



The University of Kansas

School of Public Affairs and Administration

Master of Public Administration Graduate Handbook

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This manual provides information concerning the Master of Public Administration graduate program in the School of Public Affairs & Administration. It refers to Graduate Studies guidelines but does not summarize all regulations applicable to graduate students at the University of Kansas. Please refer to the [Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs section of the KU Academic Catalog](#) for additional information and requirements.

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION GRADUATE PROGRAM

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KU Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs site: <http://graduate.ku.edu>

The MPA Program Mission

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree draws on its historic and enduring strengths in local government and public management to prepare students to manage and lead public-serving organizations, especially at the state and local levels. The Program is dedicated to cultivating the ethics, knowledge, critical thinking, and professional skills needed to serve diverse communities.

The KU MPA achieves its mission by:

- Providing high-quality professional education that instills in students the interdisciplinary knowledge and skills to lead public and non-profit organizations;
- Conducting policy and management research that speaks to contemporary social issues and topics of relevance to the field;
- Fostering and modeling public service values—social equity, sustainability, transparency, accountability, and respect for democracy—in teaching, research, and service to the professional community; and
- Recruiting and retaining students with diverse backgrounds who show passion and potential for leadership in public service.

MPA Admissions

When reviewing the applications of prospective students, the admissions committee considers:

- Commitment to public service;
- Demonstrated leadership or leadership potential; and
- An academic background that indicates an ability to succeed in a rigorous, writing-intensive social science program that promotes critical thinking.

Other enhancing factors include:

- Service involvement in leadership positions.
- Professional work experience in the public or nonprofit sector. Here, professional work is defined as having responsibility for service or program management, policy creation or implementation, or providing leadership for a section or unit.

The application deadlines are: February 1*, May 1, or November 1.

*Applications for the City Management Fellowship must be submitted by February 1 and include an additional essay describing your interpretation of the Athenian Oath (1000 words or less).

For further information regarding the program or the application process, please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator.

All supporting documentation for the application should be uploaded to the online application, with the exception of official transcripts, which should be sent directly from the issuing institution to:

Via mail:
University of Kansas Graduate Admissions
KU Visitor Center
1502 Iowa St.
Lawrence, KS 66045

Electronically:
graduateadm@ku.edu

Regular Admission

Students with an undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.0 and a clear indication of how they meet MPA admission criteria are recommended for admission to the MPA degree program.

Provisional Admission

Applicants who meet all University admission standards but have one or more deficiencies in the admission requirements above, as determined by the program, may be admitted on a provisional basis.

If an applicant is admitted provisionally, the student's department will review the student's progress immediately following each semester of graduate study until the student has completed 9 credit hours of graduate level course work. These reviews will determine whether the student has met the requirements for regular admission. Upon passing the review at the completion of 9 credit hours, the provisionally admitted student's admission status will be updated to 'regular' admission.

Deny Admission

Applicants who do not adequately represent themselves as meeting the MPA admission criteria or do not have a holistic record that indicates the potential for success in graduate-level course work will be

denied admission to the degree-seeking program. Some students denied admission may be invited to apply as a non-degree seeking student to strengthen their academic profile and/or clarify their goals for the degree, but this does not guarantee admission upon reapplication.

English Language Proficiency

Non-native English speakers must demonstrate English proficiency to gain admission to a graduate program. [The Graduate Admissions site](#) details the standards and methods of meeting proficiency requirements.

The MPA Curriculum

The MPA degree is awarded after successful completion of 40 credit hours of course work. This includes 15 credit hours of required core courses (5 courses) that all students complete, 12 credit hours toward one [School of Public Affairs and Administration graduate certificate](#) (4 courses), 12 hours of electives tailored to the student's interests (4 courses), and a final 1-credit hour course that will serve as a culmination of coursework and professional competencies. Once a student begins the program, all degree requirements must be completed within 7 years. While completing the following degree requirements, graduate students are expected to understand and follow [Office Graduate Studies policies](#) relevant to their student status and academic standing.

