Graduate School of Public Policy Master in Public Administration Program Handbook

Abbreviations and Definitions

APP – Academic Policies and Procedures for Graduate Programs of the Autonomous Organization of Education Nazarbayev University;

CGPA - Cumulative Grade Point Average - a calculation of the average of all of a student's grades contributing to the degree. The CGPA is computed by dividing the sum of the earned grade points by the total graded credits attempted in the whole period of study;

ECTS - the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System - measures the student workload required to achieve the learning outcomes of a program of study;

GPA - Grade Point Average - GPA for one academic period is computed by dividing the sum of the earned grade points by the total graded credits attempted in this period;

MPA – Master in Public Administration;

NU / University – Autonomous Organization of Education Nazarbayev University;

GSPP / School – Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Public Policy.

1. Introduction

1. Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Public Policy Master in Public Administration Program Handbook (hereinafter – Handbook) is intended to give students an understanding of the general rules and guidelines for attending and receiving education at GSPP. The Handbook includes MPA program overview, grading system, School policies and procedures, and other helpful details. Students should review the Handbook carefully as its contents are binding on all MPA program students of the School.

2. Admissions

2. Admission to the MPA program is conducted in accordance with the relevant internal documents regulating admission procedures at NU.

3. Program overview

3. The mission of MPA program is to provide mid/senior level practitioners (preferably those with at least 3 years working experience), with academic and professional education which will inform their working practices and raise the standard of governance in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

On successful completion of the program graduates will have the ability to:
1) lead and manage in public governance;
2) participate in and contribute to the policy process;
3) analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
4) articulate and apply a public service perspective;
5) communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Professional competency: in addition, the program will ensure that students learn to apply their education, such as through experiential exercises and interactions with practitioners across the broad range of public affairs, administration, and policy professions and sectors.

4. The core curriculum focuses on: the application of public administration theories to inform practice; an understanding of the economic context in which the public sector operates including issues of strategic management and leadership; how public sector organization measure their performance; program evaluation; and, a basic grounding in research skills to help students complete a master's project'. It comprises 7 core modules, Master's Project, and 3 electives. Each core/elective module equals to 8 ECTS credits and Master's Project equals to 12 ECTS credits. The total number of credits in the program is 92 ECTS. The program curriculum is provided in Appendix 1.

5. MPA students can choose to specialize in one of 3 tracks (economic policy, international political economy or public governance) to enhance their career prospects. Students should consult the Program Coordinator about their selection of

electives and whether their choices will constitute a particular specialism. Only at the end of the program will the students be advised that they have successfully completed the requisite courses to qualify for a Master's degree with specialism.

6. The program structure includes the following key components:

1) **Orientation Week.** It is the first week in MPA program. The purpose is to prepare students for the program, and forge bonds among them as classmates. Before arriving for the Orientation Week, students must have submitted all required documents and have completed any pre-assigned work.

2) **Core Courses -** courses that all MPA program students are required to complete within the program.

3) **Elective Courses** – courses that MPA program students can select from among alternatives. Elective courses are subject to change as they are based on students' interests/preferences, faculty availability and program design.

4) **Master's Project with Overseas Component**.

The Master's Project is assessed as 12 ECTS (15% for overseas component and 85% for the project itself). It is a final requirement for students on the MPA program. It may be conducted as a public policy or management exercise. In both cases, it is expected to be an exercise in which students will be able to apply relevant knowledge and skills gained during the MPA program including: defining and structuring the problem; organizing data; defining and carrying out analysis of the issue; developing specific action recommendations; and defending their findings publicly. The Master's Project is an opportunity for students to focus on a policy problem of their own preference in greater depth than is available in a classroom setting. The Master's Project will include identification of a public policy problem, preferably in the Kazakhstan or Central Asia context, its analysis from a theoretical or empirical prospective, and in case of practical exercise, formulation of a policy proposal and a feasible program of implementation.

Students receive detailed instructions on all stages of the project in MPA 699 Handbook for the Master's Project. 12 ECTS credit points of assigned a letter grade on an A-F scale to be determined by the project supervisor. Students must earn a B- or better in MPA 699 to pass the course.

