2025-26

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

(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)

These regulations apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Public Administration in the academic year 2025-26 and thereafter.

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

Admission requirements

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

(a) shall comply with the General Regulations and the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
(b) shall hold a Bachelor's degree of this University or a qualification of equivalent standard from this University or another comparable institution accepted for this purpose;
(c) for candidates who are seeking admission on the basis of a qualification from a university or comparable institution outside Hong Kong of which the language of teaching and/or examination is not English, shall satisfy the University English language requirement applicable to higher degrees as prescribed under General Regulation G2(b); and
(d) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

MPA 2. An application for exemption from the above requirements shall be considered on a case by case basis.

Qualifying examination

MPA 3.

(a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidates' formal academic ability or their ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent.
(b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.

Award of degree

MPA 4. To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Public Administration, candidates

(a) shall comply with General Regulations and the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and
(b) shall complete the curriculum and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below.

Period of study

MPA 5. The curriculum shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or four academic years of

part-time study, unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty.

Completion of curriculum

MPA 6. To complete the curriculum, candidates
(a) shall satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
(b) follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed written work of 8 courses as prescribed in the syllabuses;
(c) shall complete and present a satisfactory dissertation or capstone project on a subject within their approved fields of study; and
(d) shall satisfy the examiners in all prescribed courses and in any prescribed form of examination.

Dissertation and Capstone project

MPA 7. Candidates shall complete a dissertation or capstone project in accordance with the regulations set out in the MPA Programme. The title of dissertation or capstone project shall be submitted for approval by January 31 of the final academic year of study and the dissertation or capstone project shall be submitted by not later than July 31 of the final academic year of study. Candidates shall submit a statement that the dissertation or capstone project represents their own work after registration as candidates for the degree.

Assessment

MPA 8. Candidates shall be assessed for each of the courses for which they have registered, and assessment may be conducted in any combination of continuous assessment of coursework, written examinations and/or any other assessable activities. Only passed courses will earn credits.

MPA 9. Candidates shall not be permitted to repeat a course for which they have received a passing grade for the purpose of upgrading.

MPA 10. Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners at their first attempt in not more than half of the number of courses, not including the dissertation or capstone project, taken in an academic year, may be permitted to make up for the failed course(s) in the following manner:
(a) undergoing re-assessment/re-examination in the failed course to be held no later than the end of the following semester (not including the summer semester); or
(b) re-submitting failed coursework, without having to repeat the same course of instruction; or
(c) repeating the failed course by undergoing instruction and satisfying the assessments; or
(d) for elective courses, taking another course in lieu and satisfying the assessment requirements.

MPA 11. Candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory dissertation or capstone project may be permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation or capstone project within a specified period.

MPA 12. Candidates who are unable because of their illness to be present at the written examination of any course may apply for permission to present themselves at a supplementary examination of the same course to be held before the beginning of the following academic year. Any such application shall be made on the form prescribed within seven calendar days of the first day of the candidate's absence from any examination. Any supplementary examination shall be part of that academic year's examinations, and the provision made in the regulations for failure at the first attempt shall apply accordingly.

MPA 13. There shall be no appeal against the results of examinations and all other forms of

assessment.

MPA 14. Candidates who
(a) are not permitted to present themselves for re-assessment/re-examination in any failed course(s) or to repeat any failed course(s) or take another course in lieu under Regulation MPA 10; or
(b) have failed to satisfy the examiners in any course(s) at a second attempt; or
(c) are not permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation or capstone project under Regulation MPA 11; or
(d) have failed to submit a satisfactory new or revised dissertation or capstone project under Regulation MPA 11; or
(e) have exceeded the maximum period of registration
may be required to discontinue their studies.