Core Course Requirements

The MPA core provides students with knowledge and skills foundational to advanced educational and professional engagement in public affairs and administration fields. They provide an important underpinning for the MPA certificates and are transferable across a range of public service professions. The MPA core course work includes the following courses (16 credit hours):

PUAD 824 Creating Good Public Policy	3 hours
PUAD 835 Managing Public Money	3 hours
PUAD 836 Data-Driven Decision Making	3 hours
PUAD 841 Context, Ethics and Legal Environment of Public Administration	3 hours
PUAD 845 Managing Public Organizations	3 hours
PUAD 899 Excelling in the Practice of Public Administration	1 hour

Although there are few formal prerequisites for MPA-level courses, it is recommended to take a majority of the core course requirements prior to elective requirements. PUAD 899 should be completed in the final semester of the MPA program.

To complete the MPA program, students will also take the following courses OR complete the [MPA City/County Management Fellows program](#):

1 School of Public Affairs and Administration graduate certificate	12 hours
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Students in the MPA program may opt to complete certificate course work *without* the credential. Please note that no credential will be awarded without completion and submission of the graduate application into the

certificate. Additionally, the School will prioritize course scheduling needs based on formal certificate enrollments.

4 Electives of additional School of Public Affairs & Administration course work or graduate course work outside the School chosen in consultation with the program advisor 12 hours

Upcoming graduate-level courses can be found on the [Office of the Registrar Schedule of Classes page](#). (For courses in the School, enter *PUAD* or *UBPL* in the (search text) field. In the degree-level drop-down, enter *Graduate*.)

MPA City/County Management Fellowship

Students admitted to the City/County Management Fellowship program are required to complete core courses and the following, which includes completion of the City/County Management graduate certificate, to fulfill degree requirements:

PUAD 851 Infrastructure Management	3 hours
PUAD 892 Local Government Internship	3 hours
PUAD 894 Professional Development Seminar I: Public Administration Contemporary Issues & Competency Assessment	3 hours
PUAD 895 Professional Development Seminar II: Leadership, Professionalism and Citizen Engagement	3 hours
PUAD 899 Excelling in the Practice of Public Administration	1 hour

Electives of additional School of Public Affairs & Administration course work or graduate course work outside the School chosen in consultation with the program advisor. Within these courses, students must complete the requirements for the City/County Management graduate certificate. 15 hours

During their first year of study, City/County Management Fellows complete 33 hours of course work in which they are exposed to a variety of theories and problem-solving techniques in areas such as organizational design and development, management and supervision, policy analysis and evaluation, finance and budgeting, and personnel administration. To enhance the connection between theory and practice, Fellows may complete a part-time internship during the first year, which is usually paid.

During the second year, Fellows complete paid full-time internships/full-time positions in city and county government and enroll in 2 professional development seminars: PUAD 894 in the Fall and PUAD 895 in the Spring. The seminars are formal MPA classes and enrollment completes the remaining 6 credit hours required by the program. During the full-time internship year, as a part of these seminars, students meet with the Professor of Practice and other contributing graduate faculty for 3 intensive multi-day sessions designed to link theory and practice. The first meeting is held at the International City/County Management Annual Conference. The second and third meetings occur in the Lawrence area and are traditionally scheduled in January and May so the cohort may take part in commencement events. Fellows complete PUAD 899 in the Spring semester of their second year.

Each Fellows cohort has a Practitioner in Residence (PIR). This person assists the students in their

transition from academic life to a professional career.

MPA Conferral for Public Administration Ph.D. aspirants

Public Administration Ph.D. students wanting to also earn an MPA must complete 30 credit hours of MPA-level courses. All MPA core courses, or direct substitution for each, must be completed. If a Ph.D. course is used as a substitute, an MPA-level elective class must be taken in its stead so that a total of 30 MPA credit hours are completed.

