

POLICY STUDIES (POSI)

Graduate Degree Program
College: Public Policy

Abstract

The School of Public Policy is one of the nation's leading graduate programs devoted to the study of public policy, management and international affairs, with particular expertise in the fields of environmental policy, international development, international security and economic policy, social policy, non-profit management, public management and leadership, and public finance. The School offers a wide variety of master's programs, joint degree programs, graduate certificate programs, and one of the nation's premier doctorate programs. The School's location just outside of Washington, D.C. attracts a stellar faculty of scholar-practitioners who are experts in the theory and practice of public policy and management and influential participants in the nation's policy-making process. The location and faculty in turn attract outstanding students by providing them, not only an in-depth, rich curriculum, but extensive exposure to and interaction with the real-life world of policy-making, the federal government, the international diplomatic community, state and local governments, and a host of non-governmental and multinational organizations. It is one of the few policy schools to combine state, national and international policy study under one roof, and to take into account policy interests in all sectors of the economy, thus allowing both faculty and students to study the full range of issues in all courses and in all research. The Ph.D. program trains policy analysts who will make their marks in the practice and teaching of public policy. To this end, a limited number of applicants are admitted annually. In their first year, students develop and demonstrate proficiency in economic, normative, political, and quantitative analysis. They then pursue advanced study within their chosen specialization. Finally, they complete and defend a doctoral dissertation. Those awarded the degree move on to public policy careers in government, research, academia, and the private sector.

Financial Assistance

The School has financial aid available in the form of fellowships, graduate assistantships, and employment. All qualified applicants meeting appropriate deadlines are considered.

Contact

School of Public Policy
Graduate Admissions
1237 Thurgood Marshall Hall
7805 Regents Drive
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
Telephone: 301.405.6331
Email: policy-applications@umd.edu

Website: <https://spp.umd.edu/>

Courses: PLCY (<https://spp.umd.edu/your-education/phd/>)

ADMISSIONS

General Requirements

- Statement of Purpose
- Transcript(s)
- TOEFL/IELTS/PTE (international graduate students (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/english-language-proficiency-requirements/>))

Program-Specific Requirements

- Letters of Recommendation (3)
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (optional)
- CV/Resume
- Supplementary Application (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/default/files/2023-05/umdsupplementaryapplicationplcy2020.pdf>)
- Writing Sample: The writing sample should be relatively recent, and should preferably demonstrate the applicant's ability to structure and analyze a problem, or critique/develop a viewpoint. (uploaded to the Uploads Requirements section of the application)

For more admissions information or to apply to the program, please visit our Graduate School website (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/application-process/step-step-guide-applying/>).

Application Deadlines

Type of Applicant	Fall Deadline
Domestic Applicants	
US Citizens and Permanent Residents	January 30, 2026
International Applicants	
F (student) or J (exchange visitor) visas; A,E,G,H,I and L visas and immigrants.	March 13, 2026

Other Deadlines: Please visit the program website at <http://www.publicpolicy.umd.edu>

REQUIREMENTS

- Policy Studies, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/policy-studies-posi/policy-studies-phd/>)