Progressive Degree – Master of Public Policy (MPP)
Application Package and Instructions

**Application Requirements**
- University Progressive Degree proposed course plan (to be completed in tandem with applicant’s undergraduate advisor). Individualized MPP coursework will be discussed and outlined in the course plan after the student is admitted into the MPP Progressive program.
- Current STARS report
- Current resume
- One (1) page essay addressing the following:
  - Why are you interested in pursuing the MPP progressive degree?
  - What is the area of policy that interests you most and why?
  - What are your short- and long-term career objectives?
- Applicants must provide two letters of recommendation from USC faculty supporting their admission to the progressive degree and at least one from a faculty member in the student’s major.
- Letters of recommendation can be mailed directly to Suzanne Alexander, MPP program administrator, USC Price School of Public Policy, 650 Childs Way, RGL 238, Los Angeles, CA 90089, or provided in sealed envelopes along with the application materials.
- Any additional supporting documents
- Applicants who are determined to be strong candidates will be invited to interview with the MPP faculty leadership and program administrator.
- Admission decisions will be provided via letter, emailed to the applicant’s USC email address.

**Deadlines**
- **Spring:** No Admittance
- **Fall:** February 1 (if this date falls on a weekend, the deadline is the next business day)
- **Summer:** No Admittance

**Additional Information**
- Once a student has completed 8 semesters (including transfers from another university), they will be considered a graduate student. This status change will affect your financial aid package. Please visit the Office of Financial Services (JHH Lobby) for more information. If you are a scholarship student, please contact your scholarship coordinator to discuss the impact the Progressive program may have on your scholarship.
- Submission of an application to the Progressive Degree does not constitute automatic admission. Students must be accepted in order to pursue the Progressive degree objective.
- Progressive students are not eligible for USC Price merit-based scholarships.

**Application Submission**
- Submit your completed application in person to Suzanne Alexander, Program Administrator, Graduate Programs in Public Policy, located in Ralph and Goldy Lewis Hall (RGL) 238 between 7:30am and 4:30pm. Emailed applications will not be accepted.
- Please submit all documents at the same time. Incomplete applications will be disqualified from admission review.
- Applicants will receive a notification e-mail stating that your completed application package has been received.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Can I apply if I have earned more than 96 units?
An applicant must have 96 units or less in order to apply for the progressive degree. The 96 units does not include AP, IB, any coursework completed prior to high school graduation, and in-progress coursework. *If a student has earned more than 96 units, an exception to this policy may be possible, and is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

How many applicants are there and what is the acceptance rate?
The total number of applicants and the acceptance rate varies from term to term. The MPP program is looking to admit a small number of high-performing undergraduate students.

Why am I considered a graduate student once I have completed 8 semesters?
Eight semesters is the maximum number of undergraduate financial aid. You may contact Financial Aid for detailed information regarding this policy. The Office of Financial Aid is located in JHH (Lobby); (213) 740-1111.

How many semesters do I have to complete my bachelor’s and master’s degree?
USC policy states that the time limit for completing the undergraduate and graduate degree is 12 semesters (6 years). This time limit starts with the student’s first semester as a college student (including transferred community college course work completed prior to USC). Any time limit extension would need to be supported by the MPP program and petitioned through the Associate Vice Provost.

Can I meet with the MPP program administrator to work out a completed course plan prior to being admitted to the MPP Progressive program?
Due to the volume of undergraduate student inquiries, students will be scheduled for an advising appointment and transcript review following admission into the Progressive degree program. Progressive Degree information sessions take place each semester, offering an opportunity for program details as well as Q &A. Students may feel free to call or email the program administrator with any specific questions.

When will I be notified if I have been accepted in to the MPP Progressive degree?
All applicants are notified of their admissions status via email, 2-3 weeks following the application deadline.

When can I register for graduate courses?
To develop an official course plan, all admitted MPP progressive degree students will meet with the MPP Program Administrator upon program acceptance. Once the complete course plan has been created, all required signatures have been obtained and the plan has been approved by the University and loaded onto the Student Information System, the student will be eligible for fall semester graduate course registration. This process can take several weeks. Pre-emptive d-clearance entry may be obtained, reserving a seat in the first-semester MPP core classes.

What is the maximum MPP Progressive student course load each semester?
The MPP imposes a 15-unit maximum while taking any graduate courses. Any exceptions may be requested by departmental petition.

Can my units taken at another school be used to waive graduate coursework?
Graduate course waivers are considered only on the basis of upper-division, undergraduate courses completed at USC.

