Dear MPA Students:

The Graduate Center for Public Policy and Administration (GCPPA) is proud to provide the MPA degree for individuals interested in a career in the public and nonprofit sectors. The MPA program has been in operation for over 40 years and maintains a strong presence in the Southern California region through its vibrant professional network of over 3,000 graduates.

The MPA Program at CSULB offers you the training necessary for a career in the public service. The majority of our graduates work in the public sector, but many also work in the non-profit sector, while more are expected to work in the private sector at some point. Our MPA also offers you the opportunity for advancement in the field. Over half of our graduates work at the managerial or executive level, while others work in professional and technical positions. The MPA is also a flexible degree that you can shape to further your own career interests. Our graduates work in a wide variety of fields, including general administration, finance and budgeting, personnel, public works, social services, criminal justice, parks and recreation, community development, housing, and urban affairs.

The GCPPA’s interest is in making your educational program an opportunity for professional growth and development. Our mutual interest is in fostering and promoting professional career development in public administration and the formulation of good public policy in the best interests of citizens and government. We are also proud of our MPA program’s national accreditation through the Network of Schools of Public Policy Affairs and Administration (NASPAA).

This Student Handbook has been designed to help you meet the requirements for the MPA degree offered by the GCPPA at California State University, Long Beach. The GCPPA wants you to be fully aware of the various University rules and GCPPA policies that are important in successfully completing your MPA degree. Each requirement is explained so that forms and processes are as manageable as possible.

You may find additional information on the GCPPA’s website www.csulb.edu/ppa. If you have any questions about the procedures included in the handbook, do not hesitate to call the GCPPA at (562) 985-4178, come by to visit GCPPA faculty in the SPA building (2nd floor), or consult the GCPPA website.

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GCPPA Adjunct Faculty
Visit our website for a current list of the GCPPA’s adjunct faculty.
Master of Public Administration Program (MPA)

The general MPA program is designed with a professional emphasis and provides graduate students with a broad knowledge of specific competencies. The program also develops the student’s ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills to the solution of public problems. In addition to the general MPA degree, the GCPPA offers the MPA degree with options in Urban Affairs and Public Works Management. Students may also earn certificates in Employer-Employee Relations and Personnel Management, Public Management Analysis, and Public Sector Financial Management. More information can be found online at www.csulb.edu/ppa

Application Process

The application process consists of two separate applications forms: One for the University and the other for the MPA program. Both applications should be submitted at the same time.

CSULB Application

You must apply to the University online at CSUMentor.edu and pay a $55 fee. You need to submit one official transcript from all colleges and universities attended to Enrollment Services for your application to be reviewed. Requirements for admission as a graduate student are listed in the CSULB Catalog csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/

MPA Program Application

You must apply to the MPA program. The requirements for admission to the MPA program are more stringent than those of the University. The MPA program application is on the GCPPA website and you can mail or hand-deliver your completed application to the GCPPA.

For admission to the MPA program, you must have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and have maintained a cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of not less than 3.0, or 3.0 in the last 60 semester units. Your application will be evaluated in terms of your previous academic and employment performance, promise as a graduate student, leadership in some field of public administration, and commitment to develop, pursue, and perform effectively in a career in public service. You must submit the following documents (in addition to any documents you submit to the University): MPA application, two letters of recommendation from former professors and/or job supervisors, and a one- or two-page statement stating your reasons for wanting to obtain the MPA degree and for pursuing a career in the public sector.

Your application file must be complete before you will be considered for admission to the MPA program. Once you are admitted to both the University and to the MPA program, you may enroll in courses.

Advising

If you are considering applying to the MPA program, we encourage you to meet with the Graduate Advisor. In consultation with the Graduate Advisor, you can decide if the MPA program meets your personal and professional needs. Once accepted, you may work with any full-time faculty member to select courses and plan your schedule.

