

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Why enrol for the MPA programme?

The **Master of Public Administration (MPA - 07251153)** programme prepares you for a leadership role in the field of Public Administration. By completing the MPA programme you acquire managerial competencies that enable you to deal effectively with challenges in the modern public sector.

What is the aim of the MPA programme?

The MPA aims to promote for an in-depth understanding of core executive, organisational and managerial functions. You will be guided by experienced faculty to understand the historical development and principles of public administration, public policy management and issues regarding policy implementation. The programme also encompasses other core topics and areas that are of critical importance in preparing you for a senior position in the public sector.

What are the curriculum requirements?

In order to obtain the degree, you must successfully complete seven compulsory modules, and a mini-dissertation. You must register before the end of January of your first academic year for all the modules as well as the mini-dissertation (PAD 899). In the event that you do not complete the programme in the 2 years prescribed time, you will need to register for the outstanding modules/mini-dissertation the following year. Extensions to the second year are not automatically granted. Based on your academic performance, you will require permission from the Postgraduate Committee and the Deputy Dean: Research to continue with your studies. For details, see the *Postgraduate Regulations and Syllabi for the coursework MPA (07251153)*, which appears on the University of Pretoria's website at <https://www.up.ac.za/yearbooks/2025/EMS-faculty/MA-programmes/view/07251153>

What are the admission requirements?

Details of the requirements for admission appear in the publication *Postgraduate Regulations and Syllabi of the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences*. The following are the core requirements:

- 1) A relevant Bachelor's or B-tech degree for which an average mark of at least 60% was achieved. However, the students with the top 50 marks will be accepted.
- 2) At least three years of administrative and managerial experience, preferably in the public sector. The assessment of whether this experience is deemed adequate and

appropriate rests with the Director of the School of Public Management and Administration.

- 3) The Postgraduate Committee will evaluate all applications based on merit (academic and experience) whereafter candidates will be informed of the outcome of their application.

Please note that, in terms of a decision of the Senate of the University, a maximum of 50 students may be admitted to the coursework MPA programme

How do you apply for admission?

Applications for admission to next year's coursework MPA programme may be submitted as from 1 April this year. The cut-off date for applications is 30 September 2025. No late applications will be considered. The application process includes the following actions and documents:

- 1) Complete the application form online and submit the required documents before the due date.
- 2) The application protocol must include the following:
 - a) Online application via the university website <https://www.up.ac.za/online-application>
 - b) Certified copies of official academic transcripts.
 - c) Certified copies of all qualifications obtained.
 - d) Complete curriculum vitae.
 - e) and identification document
- 3) In addition to the online application, an electronic copy of your application (including all photocopy attachments) must be submitted when an online application has been made. due date to the Postgraduate Coordinator of the School of Public Management and Administration, University of Pretoria.
- 4) Application fee: The application fee can be paid at the university cashiers or by internal transfer. Consult Student Affairs for details or click on the link <https://www.up.ac.za/student-fees/article/2735935/postgraduate-tuition-fees-per-faculty>
- 5)

Please note that the submission of an application does not automatically lead to admission. Shortlisting of applicants takes place during October each year and the Faculty Administration informs applicants by the end of November whether their application has been successful or not.

Registration of successful applicants

Successful applicants register on the first day of the first study block of year one. Students are required to register every year thereafter until they have completed the course.

Is class attendance obligatory?

In accordance with the regulations of the University of Pretoria, class attendance is obligatory for all modules. Classes are presented on a block-release system, i.e. one week (Monday to Friday) per module, 8:30 – 16:00 daily.

Where are the timetable and examination dates to be found?

Consult the SPMA webpage on the University of Pretoria website for the class timetable and the examination dates.

What is the duration of study and maximum period for completion?

The course extends over a minimum period of one year. However, the course must be completed within two years from the first registration date. The Dean may, upon the recommendation of the Departmental Postgraduate Committee, cancel the registration of a student who does not make satisfactory academic progress during any academic year.

What teaching methodology is applied?

A modular approach is applied. A comprehensive study guide will be provided, which contains a section that deals with organisational issues and another section that deals with the study component. The organisational component addresses the following matters:

- 1) general information and the tutoring approach.
- 2) important contact information.
- 3) time arrangements.
- 4) how the module will be assessed.

The study component of the study guide also contains study material and reference documents. The study guide is a tool that is intended to assist students and contains a comprehensive selection of study material that forms the foundation of the module. It provides guidance on required reading, content knowledge, preparation for class presentations, lectures and the final examination. Registered students should access the study guide for each module on the ClickUP system prior to attending the scheduled block week in order to read the material

and prepare for the block week. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain the prescribed book(s) and, where applicable, to download and print the listed prescribed sources for each study unit.

