



THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

FAQs for Applications and Admissions

Q: Are applicants required to submit GRE scores?

The **GRE is no longer required or reviewed**. Please note that any submitted GRE scores will not be considered upon application review.

Q: Who do I contact for help with the on-line application?

If you are having issues with the online application platform, please contact the Graduate School directly. The contact information for the Graduate School can be accessed here: <https://gradschool.umbc.edu/> - 410-455-2537 or gradschool@umbc.edu

Q: How can I get a waiver for the application fee?

At this time, the Graduate School does not allow discretionary app fee waivers. You are eligible for a fee waiver if you fall into one of these categories: current Peace Corps volunteers, Horizons participants, McNair Scholars, Project 1000 applicants, and employees of UMBC. There are also a few exceptions for returning students.

Visit <https://umbc.edu/admissions/graduate/admissions-requirements/#other> for more information and to request a waiver if you believe you are eligible.

Q: Do I need to have a policy degree in order to apply?

A: No, we do not require that applicants hold a degree in a policy field. Applicants must, however, have an undergraduate degree (or receive one prior to the intended graduate degree start date) in order to apply. See also "personal statement".

Q: Do I need to have a faculty mentor prior to applying?

A: No, faculty advisors are assigned by the School of Public Policy based on specialization area after the point of admission.

Q: Is your program a STEM designated program?

A: No, neither the MPP nor the PhD are STEM designated degree programs.

Q: How does the dual degree program work, like the JD/PhD?

For those who are interested in our partnership with UB School of Law, UMB Law, or any of the joint degree programs, please take a look at details regarding combined programs:

<https://publicpolicy.umbc.edu/programs-of-study/> You will apply to each program separately, and work out with each program's advisors which credits count for what. You can apply to one program first, and then the second program once you have started the first degree, but be sure to apply to the second program at least one full semester before completion of the first.

Q: Are there opportunities to take courses at other Baltimore area institutions through perhaps an inter-university consortium?

Yes, we offer consortium options. This is something that would need to be approved by both your faculty advisor and our Graduate Program Director.

Q: How many students are admitted into the MPP or PhD program annually?

There are no quotas and caps on admission and enrollments, so we are fortunate to be able to admit all applicants that meet our requirements.

Q: What are alumni doing now? How can I learn more about them?

We have a network of alumni who are very active and send us internships, etc. There is also an organized alumni office that tracks alumni data, so we can help students connect with alumni in their fields of interest or at specific organizations. Visit our alumni page:

<https://publicpolicy.umbc.edu/alumni/> And our **select alumni profiles**:
<https://publicpolicy.umbc.edu/files/2018/11/Combined-Alumni-Profiles.pdf>

Q: Can I defer enrollment if admitted?

As you hear of your admission to the program, you may choose to defer enrollment for up to 1 year. Please follow the deferral instructions on the Graduate School website here:

<https://gradschool.umbc.edu/students/forms/>

Q: Am I able to focus mostly on health policy (or other policy area)?

Yes, Health Policy is a designated area of specialization. You can also design your own combination of courses to suit your interests. To access the list of **specializations**, please visit our website here: <https://publicpolicy.umbc.edu/study-specializations/>

Q: Regarding concentrations within PhD for Public Policy, can students change their focus within the first year?

Yes, absolutely. The online application will ask you for your primary area of interest. We use this information to get you connected with a faculty advisor in that area. You will work with your faculty advisor to tailor your courses (beyond the core) to your interests. To review the listing of available specializations, please visit our website here:

<https://publicpolicy.umbc.edu/study-specializations/>

Q: What is the timeframe for consideration once I apply? How to take/register for classes before acceptance into a program?

There are two admissions application deadlines.

Domestic Application Deadlines:

M.P.P. –

for spring 2025, complete application by **November 1**;

for fall 2025, complete application by **April 1**

Ph.D. – **January 15** (Fall admission only)

To be automatically considered for a GA position for AY 2025, apply by February 1.

International Application Deadlines:

Same as above

Non-Degree Seeking:

July 15 (Fall), December 15 (Spring)

Any student can take up to **6cr as a Non-Degree seeking student**. You will submit a separate non-degree seeking application. To review the application process for ND status, please visit the Graduate School website here:

<https://umbc.edu/admissions/graduate/admissions-requirements/#new-application-exemptions>

Q: What is the difference between Full time and part time enrollment?

Full Time rate of pursuit at the graduate level is 7cr-9cr per semester. Part Time status at the graduate level is 1cr-6cr per semester.