After you have completed six units in the program with a GPA of 3.0 or above, you must see a faculty advisor to advance to candidacy. To arrange for advising, or to schedule an appointment with a faculty advisor, contact the faculty member directly.
Components of the MPA Degree

The MPA program has several components, which are discussed in this section. The following table shows the components for the MPA degree, the MPA with an option in Public Works, and the MPA with an option in Urban Affairs.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MPA</th>
<th>Public Works</th>
<th>Urban Affairs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Courses</td>
<td>18 units</td>
<td>21 units</td>
<td>21 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>15 units</td>
<td>12 units</td>
<td>12 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directed Research/Portfolio</td>
<td>6 units</td>
<td>6 units</td>
<td>6 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internship Optional</td>
<td>3 units</td>
<td>3 units</td>
<td>3 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>39 units/42 units</td>
<td>39 units/42 units</td>
<td>39 units/42 units</td>
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Core Courses in the MPA Program

These courses must be completed to obtain the MPA degree. They also must be completed before the student can enroll in PPA 697. You should take PPA 500 in your first semester. The remaining courses may be taken in any sequence but should be completed early in your program. Be sure to note PPA 555 has a prerequisite microeconomics course and PPA 696 has a prerequisite statistics course. Contact the GCPPA for questions about prerequisites.

- PPA 500  Foundation of Public Policy and Administration  3 units
- PPA 555  Government Budgeting and Finance  3 units
- PPA 577  Public Sector Human Resources Management  3 units
- PPA 660  Seminar in Organization Theory and Behavior  3 units
- PPA 670  Policy Issue Analysis  3 units
- PPA 696  Research Methods in Public Administration  3 units

MPA Options

The Public Works Option has one more core course-PPA 554 Public Works Facilities and one less elective course. All other requirements for the MPA degree are the same.

The Urban Affairs Option has one more core course-PPA 610 Seminar Urban Affairs and one less elective course. All other requirements for the MPA degree are the same.

Elective Fields

You may select your elective courses from among those offered by the GCPPA, as well as from graduate level courses (numbered 500 or 600) offered by other departments of the University. In consultation with your faculty advisor, select the elective courses that are of most value to your career goals. For example, you may be interested in electives in the following areas: personnel, financial, systems analysis, urban planning, policy analysis, community development, public works, recreational, social services, criminal justice, public health, or nonprofit.
PPA 697 Directed Research (6 units)
You must complete all the required core courses before you can enroll in PPA 697. While students may complete the six unit requirement over the course of two semesters, it is recommended that students register for all six units in one semester. The Student Learning Portfolio (SLP) is completed during PPA 697.

You must be advanced to candidacy and have completed all core courses prior to enrolling in PPA 697.

Internships
The GCPPA offers pre-career students a first-hand opportunity for observation of and participation in policy-making and administration in the public sector through an internship. Enrollment in PPA 585 Internship Seminar is required for all students who do not have at least one year of significant experience in the public sector. Students who are employed currently, or who have previous work experience in the public sector, may request a waiver of the internship from their faculty advisor when they advance to candidacy.

You may benefit from an internship if you are entering the MPA program directly after completing your undergraduate degree, changing careers, have no public or nonprofit experience, or want to gain experience, which will help you in obtaining a job.

Students may enroll in the internship course under the “Credit/No Credit” grade reporting option. The hours required are determined in consultation with the Internship Coordinator. The normal expectation is 300 hours of internship work. To complete the internship in one semester, 20 hours per week on-site would be required.

Please note—PPA 585 does not count toward the 39 units required for the MPA degree.

Certificates
The GCPPA offers three certificates: Employer-Employee Relations and Personnel Management, Public Management Analysis, and Public Sector Financial Management. Up to 15 units (5 courses) may be transferred from a certificate program into the MPA degree with approval of a faculty advisor.

Unit Requirements
A minimum of 39 units are required for the MPA degree. At least 24 units must be in graduate level courses offered by the MPA program (courses with a PPA prefix). The remaining 15 units may be selected from graduate level courses offered by the MPA program or from graduate courses (classes at the 500 or 600 level) offered by other departments and schools of the University. Consult the CSULB Catalog and your faculty advisor for information on graduate level course listings in other departments.