Do progressive students automatically receive a reduction in the MPP 48 unit requirement?
No. Some students will have units waived pending transcript review, following program admission. Coursework waivers depend on the relevance of the upper-division undergraduate coursework and the grades earned.

**What is the maximum number of units MPP progressive students can waive?**
The maximum number of MPP degree units that a progressive student may waive is 12 units.

**Does the Progressive MPP program have any prerequisites?**
Yes. The MPP program requires a basic background in probability and statistics. First-semester Progressive Master of Public Policy (MPP) students must complete two prerequisites: (1) completion of a college-level statistics or econometrics course with a grade of B or better and (2) completion of both pre-semester program labs.

**Statistics Prerequisite**
All progressive MPP students are required to demonstrate proficiency in foundational statistical methods. The statistics prerequisite can be satisfied in one of two ways:

- **Statistics or Econometrics Course Taken Prior to Enrollment in the Progressive MPP**
  Completion of a college-level statistics or econometrics course with a grade of “B” or better within three years of matriculation.

- **PPD 502x-Statistical Foundations for Public Management and Policy**
  If a student has not completed a college-level statistics course with a grade of “B” or better within three years of matriculation, they will need to complete the PPD 504 course prior to starting the MPP program.

Depending on prior coursework and grades received, some students may waive out of the statistics prerequisite requirement.

**Pre-semester MPP Labs**
The Professional Fundamentals and Statistics/STATA Labs provide an introduction to the program and help to create a genuine camaraderie within the first-year student cohort. Progressive MPP students are required to participate in the Statistics/STATA Lab as well as the Professional Fundamentals Lab. The labs meet the Thursday, Friday and Saturday prior to the start of the fall semester AND on the first Friday of the semester. Foundational knowledge of STATA software is essential for success in PPD 558, *Multivariate Statistical Analysis*. The lab will provide STATA tools and explain how to apply this within the MPP program. If a student registers for PPD 558 in spring, the Statistics/STATA Lab will be required the Friday and Saturday prior to the start of the spring semester.

**Progressive Degree Eligibility Criteria**

- MPP progressive degree applicants must have completed a minimum of 64 units since high school graduation and must submit their completed, progressive degree application prior to the completion of 96 units of course work. (AP units, IB units, and course work taken prior to high school graduation are excluded).
- Applicants are not required to submit GRE scores, but are expected to have a minimum 3.0 GPA at the time of application. Due to program rigor, GPAs of 3.5 or higher are preferred.
- Applicants must provide two letters of recommendation from USC faculty supporting their admission to the progressive degree and at least one from a faculty member in the student’s major.
Application Requirements

• Students must complete a Progressive Degree Program – Proposed Course Plan form as part of the application process. This is necessary to determine how future terms of registration will apply to progressive degree requirements. Future course work (applying to both the undergraduate major and the MPP degree requirements) is listed by term, indicating whether each course satisfies an undergraduate or graduate requirement. In the application packet, please list only the remaining undergraduate course work requirements. This information should be reviewed and verified by your undergraduate advisor prior to submitting the progressive degree application packet.

• Students must complete all necessary sections of the Application for Admission to a Progressive Master’s Program form. Admission must be approved by both the dean of the student’s undergraduate major, as well as the department chair and dean of the master’s degree program. Approved undergraduate department signatures must be present on the submitted application. Price School students do not need to obtain departmental signatures until they have been admitted.

Required Master of Public Policy Course Sequencing
48 unit maximum

1st Semester Fall
PPD 503 Economics for Public Policy 4 units
PPD 554 Foundations of Policy Analysis 4 units
PPD 558 Multivariate Statistical Analysis 4 units

2nd Semester Spring
PPD 555 Public Policy Formulation and Implementation 4 units
PPD 560 Methods for Policy Analysis 4 units
(Management, Analytic or Specialization elective) 4 units

3rd Semester Fall
PPD 561a Policy Analysis Practicum 1 unit
(Management, Analytic or Specialization electives) 12 units

4th Semester Spring
PPD 561b Policy Analysis Practicum 3 units
(Management, Analytic or Specialization electives) 8 units

*Progressive degree students will have undergraduate courses interspersed in their course sequencing until bachelor’s degree has been completed. MPP coursework must be taken in the aforementioned sequence, adhering to course prerequisites. Students must complete their bachelor’s degree prior to all 48 MPP units.

**Waivers of up to 12 units of MPP coursework requirements may be granted on the basis of successful completion of relevant upper-division undergraduate coursework. For example, a waiver for PPD 503 will be granted for students who have earned a grade of B or better in an intermediate microeconomics course.