The overseas component (currently in Singapore normally takes place at the end of the first academic year (Summer semester), where students learn about Singapore's approaches in long-term urban planning and development through lectures and learning journeys, reflect on the lessons learnt and whether/how they could be applied or adapted to the context of Kazakhstan. This can be particularly useful for students who are working on their Master's project. Singapore is often used as a successful comparison model for Kazakhstan. Hence, the Singapore component includes visits to organizations relevant to the MPA student cohort where participants can ask relevant questions about the transferability of public policy lessons from Singapore to Kazakhstan. The success of the Singapore Component model requires that students strictly follow the program, including learning journeys, meals, accommodation, transfers, and flights to and from Singapore. This arrangement is intended to maintain

the necessary coherency in the delivery of subjects, students' work on projects, and student experience.

4. Course registration policy and procedures

7. The overall credit load of a student is based on MPA program specific requirements. It is the responsibility of a student to register for all courses including core and electives in accordance with program curriculum.

8. Students are notified, via email, of the dates for the registration period prior to the event.

9. Students must follow the program curriculum with respect to course order and normal volume of credits per semester. Credit overload is possible only with the permission of MPA Program Coordinator and Vice Dean for Academic Affairs of the School. The appropriate form with all required signatures on it must be submitted to the Program Manager before the end of add period as provided in School's Academic Calendar. If no credit overload form is submitted by a student, he/she will be deemed to be taking the normal volume of credits for the semester in question. Therefore if the student is registered for a course(-s) without permission of the Program Coordinator and Vice Dean of Academic Affairs she/he will not be allowed to attend classes for the latest elective course/s registered for and will be withdrawn from the course(-s).

10. GSPP students may enroll in courses in another NU School with the permission of MPA Program Coordinator, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs of the School and the course instructor. The number of elective courses taken from a different NU School should normally not exceed 50% of elective courses per semester.

5. Grading system

11. Table 1 contains the standardized grading system that is used by GSPP and the corresponding grade points.

Table 1: Standardized GSPP Grading			
|Grade Points	Letter grade	Percentage	Grade description
4.00	A	90-100	Excellent, student meets the highest standards in completing the course assignments
3.67	A-	85-89	Excellent, student meets most of the highest standards in completing the course assignments
3.33	B+	80-84	Very good, student meets the high standards in completing the course assignments
3.00	B	75-79	Good, student meets most standards in completing the course assignments
2.67	B-	70-74	More than adequate, student shows some reasonable command of the course material
2.33	C+	65-69	Acceptable, student meets basic standards in completing the course assignments

2.00	C	60-64	Acceptable, student meets some of the basic standards in completing the course assignments
1.67	C-	50-59	Acceptable, while failing short of meeting basic standards in several ways
0.00	F	00-49	Failing, very poor performance

12. A grade of "P" (Pass) or "F" (Fail) will be reported for students enrolled in program elements approved for such grading.

A "Pass" will not be used in calculating the student's GPA or CGPA; a "Fail" grade is assigned 0 grade points for purposes of calculating the GPA and CGPA. The grade of "Pass" is equivalent to a C or above.

13. Administrative Grades: Special administrative grades and notations are used on transcripts, which apply to all University programs. The administrative notations in Table 2 do not affect the calculation of either the GPA or the CGPA but may impact normal student progression:

Table 2: Administrative Grades		
Grade	*Comment*	*Grade Points*
AU	Audit	N/A
AW	Administrative Withdrawal	N/A
I	Incomplete	N/A
IP	In Progress	N/A
IPS	In Progress Satisfactory	N/A
IPU	In Progress Unsatisfactory	N/A
TC	Transfer Credit	N/A
W	Withdrawal	N/A

14. Audit (AU). The course Audit Option provides students the opportunity to register for a course for enrichment and/or exploration. Audited courses are designated "AU" on the student's transcript; no grade is recorded and no academic credit is earned. As an auditor, the student is considered a passive learner and may not recite in class or take examinations. Regular class attendance is expected. The credit value of audited courses is included in the program load for purposes of determining fees and maximum credits carried. A student may register for a course on an audit basis provided:

1) the course is approved for audit (courses with laboratory or performance skills may not be audited);

2) there is space in the course;

3) the student has appropriate academic preparation;

4) the student has a valid reason for taking the course; and

5) permission of the instructor is obtained.