Grading system

MPA 15. Individual courses should be graded according to the following grading system:

Grade	*Standard*	*Grade Point*
A+	Excellent	4.3
A		4.0
A-		3.7
B+	Good	3.3
B		3.0
B-		2.7
C+	Satisfactory	2.3
C		2.0
C-		1.7
D+	Pass	1.3
D		1.0
F	Fail	0

Classification of awards

MPA 16. On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diploma.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

CURRICULUM

The degree is designed primarily for employees in public sector and subvented organizations who wish to extend their academic knowledge in the field of public administration. To receive the award of Master

of Public Administration, candidates must complete 8 courses (6 credits each) and a dissertation or capstone project (12 credits), with a total of 60 credits. The 8 courses include 4 compulsory courses, and 4 courses from the list of elective courses. In each semester, full-time candidates shall enroll in not more than four courses and part-time candidates shall enroll in not more than two courses. In the first semester of study, candidates must satisfy the examiners in compulsory courses POLI7002 and POLI8027. In the second semester of the final academic year of study, candidates must satisfy the examiners in compulsory courses POLI8017 and POLI8026.

Compulsory courses

Candidates shall complete all courses from the following list:

POLI7002. Public administration: scope and issues (6 credits)
POLI8017. Workshop in public affairs (6 credits)
POLI8026. Workshop in managerial skills (6 credits)
POLI8027. Public administration in Hong Kong (6 credits)

Capstone experience courses

Candidates shall complete either Dissertation or Capstone project.

POLI8012. Dissertation (12 credits)
POLI8028. Capstone project (12 credits)

Elective courses

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

POLI7001. Human resource management (6 credits)
POLI7003. Public policy: issues and approaches (6 credits)
POLI7004. Public management reform (6 credits)
POLI7005. Comparative public policy (6 credits)
POLI7006. Politics and public administration in the era of climate change (6 credits)
POLI7007. The art and science of policy-making in Hong Kong (6 credits)
POLI7008. The povernance of China and past experience (6 credits)
POLI7009. Governance and policy in international organizations (6 credits)
POLI8002. Ethics and public affairs (6 credits)
POLI8003. Financial management (6 credits)
POLI8004. Government and law (6 credits)
POLI8008. Public administration in China (6 credits)
POLI8009. Policy design and analysis (6 credits)
POLI8011. Selected topics in public policy (6 credits)
POLI8014. NGOs and governance (6 credits)
POLI8019. Comparative public administration reform (6 credits)
POLI8021. Public organization and management (6 credits)
POLI8023. Selected topics in public management (6 credits)
POLI8029. Non-profit management (6 credits)
POLI8030. Institutional analysis for public policy and management (6 credits)
POLI8031. Collaborative governance (6 credits)
POLI8032. Selected topics in public administration (6 credits)
POLI8033. Program evaluation (6 credits)
POLI8034. Digital society and governance (6 credits)

Subject to departmental approval, candidates may select no more than 6 credits of course from the core and elective course lists of Master of International and Public Affairs (MIPA) programme offered by the Department of Politics and Public Administration. The course from MIPA will be counted as an MPA elective.

The compulsory courses will be offered every year. The elective courses listed above will not necessarily be offered every year; from time to time, depending on the exigencies of staffing, additional courses may be offered while the above courses may be offered in different years of study. Candidates

should consult the Department to find out which courses are being offered in any one year.

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

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Compulsory Courses

POLI7002. Public administration: scope and issues (6 credits)

Every morning we travel to work or to school on roads that are "provided"; we enjoy education, public safety, drainage services, and so on that are "provided"; we engage in numerous economic transactions of which the regulation is "provided". Many of us simply take these provision and production activities for granted. Each of these activities, however, does involve a whole array of problem-solving efforts; Public Administration (PA) is concerned with how these efforts are arranged, maintained, and implemented. This course provides the intellectual foundation for the study of PA.
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

POLI8017. Workshop in public affairs (6 credits)

This course introduces the latest developments in the study of public affairs in a workshop format emphasizing intensive learning, hands-on training, as well as active participation of the students. Distinguished visiting scholars and/or practitioners from different fields of public affairs will be involved in this workshop. Topics to be covered may vary each year, and may cut across the boundaries of different subfields in public administration and policy.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8026. Workshop in managerial skills (6 credits)

The purpose of the course is to enable students to acquire knowledge and develop practical managerial skills in public administration, such as the knowledge and skills required for handling the media, dealing with civil society, coping with issues of public accountability, managing crises, and providing leadership in the departmental context. Distinguished practitioners will be invited to share their experiences with the students. Role-play and other exercises may also be conducted. The choice of topics, learning activities and format for assessment may vary each year.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8027. Public administration in Hong Kong (6 credits)