When formulating your plans for the MPA program with your faculty advisor, consider your work schedule and your course load. Students employed full-time should not exceed six units (two courses) per semester, which is considered appropriate for part-time students. A normal academic load for a full-time student is 9-15 units per semester (three to five courses). A maximum load of 18 units is permitted by the University, with permission of the GCPPA.
Transfer of Credit

Subject to the approval of the GCPPA’s Director and the Associate Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, up to nine units of credit for graduate courses taken through Open University may be applied to the 39-unit requirement of the MPA program. Open University is run through the College of Continuing and Professional Education (CCPE). Graduate courses also may be transferred for credit from any of the GCPPA’s certificate programs.

For graduate courses taken at other colleges or universities, a maximum of nine units (three courses) may be applied to the MPA degree. Acceptance of graduate courses to be transferred from other universities normally depends upon sufficient information being provided to permit evaluation of the course, such as the course syllabus and course description. Courses taken at another institution are not accepted as substitutes for any of the required core courses.

Requirements

The basic requirements to complete your MPA degree, the GWAR, Advancement to Candidacy, the SLP, and Request to Graduate form, are summarized in this section. The Change of Program form (optional) is also covered.

Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)

Graduate students who earned a bachelor’s degree from a U.S. college or university are considered to have met the GWAR, and are not required to take the WPE. See Appendix for more information. Graduate students who earned a degree from a non-U.S. college or university should visit the Testing, Evaluation & Assessment website for more information web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/testing/wpe/

Advancement to Candidacy

Advancement to candidacy signifies approval of a plan of study by the student’s major department and college. You should advance to candidacy as soon as you are eligible. In most instances, advancement to candidacy should occur no later than the end of the second semester of matriculation and must occur no later than one semester prior to the semester in which the student expects to graduate. It must occur prior to a student filing a request to graduate with Enrollment Services. Advancement to Candidacy forms can be found at csulb.edu/ppa

Advancement to candidacy requirements:

1. Fulfillment of the GWAR.
2. Completion of at least six units of required MPA program courses with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
3. Earned a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all graduate work attempted at CSULB after completion of a baccalaureate degree.
4. Must be enrolled in the semester or summer session in which the advancement to candidacy takes place and this must occur no later than one semester or summer session prior to completion of course requirements.

Most importantly you may not advance to candidacy and graduate in the same semester!
Student Learning Portfolio (SLP)

The SLP is designed to monitor and to document students’ educational progress over their tenure in the program. Guidelines for the SLP are in the SLP Handbook. Students collect course work throughout the MPA program and present the completed SLP to the PPA 697 Instructor for final approval. The SLP must be approved as a requirement for graduation.

More specifics on policies and procedures governing the SLP can be found in the MPA Student Learning Portfolio Handbook available on the GCPPA website. Be sure to follow the instructions concerning how to save your coursework in the MPA program for the SLP. You will need to get the completed SLP approved before you can graduate.

Important parts of the SLP include:

**Part One:**
- The Initial Skills Self-Assessment (completed in PPA 500)
- The Final Skills Self-Assessment (completed in PPA 697)

**Part Two:**
- Pre- and Post-Instructional assignments from all core (required) courses

**Part Three:**
- Case Studies (completed in PPA 697)

The case study deadlines are December 1 (Fall), May 1 (Spring), and August 1, (Summer). If you fail to meet these deadlines, your graduation may be delayed until the following semester, so plan ahead.

Change of Program

If for any reason you must make a change in your program of study as stipulated on the Advancement to Candidacy form, you must file a Change of Program form. Be sure to file a Change of Program form as soon as you know that your program of study has changed. If there are any differences between your Advancement to Candidacy form and the courses you actually take, you will not be able to graduate until you file the form.

Maintaining Enrollment

A student who has been admitted to the University and accepted in the MPA program is expected to maintain continuous enrollment. This means you must be registered for one or more courses each Fall and Spring semester until completion of the program. Registration in Summer and Winter is NOT required to maintain continuous enrollment. Students who register for classes at the beginning of the semester but withdraw from all classes before the end of the fourth week of the semester are considered to be absent for the entire semester. In other words, withdrawing from all classes prior to the fourth week of the semester would constitute a break in enrollment.