What does the assessment entail?

Continuous formative assessment is undertaken for each module. The assessment is based on specified learning outcomes. Individual class presentations are assessed in terms of predetermined criteria. Integrated assessment is undertaken by means of the completion of an assignment and a prescribed reader, which is to be submitted on a specified date. A summative assessment for each module, in the form of a written examination, is scheduled. (See the MPA examination timetable that is available on the website.)

In summary, the assessment comprises the following:

- 1) A module mark, which consists of:
 - a) class assessment (where applicable. The method/type of assessment is detailed in the study guide.)
 - b) required reader (Where applicable)
 - c) individual assignment
 - d) written examination
- 2) Final written Examination. A semester mark of at least 45% will qualify you for the examination (See University regulations in this regard). Credits are obtained for each module in which a final mark (average of semester and final written examination) of at least 50% has been achieved with a sub-minimum of 40% required for the examination.
- 3) Supplementary examination. A student may, on the recommendation of the Departmental Postgraduate Committee, be admitted to a re-examination/supplementary examination in a module, in cases where:
 - a) a final mark of between 40% and 49% has been obtained; or
 - b) a final mark of 50% has been achieved but the required sub-minimum of 40% in the examination has not been obtained.

Additional matters:

- 1) A re-examination/supplementary examination is allowed in a maximum of two modules.
- 2) A student may only write an examination in a module more than twice on the recommendation of the Director of the SPMA and with the approval of the Dean.
- 3) The foregoing means that a student may not sit for an examination more than three

times in a module, including one supplementary examination.

- 4) The subject content that is examined in a supplementary examination is the same as that examined in the relevant final written examination.
- 5) Should a student fail NME 801 the student will not be allowed to continue with PAD 899. Failing NME 801 two years consecutively will result in termination of studies.

What are the requirements regarding the mini-dissertation (PAD 899 Module)?

A flow diagram that explains the process of the completion of a mini-dissertation is available on the website at <https://www.up.ac.za/school-of-public-management-and-administration/article/42650/postgraduate>

The following are the requirements in this regard:

- 1) Attendance of the NME 801 Research Methodology module.
- 2) Submission of an approved research proposal (i.e. the assignment for the NME 801 module) which determine if a supervisor will be allocated A year mark will be allocated.
- 3) Registration for the mini-dissertation (PAD 899) in year two of the programme.
- 4) Submission of an amended research proposal (or a new proposal) to the SPMA Postgraduate Committee, if required.
- 5) Allocation of a supervisor.
- 6) Conclusion of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the supervisor regarding deliverables and milestones.
- 7) Obtaining clearance regarding the ethics of the proposed research.
- 8) Conducting the research in consultation with a supervisor.
- 9) Preparation of a final draft of the mini-dissertation and the submission thereof for language and layout editing.
- 9) Obtaining a declaration from a registered subject language specialist who edited the mini-dissertation. There is a database of language practitioners who are registered with the UP.
- 10) Submission of the mini-dissertation for examination.

Examination of the mini-dissertation

- 1) The mini-dissertation must be submitted during the first week of April for examination in May or during the first week of September for examination in October.
- 2) Any changes that may be required by the examiner are to be implemented to the satisfaction of the supervisor prior to the cut-off date for graduation.
- 3) A pass mark of 50% is required.

- 4) The final mark for the mini-dissertation is forwarded by Faculty administration to the student. This task is not undertaken by the supervisor or by any SPMA staff member.

What is the policy regarding plagiarism?

Plagiarism involves the appropriation of someone else's work and passing it off as one's own. It is considered to be a serious form of academic misconduct. For further information on this subject please visit the following website:

https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/1/ZP_Files/s5106-19-plagiarism-prevention-policy.zp181077.pdf

What is the policy regarding deregistration and termination of registration?

Should you fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress at any stage, your supervisor may, in consultation with Faculty administration, issue you with a warning letter concerning poor academic achievement. You may be placed on probation and monitored for a period of three months. Should your academic achievement not improve, your registration may be terminated by the Dean on the recommendation of the Postgraduate Committee (General Regulation G.4).

Do I only have to register for my 1st year of study?

No, you need to re-register for each new academic year by the end of February every year that you are busy with your mini-dissertation and pay the registration fees.

May an appeal be lodged against the termination of registration?

A student may appeal the decision to terminate his/her registration with the Vice-Principal responsible for Research and Postgraduate Studies. The student has an opportunity to state his/her case in writing to the Vice-Principal. The supervisor will also submit a written response to the appeal. The Appeals Committee, considers the written submissions of both parties before it takes a decision which is considered final.

Who are the important role-players?

MPA Programme Leader

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