the necessary steps found in the policy to file a complaint or to understand the appeal process further as necessary.

If a faculty member has reason to believe that a Code violation has occurred (due either to the faculty member's own observation or due to a report by a third party), the faculty member shall discuss the matter with the student, provide the student with the supporting documentation and ask the student for a response.

If the student admits to the Code violation or the faculty member finds that a Code violation has occurred, then it is the faculty member's prerogative to impose a sanction at the course level. Such sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. downgrading the student on the assignment/exam/activity in which the academic Code violation occurred, with or without the opportunity to redo;
- b. failing the student on the assignment/exam/activity in which the academic Code violation occurred, with or without the opportunity to redo;
- c. lowering the student's grade for the course;
- d. failing the student for the course.

If the faculty member believes that a sanction more severe than a course-level sanction should be levied, then the faculty member shall follow all department and college procedures for such sanctions. The program director or dean may levy more severe sanctions including probation, suspension, expulsion, or withholding or revoking a degree.

Students may dispute the faculty member's finding that a Code violation has occurred by following the appeals process outlined below. Students may not appeal for course-level sanctions.

Step One: Filing the Appeal

If the student contends that they are innocent of a Code violation and is unable to resolve the situation with the faculty member(s), they should file a written appeal with the MPA program director. Absent unusual circumstances, the appeal should be filed within 30 days after the dispute.

The written appeal may be filed via e-mail or delivered directly to the MPA program director. The appeal should contain all relevant information.

Step Two: Investigating the Appeal

The MPA program director will acknowledge receipt of the appeal, forward a copy to the faculty member(s) involved, and begin an investigation. They may request additional information from the student and faculty member(s) involved.

In the event that the MPA program director is involved in the dispute, they shall refer the investigation of the appeal to the Associate Dean of the College of Public Service for investigation.

Step Three: Decision by the MPA Program Director

Within 30 days of the filing of the appeal, the MPA program director shall provide a written report containing their decision to the student and the faculty member(s).

Appealing the Decision of the MPA Program Director to the Department Chair

If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MPA Program Director, the student may appeal to the Department Chair within 14 business days of notification of the Program Director's decision, following the same procedure specified above. The Department Chair shall then review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MPA Program Director in deciding the disposition of the appeal, and any other materials they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 business days of receiving the student's appeal of the Program Director's decision, the Department Chair shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the appeal to the student, the faculty member(s), and the MPA Program Director.

Appealing the Decision of the Department Chair to the Associate Dean

If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MPA Program Director and the Department Chair, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean of the College of Public Service within 14 business days of notification of the Associate Dean's decision, following the same procedure specified above. The Associate Dean shall then review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MPA Program Director and Department Chair in deciding the disposition of the appeal, and any other materials they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 business days of receiving the student's appeal of the Department Chair's decision, the Associate Dean shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the grievance to all of the parties involved.

Appealing the Decision of the Associate Dean to the Dean

If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MPA Program Director, Department Chair, and Associate Dean, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Public Service within 14 business days of notification of the Associate Dean's decision, following the same procedure specified in Step Two above. The Dean shall then review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MPA Program Director, Department Chair, and Associate Dean in deciding the disposition of the grievance, and any other they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 business -days of receiving the student's appeal of the Associate Dean's decision, the Dean shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the grievance to all the parties involved.

Campus-Level Appeals

Students may dispute the faculty member's finding that a Code violation has occurred at the campus level only after exhausting the CPS appeals process. Students may not appeal course-level sanctions but may appeal more severe program- or college-level sanctions such as probation, suspension, expulsion, or withholding or revoking of a degree as levied by the college. This process is outlined in the [Student Academic Ethics Code Policy](#).