Graduate Certificates

Admission to School of Public Affairs and Administration Graduate Certificates

The School accepts students for graduate certificate study on a rolling basis. Students may apply to be admitted for either the fall, spring, or summer semesters. Applicants for all School of Public Affairs and Administration graduate certificates are required to have:

- Undergraduate GPA of 3.0 (if the undergraduate degree was awarded in the last three years)
- At least three years of managerial experience, admission to a KU graduate program KU, or a conferred graduate management or leadership degree from an accredited institution
- [Proof of English language proficiency](#)

All students must complete an application in the Graduate Admission system to have the certificate formally denoted on their academic profile and transcript. Students in the MPA program may opt to complete certificate course work *without* the certificate credential. Please note that no credential will be awarded without completion and submission of the graduate application into the certificate. Additionally, the School will prioritize course scheduling needs based on formal certificate enrollments.

A graduate certificate cannot be retroactively applied to a student's record. The student must be admitted to the certificate program prior to starting the last required course for the certificate program.

Individuals who are not already enrolled as School of Public Affairs and Administration graduate students must complete [an application to Graduate Studies](#) for admission into the certificate program and submit an application fee along with the following materials:

- A current resume.
- A statement of interest in the graduate certificate program. This 1-2 page narrative should summarize your education, employment history, career goals, and how this certificate will bolster your professional aspirations.
- Official transcripts of baccalaureate degree/s and any post-baccalaureate course work.

The admissions committee may request additional materials if needed to assess an applicant's ability to be successful in the coursework.

City and County Management

Local government is increasingly being described as the level of government "where things get done." This certificate is designed for those who are interested in a career in local government organizations (cities and counties) or in non-profit or private sector organizations that collaborate or serve local governments. It offers broad coverage of the leadership and management skills that local government

professionals need as well as more in-depth instruction on key issues facing modern communities.

Public / Nonprofit Management

This certificate aims to enhance graduates' ability to manage and lead public and nonprofit organizations ethically and effectively. It establishes effective human resource management as a core foundation, with emphasis on the political, legal, and ethical dimensions of public service employment. Through study of management theories and techniques, students will gain understanding of contemporary organizational challenges and the tensions inherent to competing values and develop the leadership skills necessary to guide public organizations through change. Through their choice of electives, students may tailor this certificate to focus more specifically on the nonprofit or public sector.

Public Policy

Public policy shapes the behavior of individuals, organizations, and corporations and affects almost every aspect of society. The ability to develop "good" public policy requires both a strong analytical base and political astuteness. The required courses in the certificate establish a contextual and analytical foundation, equipping students with the ability to both prospectively assess and retrospectively evaluate public initiatives. Electives enable additional exploration of particular policy areas.

Urban Planning

Through the completion of this certificate, students will gain an essential introduction to the field and practice of urban planning, which is about engaging communities for better futures and creating places where people can lead meaningful lives. Courses will provide a framework of the social, economic, and political environments within which planning policy is formed and carried out. The certificate is geared toward meeting the need for planning policy on urban issues at any level of government — federal, state, regional, and local — or outside the governmental arena.

Graduate Certificates Outside SPAA

Departments and programs outside the School may also offer graduate certificates that contribute to the academic experience of MPA students. Upon review and approval of the MPA Program Manager, these certificates may be completed as the elective course requirements for the MPA degree, so long as the course work completed relates to the expected outcomes of the MPA program. Certificates that are traditionally approved include:

- [Environmental Justice](#)
- [Environmental Studies](#)
- [Museum Studies](#)
- [Foundations of Project Management](#)
- [Professional Workplace Communication](#)
- [Public Health Practice, Policy and Management](#)

Applicants are expected to meet the graduate certificate requirements and receive admission into outside graduate certificates through the host program.