Q: How do I apply as an international student?

The Graduate School has a great landing page found here:

<https://umbc.edu/admissions/graduate/international-applicants/>

The best resource and advocacy for **international students**: <https://ies.umbc.edu/>

Q: What are the funding opportunities for the program/Am I guaranteed funding if admitted?

All applicants to our grad programs (who are not working full time) are also considered for a Research Assistantship with faculty when they apply. However, these are highly competitive, and dependent on faculty grants and other funding. *To be considered for a GA position for AY 2025, apply by February 1.*

To view **UMBC graduate funding** opportunities, please visit the UMBC FA and Scholarships page here: <https://umbc.edu/admissions/graduate/funding/>

Public Policy also has a list of funding opportunities specific to our programs, once enrolled as a student: <https://publicpolicy.umbc.edu/financial-aid/>

Q: Are graduate level classes being offered remotely?

As of Fall 2024, most courses are offered in person as well as a select number of courses with hybrid format. For updates on University operations during COVID-19 please visit the University COVID 19 website here: <https://covid19.umbc.edu/>

Q: Are there internship opportunities? Will you help me find an internship?

We circulate internships to our students, and we are informed of opportunities frequently from alumni, board members, faculty, and other community members. Some internships may be in DC, some are remote, many are Baltimore-based or at the state level, where our network is strongest. We have a Career Center at UMBC that can assist with your internship search. Their webpage can be found here: <https://careers.umbc.edu/employers/internships/>

Q: Are there Study Abroad opportunities?

At this time, we do not offer study abroad as part of our curriculum.

Q: What is the Accelerated or BA/MPP program? How do I start taking graduate level classes as an undergraduate?

For those students who are current UMBC undergraduate students, you may want to consider applying to our Accelerated Program. For more information on the Accelerated Program and the process for applying, please visit the Graduate School website here:

<https://umbc.edu/admissions/graduate/accelerated-program/>. The First step is to make an appt with undergrad advisor to make sure you have time in your schedule to take UP TO 4 grad classes. THEN contact Shelley Morris in Public Policy.

Q: How long will it take for me to finish my degree?

If attending part-time, depends on how many courses you take at once. Many of our students work full time and take classes part time. For full-time enrollment, most finish the PhD in 4-5 years. Full-time MPP is usually completed in 2 years. Many Part-time MPP students take 3- 3.5 years. Working full-time and taking courses full-time is not advised.

Q: Is it typical for PhD students to go into academic, tenure-track careers?

Our alumni tend to go into practice as opposed to Academia, but we do have alumni that pursue instruction. Some alumni go into academics, and we have alumni who are deans, professors, etc. Many other alumni work for non-profits, think tanks doing policy research, or at the local, state, or federal levels of government.

Q: If someone is applying to the PhD program and is not accepted, are they considered for the master's program, or would this be a separate application?

You can request via the Graduate School to be considered for the MPP in that circumstance.

Q: Where do students live?

Most graduate students live off-campus and secure their own housing. Graduate Housing options are visible here: <https://gsa.umbc.edu/graduate-housing-options/>

Q: How can I learn more about or get in touch with Faculty?

Explore profiles and reach out to any **faculty member** via email to learn more about their courses and advising methods. <https://publicpolicy.umbc.edu/ourfaculty/>. You can also learn more about faculty (and student) activities in our quarterly newsletters: <https://publicpolicy.umbc.edu/newsletters/>. You can also follow us on twitter [@UMBCPubPolicy](https://twitter.com/UMBCPubPolicy) for program news and relevant events.

Q: Is the writing sample required for the Application?

The **writing sample is not a requirement**. If you have a sample of your academic writing it can be submitted as supplementary on the online application platform. If you choose to submit a writing sample, please keep your submission to **10 pages or less**.

Q: Are there any resources for Military Veterans within the application/admission process?

Yes, you can find support on the Veterans website here: <https://veterans.umbc.edu/>

Q: What are Shriver Peaceworkers/are there resources for returning Peace Corps volunteers?

Each year the Shriver Peaceworker Program invites a group of returning Peace Corps volunteers (RPCVs) to participate in a two-year service-learning program integrating graduate study, community service, and ethical reflection. Participation in the program is limited to Peace Corps volunteers who have successfully completed their service overseas. RPCVs who are interested in applying to the Public Policy program to receive funding through Shriver Peaceworker Program should contact Joby Taylor (joby.taylor@umbc.edu) or visit their website. The application fee is waived for current PCVs.

<https://peaceworker.umbc.edu/>

Updated 8/19/24