This course begins with an overview of the history of Hong Kong public administration since the early colonial days and covers coordination, budgetary allocation, consultation and civic engagement, and civil service management. Guided by academic research on these administrative functions, we will discuss more recent changes in institutions and practices as well as traditions that continue to shape the way the civil service works today. We also cover the major developments in local politics in the last two decades to better make sense of the challenges they pose to the civil service and the public sector at large.
Assessment: 100% coursework

Capstone Experience Courses

POLI8012. Dissertation (12 credits)

The dissertation presents the results of a student's research and should demonstrate a sound understanding of the field of study and appropriate research methods. A topic is selected in consultation with relevant teaching staff in September and the title of the dissertation is submitted for approval by 31 January of the final academic year of study. The dissertation is then researched and written and submitted for examination by 31 July of the final academic year of study.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8028. Capstone project (12 credits)

The Capstone project in the Master of Public Administration is a group-based learning-in-action project. It addresses and proposes possible solutions to a contemporary issue in public administration in Hong Kong. Its underlying purpose is to ensure that students grasp the essentials of applied research and analysis in a selected area of public affairs. A topic is selected in consultation with relevant teaching staff in September and the title of the capstone project is submitted for approval by 31 January of the final academic year of study. The project is then researched, written and submitted for examination by 31 July of the final academic year of study.
Assessment: 100% coursework

Elective Courses

POLI7001. Human resource management (6 credits)

Public administration strives to solve public problems seamlessly, unobtrusively, with citizens largely unaware of government presence. Crafting and implementing these solutions is the job of the public service, led by a political executive, with the civil service at its core. Explaining why people join the public service, work effectively, and stay in the public service is the focus of this course. We examine the extent to which public service motivation is supported by human resource management policies and how diversity, participation, and broader issues of accountability impact the behavior of public servants.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI7003. Public policy: issues and approaches (6 credits)

This course introduces students to the key concepts and theoretical approaches in the study of public policy process. The course is organized into three parts. Part one examines the basic concepts used in analyzing the policy process and the political and institutional contexts of policy making. Part two discusses the major theoretical approaches to the study of policy making and policy implementation and assesses their strengths and limitations. Part three analyses the politics of policy making in Hong Kong and discusses the applicability of the concepts and theories in public policy studies to the real world. Selected policy issues will also be examined to illustrate the dynamics of the policy process in Hong

Kong and other areas.
Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination

POLI7004. Public management reform (6 credits)

This course recognises and addresses that, over the last three to four decades, established systems of public management around the world have been subject to widespread reform embracing significant issues of organisational integration, autonomy, verticalism and horizontalism. Many people, organisations and power alignments have been affected by the adoption particularly of various forms of decentralisation, corporatisation and privatisation. This has resulted in numerous mixes of state, market and civil society activity involving contractual relationships, partnerships, networks and other strategic alliances.
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

POLI7005. Comparative public policy (6 credits)

The course is organized into three parts. Part one examines the key concepts and approaches in analyzing public policy and the political and institutional contexts of policymaking. Part two discusses the major approaches to the study of the policy process, policy design, and policy tools. Part three analyzes several key issues that are particularly relevant for Hong Kong and other Asia societies, namely aging, health care, housing, and innovation and technology.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI7006. Politics and public administration in the era of climate change (6 credits)

This course will take the portfolio of climate change and environmental policy in Hong Kong as an example to share the local experience and observations in the practice of public policy and administration. The course contents will be largely based on selected policy cases to illustrate the practices and challenges. The relevant issues such as political accountability, political and policy processes, executive-legislative relationship, public engagement, control of public utility companies, and public education and publicity will also be touched on.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI7007. The art and science of policy-making in Hong Kong (6 credits)

This course combines academic discussions with practical experiences in public policy-making in Hong Kong. Through cases from different policy areas, it analyzes how the concepts and theories of public policy are applied in the actual policy-making process. Concepts such as policy formulation process, policy implementation, policy coordination, public engagement, and policy review, along with relevant academic works, will be covered in this course. These concepts and theories will be applied to different policy areas in Hong Kong such as healthcare, welfare, labour, environmental protection, and so on. By integrating theory with practical experience, students will gain a deeper understanding of the scientific nature of policy "science" as well as the "art" of real-world policy-making.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI7008. The governance of China and past experience (6 credits)