Non-Degree Seeking Students

Non-degree seeking (NDS) students can take unlimited courses as NDS but, per university policies, only 9

graduate-level credits are eligible to be counted toward degree if they apply to matriculate at a later date.

University Admission Requirements: The standard requirements for NDS applicants are (1) proof of bachelor's degree conferred by a regionally accredited university and (2) proof of English proficiency.

Application Requirements:

- Completed non-degree seeking graduate application
- Current resume
- Statement of purpose describing background, current or previous experience in public service, courses you are interested in and how they will aid your current and future professional goals, etc.
- Official, degree-conferred transcripts and official transcripts for post-baccalaureate course work

Application Review: Completed NDS applications will be evaluated by the MPA Committee & Program Manager for reference, but do not require a full review.

MPA Internship Postings

All MPA students are granted access to the MPA Internship Postings Canvas site, which lists full-time and part-time internship positions that the School has been notified about. Each posting will be archived from the Active Posts Modules after the application's deadline, so all the postings visible should be open.

Students seeking internship opportunities are encouraged to set a recurring calendar appointment to make visiting this page routine, particularly in the spring semester of the first year. Students seeking internship opportunities should also regularly conduct searches on public administration aggregate search sites, including but not limited to: [USAJOBS](#), [Government Jobs](#), [Nonprofit Connect](#), [International City/County Managers Association \(ICMA\)](#), [Idealist](#), [Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration \(NASPAA\)](#).

MPA Student Teams Resource

[The MPA Students Teams site](#) serves as a repository and resource. All current MPA graduate students are added to and invited to regularly access the MPA Student Teams site to stay up-to-date with the following:

- MPA Updates in the General channel
- Conferences and Seminars
- Enrollment and Progress Tracking
- Graduation Processes and Events
- Greener Grass, GradPaths, and League of Kansas Municipalities
- KU web resources
- Orientations and Academic Success Resources

MPA Mentoring Group

We created a space on the Alumni Association's PeopleGrove platform for alumni and students to connect, seek and find mentoring at all levels, and share opportunities and resources. Join us!

- Navigate to the [KU Alumni Association Mentoring page](#).
- Join the Mentoring Community by connecting through your LinkedIn account or building a profile in the PeopleGrove system.
- Click to the Groups page on the red menu ribbon.
- Click to Join the MPA Network- for MPA Students & MPA Alumni.

Internship Credit

Current MPA students may enroll in course work to receive 3 credit hours toward program completion while completing an approved internship experience. Eligibility and enrollment requirements include:

- The internship or employment must be current; the internship/work credit must coincide with the semester in which the student is enrolled in the course. Retroactive credit for previous or past work is not permitted.
- Each student must have a designated supervisor responsible for providing guidance and evaluation.
- Only positions within public or nonprofit organizations are eligible for approval.
- Students must complete a minimum of 15 hours of work per week during the internship period.

In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements, the following information must be submitted to SPAA Programming & Career Services Manager for review:

- Position Description: A detailed outline of duties, responsibilities, and expected learning outcomes.
- Internship supervisor contact information
- Program Alignment Statement: A written explanation describing how the position aligns with the goals and competencies of the MPA program (listed below):
 - Lead and manage in public governance.
 - Participate in and contribute to the public policy process.
 - Analyze, synthesize, think creatively, solve problems, and make decisions.
 - Articulate and apply public service perspectives.
 - Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Mentorship Agreements

The University expects that a master's degree should typically be completed in two (2) years of full-time study. Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the link above and in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. In order to support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Note that the College's Mentoring Agreement is required for doctoral students who are within 2 years of exhausting their maximum time to degree (which is 7 years for master's degree students). See the [College Graduate Regulations](#) or talk to your graduate program coordinator for more information.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Degree Program Time Constraints](#)
- [Mentorship Agreement Template](#)
- [Mentorship Agreement Timeline](#)

Grievance Procedures

Graduate students should make every attempt to resolve issues directly with the instructor, the party involved, the MPA Director, or with the School's Director. If a grievance arises that cannot be resolved directly or if the student does not feel comfortable attempting to resolve the issue with the School's Director, the student should then follow the [School's official, university-approved grievance procedure](#).