Educational Leave

Any graduate student in good academic standing is eligible to request an Educational Leave. Students requesting such a leave must complete an Educational Leave form. The completed form needs to be signed by the Graduate Advisor before turning it in to Enrollment Services.

You must have completed at least one semester and earned units to request an Educational Leave for a minimum of one semester or a maximum of two semesters. Additional leaves must be requested by submitting a new form. Under no circumstances will the total number of semesters exceed four per academic career.
Graduate Studies 700 (GS 700)
Registration in GS 700 is restricted to graduate students who have been advanced to candidacy, have completed all course work, and have departmental approval. GS 700 fees are paid through CCPE.

Readmission to the University
A student must reapply online at CSUMentor.edu if enrollment has been interrupted.

Time Limit
The university requires that all coursework for the degree be completed within seven years. Any coursework that exceeds this seven-year limitation requires revalidation by the GCPPA. For more information on the revalidation policy, please contact the Graduate Advisor.

General Regulations and Procedures
You should familiarize yourself with CSULB regulations concerning academic credit, grading policies and procedures, class attendance, minimum grade standards for graduate students, and similar administrative matters. These regulations and policies are contained in the current edition of the CSULB Catalog csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/

Course Withdrawals
Students are responsible for withdrawing from the classes they are not attending. A Petition to Withdraw from a Class form must be officially filed by a student and can be found on Enrollment Services website www.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/assets/pdf/withdrawal_petition.pdf

Students who fail to withdraw from a class, regardless of whether they have ever attended the class, will receive a grade of “WU” (unauthorized withdrawal). A grade of “WU” is equivalent to an “F” in computing the student’s GPA.

Withdrawals from a course, after the first three weeks but before the last three weeks of the semester, require the approval of the instructor and the Director of the GCPPA. Withdrawals during the final three weeks of the semester are not normally approved except in such cases where the circumstances are beyond the student’s control and an Incomplete grade would not be practical. Ordinarily, such withdrawals will involve total withdrawal from all classes in which the student is enrolled for the semester.

Incomplete Course Work
The symbol “I” indicates that a portion of required course work (normally not more than one-third) has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time due to unforeseen, but fully justified, reasons and that there is still a possibility of earning credit. It is the responsibility of the student to determine from the instructor the remaining course requirements that must be satisfied to remove the “I.” The conditions for removal of an “I” must be recorded in writing by the instructor on an Assignment of Incomplete Grade form. An “I” must normally be made up within one calendar year immediately following the end of the term during which it was assigned, regardless of whether the student maintains continuous enrollment during the year. Failure to complete the assigned work will convert the “I” to the grade that is stipulated on the Assignment of Incomplete Grade form.
Academic Probation

A graduate student whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 is placed on academic probation. Generally, the student is given two semesters to bring their GPA back up to 3.0. In no case, can the student continue on academic probation for more than two semesters. See the current edition of the CSULB catalog www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/

Cheating and Plagiarism

California State University, Long Beach, has adopted a policy on cheating and plagiarism, which is stated in the current edition of the CSULB Catalog. This policy applies to all students in the GCPPA. Cases of cheating or plagiarism are subject to change of grade and administrative sanctions.

A major potential for University sanctions and change of grade occurs in the preparation of research and term papers. The GCPPA policy does not permit the submission of required research or term papers in more than one class. Further, research or term papers must be based on original research, and may not be reproductions, in whole or in part, of work completed by others.

Graduation Procedures

Request to Graduate

The deadlines to submit a Request to Graduate form are October 15, for students who plan to graduate during the Spring or Summer, and March 1, for students who plan to graduate during the Fall or Winter. You must submit the form and a $45 fee to Enrollment Services. If you file later than the period indicated, you must pay a missed deadline fee. You can find the form on Enrollment Services website web.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/forms/

Students must be enrolled currently in the University during the semester in which they officially graduate. If all other courses have been completed, students may enroll in GS 700 through CCPE.