15. Administrative Withdrawal (AW). This grade indicates that a student has been required to withdraw from a course based on:

1) disciplinary grounds, following the procedures and standards specified in the internal regulations of the University;

2) non-attendance of classes; or

3) non-payment of tuition where appropriate following the procedures and standards specified in the internal regulations of University.

16. Incomplete (I). When a student has completed a substantial portion of the requirements for a course but, due to extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all requirements, the course instructor may assign a temporary grade of Incomplete (I):

1) The grade "I" can be given only on the basis of a written prior agreement, which describes the work that is expected and the terms under which it is to be completed, between the student and the course instructor and approved by the Dean of the School. The date for completion of work is to be determined by the course instructor.

2) All work must be completed no later than the end of the last week of the subsequent semester. When the work or examination that is required under an "Incomplete" agreement is completed, the course instructor shall request a change of the "I" grade to the appropriate grade for the course, at which time the grade of "I" will be removed from the student's transcript.

3) A grade of "I" may also be applied to a student who cannot take part in a final examination in a course because of personal health problems or that of the immediate family. A new deadline will be set by a course instructor for completion of the final examination.

4) The grade "I" is assigned 0 (zero) credits, has no grade points and is not included in the calculation of the GPA.

5) A grade of "I" that is not completed by the end of the last week of the subsequent semester automatically reverts to the grade indicated in the agreement between the course instructor and the students. If no grade is indicated in the agreement and the instructor does not submit the change of grade request, the grade of "I" will revert to an "F".

6) In no case shall a student be granted a degree while there are unresolved "Incomplete" grades on his/her record.

17. In-Progress (IP, IPS, and IPU). An in-progress grade is assigned as an interim grade for students registered in courses which are approved to extend over several semesters or terms, commonly research projects or theses:

1) In-progress grades do not contribute to the semester GPA or CGPA calculation.

2) The final letter or P/F grade as appropriate is recorded and ECTS credit awarded in the academic period of completion of the course requirements.

3) In-progress grades may not be used for courses approved for standard delivery.

4) Grades of "IPS'/IPU" indicate satisfactory/unsatisfactory assessment of work in progress and may be used to determine student academic standing.

5) A grade of incomplete "I" may not be used for courses eligible for in-progress grading.

18. Withdrawal. The grade "W" denotes a student who has withdrawn from the course and who has not completed the course requirements:

1) The grade "W" is automatic; in a context in which a grade of "W" is appropriate, the instructor may not assign any other grade.

2) A "W" grade is not included in the calculation of the student's CGPA and does not count toward completion of the requirements for graduation.

6. Academic progress

19. To continue in MPA program, students must be in Good Academic Standing at the conclusion of each grading period as determined by:

1) minimum CGPA for Good Academic Standing is ≥ 2.67; and

2) timely completion of milestones for MPA 699 – Master's Project with an Overseas Component.

20. A student who fails to satisfy the program-specific conditions for Good Academic Standing at the conclusion of each academic period will be automatically placed on academic probation or be dismissed.

21. A student on academic probation who fails to satisfy the program-specific conditions for Good Academic Standing at the conclusion of the next academic period is subject to dismissal.

22. A student in good academic standing who receives a grade of "IPU" will be placed on academic probation and will receive an academic intervention/plan initiated by the his/her supervisor and approved by the Program Coordinator; a student on academic probation who receives a grade of "IPU" is subject to dismissal.

7. Graduation Requirements

23. Satisfactory completion of the MPA program requires that the student progresses through a number of distinct stages, each of which is characterized by a key evaluation point. The necessary stages are:

1) successful completion of all core and elective modules in the program as outlined above;

2) completion and successful defense of the Master's Project with Overseas Component.

24. To graduate with the MPA degree, a student must successfully complete 92 ECTS and maintain an overall CGPA of ≥ 2.67.