University Policies and Degree Requirements

This section contains information on requirements and policies of the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs, hereafter referred to as “the University”. It is not a complete list of all policies pertaining to graduate students. Only those policies that *most commonly* affect graduate students are included. Policies are described in general terms and are intended to help students understand what is expected. They do not reflect the exact language of the official policy and should not be confused with official policy. Specific information and restrictions as well as links to relevant forms may be accessed by clicking on the policy headings. Links to the official policies in the KU policy library are found at the bottom of each policy description. Students are accountable to and should familiarize themselves with the University's official policies.

GENERAL POLICIES

The following University policies apply to ALL graduate students regardless of degree, program, or department. These are minimum general requirements. Your department or program may have more restrictive policies in any of these areas.

Admission

Degree or non-degree seeking applicants must have a bachelor's degree (as evidenced by an official transcript from the institution the degree was obtained).

Related Policies and Forms:

- Admission to Graduate Study

English Proficiency Requirements

The University requires all applicants, international or domestic, to demonstrate English proficiency for admission to any graduate program at KU. There are multiple ways to prove English proficiency: Declaration of native or native-like speaker status on the online application for graduate study.

- Official scores from an English proficiency standardized test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS-Academic, or PTE), sent by the testing agency to the University of Kansas. Official scores must be less than two years old. Scores must be reported to KU directly by the testing service. Self-reported scores or unofficial scores are not accepted. TOEFL scores should be sent by ETS to KU institution code 6871. IELTS should be sent to KU Graduate Admissions via the e-delivery service. PTE score sheets containing the Score Report Code and Registration ID should be emailed to graduateadm@ku.edu for verification.
- Graduation with a baccalaureate degree (or higher) earned in residence from an accredited English-medium college or university or an accredited college or university in the United States. Degrees earned online may not be used to verify English proficiency. Note: this option is not sufficient for employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.
- AEC Curriculum: Students who haven't taken one of the listed tests may complete coursework through the KU Applied English Center (AEC) to demonstrate English proficiency.
- US Military Employment: If you are employed as an officer in the U.S. military with documentation of selection or promotion to the rank of Major or higher (or the equivalent U.S. Navy or Coast Guard rank), then you will be considered fully proficient and will not be required to complete AEC testing.

Additional English Competency Requirements for GTAs:

English proficiency requirements for GTAs are governed by the Kansas Board of Regents and must be met separately from the English proficiency requirement for admission to a KU graduate program. Detailed information on English proficiency requirements for GTAs may be found on Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' Spoken English Competency page.

Related Policies and Forms:

- English Proficiency Requirements for Admission to Graduate Study_
- Spoken English Language Competency of Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants, Kansas Board of Regents Policy

Enrollment

For graduate students, advising on enrollment and course selection take place at the department level. While individual units may have additional enrollment requirements, for students who are required to enroll full-time (e.g. students holding a GTA/GRA/GA appointment, international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa, students receiving federal financial aid, etc.) the University defines full-time enrollment it as follows:

Fall and Spring semesters:

- Enrollment in 9 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s). *See Doctoral post-comprehensive enrollment.
- Enrollment in 6 competencies for students in a Competency-Based Education (CBE) program

Summer sessions:

- Enrollment in 6 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s).
- Enrollment in 6 competencies for students in a CBE program

Graduate students are not normally permitted to enroll for more than 16 hours a semester or more than 8 hours in summer session.

While these are KU's definitions of full-time enrollment, other institutions may have different definitions. Be sure to consult with your financial aid and/or health insurance providers before making enrollment decisions.