Receiving Your Degree

Your diploma will be ready two to three months after your degree is recorded. You will receive an email telling you to pick up your diploma or it will be mailed to you.

You may not register for the semester following your intended graduation unless you moved your graduation date or re-apply to CSULB as a graduate student. You may participate in the commencement ceremony immediately preceding or following your graduation date.

University Student Services

The University offers a wide range of student services and organizations. For more information, consult the CSULB Catalog or contact the service or organization directly.

Academic Technology Services

Academic Technology Services manages campus computing resources including BeachBoard, Computer Labs, Instructional Technology and Classroom Support Services, Software Depot, and Technology Help Desk.

Beach ID

Students must have a Beach ID account to use CSULB computing services.
BeachBoard

BeachBoard is the University’s e-learning environment. It provides students with the opportunity to stay connected with their instructors and classmates. BeachBoard may be a component of some or all of a student’s courses as either a supplement to the course, as an element of a hybrid course, or as the structure for a completely online course https://bbsulb.desire2learn.com/

To access Beachboard, students need a Campus ID and Beach ID Password. For all questions regarding Beachboard, please contact the Technology Help Desk at (562)985-4959, helpdesk@csulb.edu, or visit the website http://helpdesk.csulb.edu

Disabled Student Services

Disabled Student Services, a department within the Student Services Division, ensures access to education for students with disabilities. Disabled Student Services provides support services, resources, equipment, and liaison with campus and community agencies to assist students in obtaining their degree.

Financial Resources

The CSULB Financial Aid Office assists students in seeking financial assistance from a variety of public and private sources, including grants, scholarships, loans, fellowships, and work programs.

University Library

The library provides information resources that support teaching and learning and provides enrichment and recreation for members of the campus community, as well as other scholars and community members. For more information, visit www.csulb.edu/library.
APPENDIX

GRADUATION WRITING ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENT (GWAR)
FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Because writing is important in every academic discipline, in the professions, and in public life everywhere, CSULB is committed to developing the writing abilities of its students at all levels and in all areas. In fact, over 35 years ago the CSU adopted the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) to ensure that graduates from all CSU institutions have the skills needed to succeed.

HOW DO GRADUATE STUDENTS SATISFY THE GWAR?

Graduate students must satisfy the GWAR before they can advance to candidacy, take their comprehensive exam, or begin their thesis project. Graduate students have several options for satisfying the GWAR.

When grad students are admitted to CSULB, Enrollment Services determines that they have satisfied the GWAR if they meet one of the following conditions:

• The student has a degree from a US institution

• The student has a degree from a non-US institution located in a country where English is the dominant language of communication (Enrollment Services has the list of approved countries.)

• The student has received a score of 4 or higher on the analytical writing test of the GRE or GMAT

While most grad students will meet one of the conditions listed above, international graduate students may not. International students still have options. They can satisfy the requirement either by scoring 11 or higher on the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) or by completing a GWAR portfolio course with a C or better and submitting a passing portfolio. Students must either take the WPE or enroll in a GWAR portfolio course in their first semester or enrollment.

Students who wish to enroll directly in a GWAR portfolio course without a WPE score, must request a permit to enroll from the GWAR advisor.

WHICH GWAR OPTION IS BETTER?

• Students who take the WPE but score lower than 11 must enroll in a portfolio course in the next available semester. This option will take longer and may delay advancement to candidacy and graduation.

• If students have already taken the GRE or GMAT and did not receive a 4 or higher, they won't be able to score 11 or higher on the WPE.

• If students take a GWAR course in their first semester, they will likely satisfy the GWAR immediately, and the English writing skills they gain in the GWAR course will help them in their graduate studies.

• Special sections of ENGL 301B for international students cost less and are a good way to improve English writing in a friendly classroom setting with other international students.

• Portfolio course permits, registration instructions, and information are available from the GWAR Advisor.

For more information about the GWAR go to www.csulb/gwar, email gwar@csulb.edu, or call 562-985-7378 to schedule an appointment with the GWAR Advisor.