This course involves thematic seminars on Chinese politics, national governance, political development

and other research themes, focusing on studying and summarizing the experiences and lessons of governance in China from the perspectives of party governance, government governance, society governance, and market regulation. It examines topics such as environmental governance, anti-corruption policy, economic development, and the construction of the rule of law, emphasizing institutional arrangements, decision-making systems and mechanisms, policy orientations, and policy measures.
Assessment: 30% coursework, 70% examination

POLI7009. Governance and policy in international organizations (6 credits)

Governance is about managing complex policymaking processes. It refers to the formal and informal interactions between stakeholders that have different perspectives on how to address the most pressing problems we face. The range of stakeholders with an interest in today's significant policy problems is vast. For instance, mitigating and adapting to climate change requires action by governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at the local, national, regional and global levels. Tackling policy problems that have international dimensions requires the coordination of multiple government agencies within states, different levels of government, non-state actors, which include corporations, civil society organizations and think tanks, as well as international organizations and agencies. This complexity is magnified in today's interconnected world, as policymaking in one region of the world can have significant effects elsewhere. This course covers the concepts, theories and methods required to understand governance and policymaking processes that have significant international dimensions.
The course reviews the structure and functioning of serval international organizations (including the United Nations, the European Union and ASEAN), as well as the role of states (including a range of established and emerging countries) and non-state actors (including corporations, civil society groups, and think tanks). The course will apply this knowledge to recent case studies of governance and policymaking from the fields of international security, trade and finance, environment and climate change, health, migration and digital technologies.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8002. Ethics and public affairs (6 credits)

This course focuses on the normative aspects of public policy and public administration. Using concepts and arguments, which are mainly derived from moral philosophy, the course examines the ethical justifications for, and the moral implications of, the policy choices and conduct of public officials. It will also examine the issues and challenges in maintaining responsible conduct in public organization and the strategies to maintain and enhance public administration ethics.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8003. Financial management (6 credits)

This course examines the nature, processes, causes and effects of budgeting as a fiscal instrument to enhance economic growth, as a mechanism for the allocation of scarce resources, and as a management tool for executive planning and financial control. It will also analyze the macroeconomic and political contexts of budgeting and other key concepts and issues in financial management in the public sector.
Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination

POLI8004. Government and law (6 credits)

This course examines the legal regulation of governmental powers at the constitutional and administrative levels. Topics include: the constitutional development of Hong Kong under "One

Country Two Systems" and the Basic Law; principles of constitutional and legal interpretation; constitutional protection of human rights under the Basic Law and the Bill of Rights; the nature of judicial review of administrative actions; exercise of discretionary powers by administrative officials; principles of judicial review and their application in actual cases.
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

POLI8008. Public administration in China (6 credits)

This course examines the context and key issues of public administration and the policy process in contemporary China; including the political system, legal reform, civil service system, fiscal system, party and state institutions; performance management and central-local relations. It also addresses recent developments in major policy areas such as social security, education reform and economic reform.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8009. Policy design and analysis (6 credits)

This course focuses on conceptual and analytical skills and techniques required for understanding, and suggesting solutions to, policy problems. It examines major components of public policy analysis – problem definition, policy design, and policy assessment.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8011. Selected topics in public policy (6 credits)

This course examines selected topics that address the key issues in the theory and practice of public policy. It will be offered from time to time as resources permit.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8014. NGOs and governance (6 credits)

This course examines the relationships between and among the state, market and civil society with particular reference to the work of those not-for-profit organizations and associations which are normally referred to as NGOs. It focuses on the legal-structural dimensions of NGOs and the ways in which they operate in the production, provision, ownership, regulation and facilitation of various goods and services.
Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination

POLI8019. Comparative public administration reform (6 credits)