Students not enrolled by 11:59pm the day before the first day of classes will be assessed a late enrollment fee. The University Registrar then deactivates the KU ID of any not enrolled by the last

Friday in October (for Fall) or last Friday in March (for Spring). Students who wish to enroll after that must submit a Permit to Re-Enroll to be reactivated.

Students who wish to leave their graduate program should inform the department of such plans in writing so that a Voluntary Withdrawal form may be submitted on their behalf. Please note that voluntarily withdrawing from your program does **not** automatically withdraw you from coursework. You must also withdraw from all classes in Enroll & Pay via the “Withdraw from the University” option.

Deadlines for adding, changing, dropping, or withdrawing from all courses, as well any fines associated with the change, are set by the University. **Deadlines vary from year to year. Students should carefully review the current Academic Calendar.**

You may also wish to consult the Registrar's page on Effects of Dropping or Withdrawing on your Transcript.

Your graduate program coordinator (or similar title) is available to guide you through any enrollment scenarios or questions that come up. In order to avoid problems on your record, please consult with them prior to dropping or changing enrollment.

Related Policies:

- [Discontinued Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Graduate Coursework Expiration Dates](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)

Graduate Credit (Including Transfer Credit)

The University’s Graduate Credit policy defines KU’s conditions for the following:

Definition of graduate credit for the purposes of a course “counting” towards a graduate degree or graduate certificate at KU;

- Transfer of graduate credit to KU from an outside institution;
- Reduction in the required number of graduate hours for Master’s students;
- Counting credit hours taken as non-degree seeking student towards a later graduate degree at KU;
- Counting credit hours taken as a certificate seeking student toward another graduate degree.

Transfer Credit

The transfer credit option allows master’s students to add graduate-level coursework completed at another institution to their KU transcript to count toward their KU degree. Upper-level coursework taken as an undergraduate, even courses numbered at the graduate level, is not eligible for transfer in any case. Additional restrictions apply to what non-KU graduate courses and the number of credit hours that can be counted toward a KU master’s degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below, as well as consulting with their DGS. In all cases, transfer credit must first be approved at the department or program level. To begin the transfer process, students should consult with their DGS to submit the required transfer materials. These include a transcript reflecting the courses to be transferred and descriptions and/or syllabi for the courses in

question.

No transfer of credits is allowed for the Ph.D. In circumstances where students enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another institution or other relevant graduate coursework, it may be possible for students to request a reduction in the number of hours required for the Ph.D. Students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Reduced Credit Hour Degree

KU policy defines 30 hours as the minimum for master's degrees. Departments may petition for a reduced hour degree master's degree for individual students in cases where they may provide evidence that the student entered the program especially well-prepared to complete a graduate-level degree and the student is able to maintain a superior grade point average. Reduced credit hour degrees must be based on coursework or experiences that can be objectively measured, such as coursework or qualifying internship or study abroad programs. Professional or life experience does not qualify. A reduction in hours is distinct from a transfer of credit and is reserved for students whose prior coursework doesn't qualify for transfer credit (e.g. was already used to fulfill requirements towards a completed degree) and there are no modifications on the transcript.

Restrictions apply to the number of credit hours that can be reduced for a master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below. In all cases, a reduction in hours must first be approved at the department or program level, so to begin the process for approval, students should consult with their DGS. Students must also provide documentation of the coursework or experience being used to justify the reduced hours (e.g. transcripts, program descriptions).

Because there is no minimum number of required hours for the Ph.D., reduction of required hours based on prior degrees or experience is determined solely at the program level. Doctoral students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Related Policies:

- Graduate Credit
- Co-enrollment
- Master's Degree Requirements (on Reduced Hour Master's Degree)

Credit/No Credit

The University supports and encourages interdisciplinary study, which may include graduate students enrolling in coursework at the graduate level that is outside of their primary discipline. The Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) is an option for graduate students who are taking a course that is not required for their degree or certificate and who do not wish to have the course grade reflected in their cumulative graduate GPA. Rather than a grade appearing on the transcript, the student receives a designation of CR or NC, which does not factor in the GPA.