8. Grade appeal procedure

25. Grade appeals. All graduate students have the right to appeal any grade that they believe is an error. The error must be based on one of the following procedural criteria:

1) error in calculation;

2) error in the application of the class grade policy as presented in the Course Syllabus;

3) incorrect entry of the grade into the database;

4) incomplete marking of an assessment.

26. Appeal process for an assessment grade:

1) A student must first consult with the course instructor within 3 (three) working days of the receipt of the contested grade (Appendix 2, Step 1).

2) The course instructor has 3 (three) working days of the receipt of the contested grade in which to address the concern and file a Change of Grade if needed or deny the request.

3) If a student is still dissatisfied, he or she may appeal to Vice Dean for Academic Affairs within 3 (three) working days upon the receipt of the denial from the course instructor. In order to do so, student needs to email the grade appeal form (Appendix 2, Step 2) to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs with copy to the Program Manager.

4) The Vice Dean for Academic Affairs shall consult with the course instructor before making any decision; the decision of the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs shall be final.

27. Appeal process of a final course grade:

1) The student must first consult with the Program Manager within 3 (three) working days of the date the grades are posted on the MyRegistrar system. The date to be used for calculating the time for an appeal of a final course grade is the date that grades are released to students, as published in the Academic Calendar. In order to do so, student needs to email the grade appeal form (Appendix 3, Step 1) to the Program Manager with copy to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs.

2) The Program Manager will respond to the student within the next 3 (three) working days. That time may be extended by the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs/equivalent if the Program Manager is shown to have been unavailable during the period following the student's receipt of his/her final grade.

3) If the student still believes that the grade is incorrect or the Program Manager has not replied within 3 (three) working days, he or she may appeal to the Dean of the School within 3 (three) working days after (Appendix 3, Step 2). Dean can designate Vice Dean to consider the appeal.

4) The Dean or Vice Dean shall consult with the course instructor before making any decision. If the Dean or Vice Dean decides to grant an appeal, he or she will communicate the new grade to the Office of the Registrar directly using forms supplied by that office.

5) The decision of the Dean or Vice Dean shall be final.

9. Academic code of conduct

28. A student is expected to attend all classes, program events including orientation week, GSPP dialogue series, and other events specially organized for students. A failure to attend any of the aforementioned events may result in insufficient credits to graduate and can lead to dismissal from the program.

10. Student misconduct

29. Misconduct refers to academic or nonacademic misconduct (unacceptable or improper behavior) by a student.

30. Examples of academic misconduct include plagiarism, cheating, falsification of documents and other dishonest actions:

1) **Plagiarism** is intentionally or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own. It includes submitting an assignment purporting to be the student's original work which has wholly or in part been created by another person. It also includes the presentation of the work, ideas, representations, or words of another person without customary and proper acknowledgement of sources.

2) **Cheating** is defined as deceit or dishonesty in an academic assignment, or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment.

3) **Falsification of documents** occurs when a student presents a falsified application, medical or any other official forms for any reason.

Acts of academic misconduct may result in the imposition of any of Category A, B, or C sanctions as described in Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures of the University.

31. Nonacademic misconduct can include anything from criminal activity to offences that are specific to the context of the University. Acts of nonacademic misconduct may result in the imposition of any of Category 1 or Category 2 sanctions as described in Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures of the University.

11. Attendance and absence policy

32. Students are expected to attend all classes. Students who do not attend classes from the first day may be penalized or administratively withdrawn from the class.

33. Unexcused absences will be penalized by deducting 5% of the final grade for each unexcused week of absence.

Unexcused absence

An unexcused absence is when students miss classes for reasons not accepted by the School. Arriving late or leaving class early without appropriate documentation/ justification will be counted as an unexcused absence. Some reasons for an unexcused absence include:

1) missing bus;
2) working at a job;
3) sleeping too late;
4) going on a business trip.

Excused absence

If unforeseen circumstances prevent attendance, student must notify the module/course instructor and Teaching Assistant, if any, in advance.

