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SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
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URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING

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PLANNING, GOVERNANCE & GLOBALIZATION

UNDERGRADUATE
SMART AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND PLANNING

Center for Public Administration and Policy (CPAP)

Master in Public Administration (MPA) FAQs

APPLICATION MATTERS

What are the CPAP program application deadlines?

The final application deadline for Spring admission is December 1. The final application deadline for Fall admission is August 1. Admissions decisions are made on a rolling basis, but please apply early for priority consideration.

International students have different deadlines. For Fall admission, the deadline is April 1st. For Spring admission, the deadline is September 1st.

What does the application timeline look like?

All applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. Review of Fall admission applications begins on February 1. Review of Spring admission applications begins September 1. All supporting documents, including all three letters of recommendation, must be submitted for the application to be reviewed.

Who should submit letters of recommendation?

We welcome letters of recommendation from a variety of people who are familiar with your academic and/or professional skills and goals. These people may include professors, managers, supervisors, or colleagues, though other people may be appropriate as well.

How does the letter of recommendation process work?

We only accept letters submitted online. When you fill out an application, you will be asked to enter contact information for your recommenders. Your recommenders will then receive a notification email with instructions for uploading their letters. You may view the status of letters of recommendation from your application status portal.

What is the minimum GPA for admission?

For admission to the MPA program, applicants must have a minimum of a 3.0 GPA. Students who do not have a 3.0 GPA in previous studies should enroll in the Commonwealth Campus program in order to boost their GPA and demonstrate graduate study potential. International students, in F-1 or J-1 visa status, are not allowed to enroll in the Commonwealth Campus.

What are the applicant testing requirements?

CPAP does not require students to take a standardized test such as the GRE for admission. However, students do have the option to take the test and submit their scores in order to give a full picture of their potential.

What should be included in the statement of purpose?

Applicants must submit a statement of purpose describing their reasons for pursuing an MPA degree. The statement of purpose should describe the applicant's academic, professional and career goals, and how the MPA degree could help further these goals.

What additional tests do international students need to take?

All non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. permanent residents demonstrate English proficiency to ensure they enter the university with sufficient English skills necessary to function in a graduate program. A TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test score is the most common way international applicants demonstrate English proficiency. English proficiency can also be demonstrated through a conferred bachelor's degree from an accredited university where English is the medium of instruction. If this applies to you, The Virginia Tech Graduate School will code a waiver of the English proficiency requirement into your application once they receive and review your transcript showing degree conferral and medium of instruction as English.

For information regarding TOEFL and IELTS score minimums, as well as the score submission procedure, please visit the Graduate School's website.

How will I receive an official admission decision notification about my application for admission?

You will receive a notification email once a decision is ready for you. The email will instruct you to check your Application Status Portal for an update about your application. Please note only decisions released from the Graduate School and available in the Application Status Portal should be considered official.

What are the program prerequisites?

There are no formal prerequisites for the program, however we encourage admitted students to gain technical proficiency in word processing and spreadsheet software. Topically, we expect students to be familiar with the institutions of the U.S. government. The following two texts are recommended as refreshers:

- Kernell, S., Jacobson, G. C., Kousser, T., & Vavreck, L. (2017). *The logic of American politics*. CQ Press.
- Lowi, T. J., Ginsberg, B., Shepsle, K. A., & Ansolabehere, S. (2017). *American government: Power and purpose*. New York, NY: WW Norton.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

What types of financial assistance does CPAP offer?

CPAP offers a limited number of graduate assistantships on a competitive basis. Applicants should indicate their interest in financial assistance via the online application. In addition, applicants and students may also apply for assistantships outside of CPAP. A list of available assistantships across the University can be found on the VT Graduate School website. The Graduate School also has additional information about other types of assistance available to graduate students.

COURSE LOCATIONS AND MODES

Where are your programs located?

MPA courses can be taken in person in Blacksburg, VA and Arlington, VA, as well as in a fully virtual format.

PROGRAM FORMAT

In what format are courses offered?

Courses are available across multiple modalities--in person in the three locations and online via Zoom and hybrid (mixed in person and online) formats.

Can I participate full-time or part-time?

Yes, you can participate in the MPA program as either a full-time or part-time student.

Can I transfer courses from another institution/degree?

With the approval of at least two faculty members, appropriate substitutes for up to twenty percent of the MPA coursework (9 semester hours of elective credits) may be transferred into the program from previous graduate work done at schools other than Virginia Tech. This includes transfer of credits from Certificate programs.

For graduate courses taken at Virginia Tech, students may appeal to the CPAP Chair to have additional coursework transferred.

MORE INFORMATION

Who should I contact for more information?

For more information about CPAP programs in Blacksburg, please contact Tyler Wiltshire at wilt15@vt.edu. For more information about CPAP programs in Arlington or Richmond, please contact Elia Amegashie at elia@vt.edu.