No course graded CR/NC will count toward the satisfaction of any graduate degree or certificate requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken to fulfill the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement for doctoral students.

Students make the CR/NC election via the Registrar's CR/NC online request form. Elections and changes

to elections can only be made during the specific CR/NC period. For regular semester courses, this period begins after the last day to add a class and extends for approximately two weeks. Exact dates may be found on the current KU Academic Calendar. Please keep in mind, short courses may have alternate dates.

The student should consult with their own program advisor about the appropriateness of the course prior to enrolling; however, in cases where CR/NC is elected, the course instructor is not informed of the election unless the student chooses to share this information.

Additional restrictions apply. Students should carefully review the information in the link above.

Related Policies and Forms:

- University Senate Rules and Regulations (USRR), Section 2.3.8

Probation & Dismissal

Probation is an academic status that can be assigned to a graduate student that is not making satisfactory progress toward completing their degree. The department initiates the probation process and will inform the student of why they are not making satisfactory progress, what they must do to return to good standing, and the deadline for doing so.

Students are most commonly placed on probation due to their graduate cumulative GPA dropping below a B average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale). In these cases, on the student's record for the semester following the semester in which the student's GPA drops below 3.0. If the student's cumulative GPA is raised to 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be automatically returned to good academic standing.

Individual Schools/the College may set more stringent GPA requirements.

Students may also be placed on probation by their departments for other reasons that constituting a failure to make satisfactory progress towards degree. These may include, but are not limited to;

- Lack of progress on the thesis, dissertation, or capstone project
- Unacceptable academic performance on program milestones outside of coursework (e.g. exams)
- Unsatisfactory grades or GPA within foundational required courses (despite the overall cumulative GPA)
- An unsatisfactory result in their department's annual progress evaluation
- Nearing or going beyond their maximum time to degree. See the Time Limits section below for more information.

Students should carefully review the Good Academic Standing policy for graduate students at KU for more information on what constitutes making satisfactory academic progress.

Individual programs may also have additional measures of progress. Students should also consult the Annual Review section of their department graduate handbook or the degree requirements section and with their program advisor for more information.

If a student is unable to raise their cumulative GPA or otherwise meet the communicated terms of the academic probation, the department will reconsider their continuation in the program, and in most cases will recommend the student for dismissal. Once dismissed, a student is no longer able to be

enrolled in coursework and cannot complete their degree. Students dismissed from any graduate program may not be admitted to any other graduate program at the University of Kansas.

A student on probation or facing dismissal should discuss their status with their advisor.

Related Policies:

- Academic Probation
- Dismissed Enrollment
- Good Academic Standing policy

Grading

The Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' (GPA) Grading policy governs requirements for the grading of graduate students above those described in Article II of the University Senate Rules and Regulations. Additionally, individual schools, departments, or programs may have grading policies that are more stringent than those of GPA.

Students should also consult their advisor and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information that may affect them.

At minimum, for all graduate students at KU, at least a B average is required on course work counted toward any of the master's degrees at KU, and only courses graded A, B, or C (excluding C-) may be counted. Course work counted toward a doctorate, including that for a master's degree if obtained at KU, should average better than a B.

Related Policies:

- University Senate Rules & Regulations
- Grading
- Academic Probation
- Dismissed Enrollment

Time Limits

The University expects that master's degree should typically be completed in two (2) years of full-time study, the doctorate degree in five (5) years of study, and both the master's and doctorate together in six-seven (6-7) years of study.

Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. In order to support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Note that individual schools/the College/degree programs may require Mentoring Agreements for students who are nearing their maximum time to degree.