Some examples for an excused absence are:

death of a family member;

student's illness or injury.

34. If a student provides a medical certificate verified by University Health Center (UHC) then absence is counted as excused.

35. The time limit for submission of documentation for absences (including, but not limited to medical certificates) is 3 (three) working days after the condition preventing student from attending is over.

36. Medical certificates (or photocopy) issued by a clinic other than University Health Center has to be verified by UHC. After verification the School Manager may inform respective faculty members.

37. In cases other than student's illness (including but not limited to death of a family member), it is the course instructor who makes the decision on granting excused absence after considering documentation provided by a student.

12. Classroom norms

38. NU believes in the importance of establishing an environment conducive to supporting the student learning experience. To this end, rules and policies have been established to minimize distractions that could adversely affect the learning experience. Such rules and policies govern the use of electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops) and reinforce appropriate and professional norms of behavior. Failure to follow the classroom norms may result in removal from the class/session in progress and treated as non-attendance. Classroom norms for all School sessions, including guest lectures, include the following:

1) use of cell phones, laptop computers and electronic devices are not allowed unless permitted by the instructor;
2) take responsibility for learning - yours and others;
3) show respect and care for others;
4) provide constructive feedback;
5) arrive on time and be prepared for class;
6) actively participate and contribute.

13. Dismissal, voluntary withdrawal and leave of absence

39. Dismissal, voluntary withdrawal and application for leave of absence are carried out in accordance with the internal policy and procedures for students.

40. Applications for voluntary withdrawal and leave of absence are submitted electronically through MyRegistrar system by the student.

14. Student support

41. The MPA student orientation program which normally takes place in the first week of MPA program, provides relevant information about NU and GSPP in general, promotes engagement with the University and School's mission and values, explores program requirements and modules, and offers opportunities for new students to connect with each other.

42. The Program Coordinator provides guidance to students on academic progression, matters pertaining to curricular and graduation requirements. Students not in good academic standing are requested to consult the Program Coordinator in order to an intervention plan to increase the probability of successful completion of the MPA program.

43. During the Master's Project development each student/group of students is assigned a Supervisor. The Supervisor provides overall supervision of a student's project, sets milestones, provides regular feedback to all writing and data collection processes. Students work in groups of 2 or 3. Detailed guidance is set out in the MPA project notes given to students in MPA605 Syllabus.

44. The Instructor for Master's Project organizes regular workshops related to conducting research, writing final papers and making presentations. Feedback on the students' written work and presentation is provided on coherence, flow and grammar.

45. The Program Manager supports students on course registration processes and scheduling, implements student engagement policies (including analysis of module/course evaluations (student feedback) at the end of each semester), organizes and facilitates educational and student events related to MPA program including Orientation Program, Overseas Component and Graduation Ceremony.

46. GSPP utilizes its professional connections with Ministries, state and quasi state organizations, international partner institutions and other organizations in order to provide students with opportunities to participate in career and research seminars, internship programs, conferences and exchange programs.

47. Students are also encouraged to use the NU Library, Sports Center, Health, Counseling, Career and Advising resources depending on the needs of students.

15. Final provisions

48. The School reserves the right, subject to necessary approval where appropriate, to:

1) revise the content of the Handbooks and to change policies, programs, requirements, rules, regulations, procedures, calendars and other internal documents;

2) to establish and/or modify admission and registration criteria;

3) to cancel or change courses or programs and their content and prerequisites;

4) to limit and restrict enrollment;

5) to cancel, divide or change time or location or staffing of classes; or

6) to make any other necessary changes affecting study process.

When changes are made in any of the aforementioned areas and affect students' interests, they shall be notified via NU e-mail.

49. Issues that are not covered in this Handbook will be regulated by the APP and other relevant University internal documents.