This course recognises that public administration remains an essential feature of government around the world, alongside and coupled with significant developments in public management and public governance. As with these developments, it has been subject to significant ongoing adaptation and transformation. The pressures for change have been founded in, and beyond, the nature and demands of the political systems and societies in which administrative decisions are made, action occurs and evaluations undertaken. The result has been increased structural, operational and review diversity, involving numerous organisational responses and challenges which are valuably studied from comparative perspectives.
Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination

POLI8021. Public organization and management (6 credits)

The course is designed for practitioners in the field of public administration and public policy. It seeks to enhance students' understanding of organizational phenomena and discusses potential strategies for enhancing the management and performance of public organizations. Studies and practices of organizations from different sectors are drawn on as learning materials. The course aims to develop students' ability to understand and analyze the characteristics and functioning of public organizations. At the end of the semester, students will also be equipped with some basic tools for improving organizational performance.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8023. Selected topics in public management (6 credits)

This course examines selected topics that address the key issues in the theory and practice of public management. It will be offered from time to time as resources permit.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8029. Non-profit management (6 credits)

This course will advance students' understanding of nonprofit management and how government could work with nonprofits in carrying out public policies or delivering public services. It will draw upon theories advanced by the scholarly community and provide case studies for in-depth analysis of key themes in nonprofit management, such as legal framework and institutional environment, governance, public and nonprofit partnership, accountability, contracting, strategic planning, and leadership.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8030. Institutional analysis for public policy and management (6 credits)

Public policies and management do not take place in a vacuum. It is essential for public managers to possess a good awareness and understanding of their embedded political context. The course applies various institutional approaches to understand the political-institutional structures and processes in which various public policies and management were practiced. It is a master–level course designed for practitioners in the field of public administration and policy who need to master the skills of managing various projects, programs, and particularly larger-scale public policy and management reforms. In this course, learning resources will be drawn on from theories and practices proposed by both academics and practitioners.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8031. Collaborative governance (6 credits)

Recent transformations of state, private, and society have increased the importance of collaborative governance in terms of formulating, determining, and implementing public policy. Collaborative governance requires the governments to engage the public, private, and civil society stakeholders at multi-levels. Students will gain a solid understanding of the role of collaborative governance in contemporary public administration.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8032. Selected topics in public administration (6 credits)

This course examines selected topics that address the key issues in the theory and practice of public administration. It will be offered from time to time as resources permit.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8033. Program evaluation (6 credits)

This course provides an introduction to program evaluation. The main objective of this course is to familiarise students with a wide range of evaluation methods that are increasingly used to evaluate programs and inform their design and implementation. Students will begin by reflecting on the inherent complexity involved in program evaluation and the importance of evaluation planning and design. Students will then engage with basic statistical techniques that underly evaluation methodologies. The remainder of the course will focus on introducing and applying the major evaluation frameworks. These include quantitative frameworks (e.g. field and laboratory experiments, quasi-experimental methods) and synthetic evaluations. By the end of the course, students will be able to design, implement and run a basic program evaluation, and critically engage with published program evaluations in the academic and grey literatures. No previous university-level quantitative knowledge is required for this course.
Eligibility: Students who have taken POLI8032 in 2020-21 are not allowed to take this course.
Assessment: 100% coursework

POLI8034. Digital society and governance (6 credits)

We're all living in a fast-changing world -- now largely driven by technology and innovation -- from the way how we shop, where we get information, and to the future of financial services. Meanwhile, we acknowledge the biggest challenge to technology and innovation is no longer the development of new technology itself but rather how to get the users and policymakers to understand the pros and cons of emerging technologies and then how to apply them to the new digital society in a responsible way as the general public do expect higher efficiency in delivery of public services as well as better control of our own data privacy. Those are the questions and issues we will explore in this course. The instructor designs the course based on his first-hand long time experience at Meta (previously known as Facebook) as well as a witness of the rapid changes of regulatory landscapes across the globe, which is becoming more and more divided and the students need to learn and assess which internet governance models will be more desirable and why. We will also touch on geopolitics and learn why technology lies at the heart of growing US-China tensions, for example, AI, electric vehicles, and semiconductor business. Students will also have the opportunities to meet guest speakers from leading technology companies and policymakers as well as accesses to company visits and related industry seminars.
Eligibility: Students who have taken POLI8023 in 2021-22 are not eligible to take this course.
Assessment: 100% coursework