Related Policies and Forms:

- Master's Degree Program Time Constraints
- Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs
- Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams (on exam expiration and recertification)

- Doctoral Program Profiles with Time to Degree Information
- KU CLAS Mentorship Agreement Template
- Univ. Michigan Rackham Graduate School Mentoring Plan Templates
- KU Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs IDP template

Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military leave, to pursue family responsibilities, or to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals) it may be necessary for graduate students to take a break from their program temporarily, without having to withdraw entirely from the program. An approved leave of absence allows a student to take a temporary break from enrolling in graduate coursework while remaining in good standing with the University and the department and while “stopping the clock” on their time to degree. When a student is on Leave of Absence status it is understood that they have temporarily suspended their graduate work and therefore will not make use of University resources, including faculty time.

Requesting a Leave of Absence is done through a University petition. University petitions must first be approved and supported at the program level, so students wishing to initiate the petition process should first consult with their Director of Graduate Studies and review their department’s internal petition procedures. Units or the Director of Graduate Study may request documentation to support the student’s need for a leave of absence.

In order for a Leave of Absence to be approved, the student must be withdrawn from all active and/or future enrollment. Withdrawal for the purposes of Leave of Absence is still subject to all Registrar deadlines, required forms, and applicable tuition and fees.

Students on Leave of Absence are automatically reactivated after their leave is over and are eligible to enroll for their intended semester back during the normal enrollment periods. See the KU Academic Calendar for exact dates that enrollment begins.

If at any time plans change and a student wishes to return and enroll before leave was supposed to end, they may contact their department to be reactivated early.

Related Policies and Forms:

- Leaves of Absence (policy)
- Leave of Absence (GPA website, form linked at bottom of page)

Required University Milestones

All graduate students must complete one or more exams as part of their degree requirements. In addition to department or program guidelines, the following milestones are required for all students and specific regulations apply:

Master's Final Culminating Exam (written or oral)/Thesis Defense for Master's degree

*A final culminating effort is not required for departments with an approved coursework-only master’s degree option in the Academic Catalog (note that programs with a capstone are considered coursework only).

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

The University offers a variety of Approved Graduate Certificate Programs to encourage current graduate students to pursue interdisciplinary study, gain a credential for expertise in an outside area of study, or provide an option for a coherent course of advanced study for those not ready to commit to a full degree program. Note that students must be fully admitted to a graduate certificate by the end of the last course that will count to fulfill the certificate. Students wishing to complete the certificate should apply as early as possible. Students whose interests or career goals may be served by a Graduate Certificate should familiarize themselves with the University's policies relating to Certificate programs (found below) early in their graduate career, in addition to individual certificate program requirements.

Related Policies and Forms:

- Graduate Certificate Programs: Eligibility and Admission Criteria
- Policies & Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (Master's)

In addition to all program requirements, students planning to graduate must complete all University graduation requirements **prior to the published Graduation Deadline** in a given semester. Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for the published Graduation Deadline, which varies by semester.

We strongly encourage students to submit an Application for Graduation as early as possible; ideally prior to the 20th day of classes of the semester they intend to graduate.

Appendix I: Dual Degrees

Master of Urban Planning and Master of Public Administration

This program combines the normal course work requirements for the Master of Urban Planning (42 credit hours) and the Master of Public Administration (40 credit hours) into just 72 credit hours for both degrees in 3 years. Students interested in learning about and leading cities into the future will gain critical planning, sustainability, and administrative skills through the combination of these degrees.

MPA/MUP Dual Degree Plan

For further information on this dual degree, please see the [course catalog](#) and speak with the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Master of Public Administration and Juris Doctor

This program allows the student to obtain a J.D. and a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree in four years and two summers.

It is of special interest to law students who intend to practice in communities where they might be called on to perform legal services for the municipality, as city attorneys or otherwise, and to students preparing for positions in city management.

The program provides preparation for positions in such agencies as leagues of municipalities or state governmental authorities and serves as a training ground for the rapidly developing field of court administration.

MPA/JD Dual Degree Plan

For further information on this dual degree, please see the [course catalog](#) and speak with the Graduate Program Coordinator.