Appendix 1
to the Nazarbayev University
Graduate School of
Public Policy
Master in Public
Administration
Program Handbook

MPA curriculum*			
Year 1: Semester 1			
Module	ECTS Credits	Class hours	Self-study hours
MPA 602 – Public Administration in Theory and Practice	8	40	160
MPA 603 – Economic Applications for Public Managers	8	40	160
MPA 605 – Research Methods for Public Managers	8	40	160
SEMESTER SUBTOTAL:	24	120	480
Year 1: Semester 2			
Module	ECTS Credits	Class hours	Self-study hours
MPA 608 – Strategic Management and Leadership	8	40	160
MPA XXX: Program Evaluation	8	40	160
Elective 1	8	40	160
MPA 699 – Master's Project with an Overseas Component (I)	0	0	100
SEMESTER SUBTOTAL:	24	120	580
Year 1: Semester 3 (Summer)			
Module	ECTS Credits	Class hours	Self-study hours
MPA 607 – Fiscal Management and Budgeting	8	40	160
MPA 699 – Master's Project with an Overseas Component (II)	0	0	100
SEMESTER SUBTOTAL:	8	40	260
Year 2: Semester 4			
Module	ECTS Credits	Class hours	Self-study hours
MPA 609: Human Resource Policy and Management	8	40	160
MPA 699 – Master's Project with an Overseas Component (III)	12	0	100
Elective 2	8	40	160
Elective 3	8	40	160
SEMESTER SUBTOTAL:	36	120	580
TOTAL	**92**	**400**	**1900**

Order of the modules can be reconsidered by the School

GSPP   Assessment Grade Appeal Form

Step 1 (Course instructor and Student)

Student Name	_____ last	Student ID#:
	first	
Major		Enrollment year
Email address		
Phone		
Course code		
Course title		
Instructor's name		
Original grade		
Semester		

Basis for grade appeal

Please provide written reasons for grade appeal. Specify the outcome that you are seeking from the appeal. Attach copy of the course syllabus and any other materials related to your appeal, such as tests, exams, assignments, reports and papers. Names of any witnesses and their contact information who may be relevant in supporting your appeal.

Student's Signature: _____   Date: _____

Instructor's response

The Instructor may decide to keep the grade or agree to a change of grade.
Please provide the course outline with explicit grading policy and written explanation of how the student's grade was determined.

Please indicate your decision below:

☐ Original grade to be kept
☐ Original grade to be decreased to _____
☐ Original grade to be increased to _____

Instructor's Signature: _____   Date: _____

GSPP   Assessment Grade Appeal Form

Step 2 (Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs and Student)

Instructions to Student:

To initiate Step 2, the student must forward the Instructor's response to the Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs of the School and explain the reasons for initiating Step 2 below.

Instruction to Vice Dean for Academic Affairs:

The Vice Dean will consult with the Instructor before making any decision.

Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs response:

The decision of the Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs shall be final.

☐ Original grade to be kept
☐ Original grade to be decreased to _____
☐ Original grade to be increased to _____

Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs Signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix 3
to the Nazarbayev University
Graduate School of
Public Policy
Master in Public
Administration
Program Handbook

GSPP   Final Grade Appeal Form

Step 1 (Program Manager and Student)

Student Name	_____ last	Student ID#:
first		
Major		Enrollment year
Email address		
Phone		
Course code		
Course title		
Instructor's name		
Original grade		
Semester		

Basis for grade appeal

Please provide written reasons for grade appeal. Specify the outcome that you are seeking from the appeal. Attach copy of the course syllabus and any other materials related to your appeal, such as tests, exams, assignments, reports and papers. Names of any witnesses and their contact information who may be relevant in supporting your appeal.

Student's Signature: _____   Date: _____

GSPP   **Final Grade Appeal Form**

Program Manager's response

Program Manager's Signature: _____   Date: _____

GSPP   Final Grade Appeal Form

Instructions to Student:

To initiate Step 2, the student must forward the Program Manager's response to the Dean/Vice-Dean of the School and explain the reasons for initiating Step 2 below.

Instruction to Dean/Vice Dean:

The Dean/Vice Dean will consult with the Instructor before making any decision.

Dean/Vice-Dean's response:

The decision of the Dean/Vice-Dean shall be final.

☐ Original grade to be kept
☐ Original grade to be decreased to _____
☐ Original grade to be increased to _____

Dean/Vice-Dean's Signature: _____   Date: _____