Joint Degree Programs in Urban Planning and Public Policy/Public Administration

Harvard University Graduate School of Design and Harvard Kennedy School

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD) and Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) offer a joint degree program in urban planning and public policy (note that HKS refers to this program as a “concurrent degree program”) and in public administration. The GSD/HKS joint degree programs support and encourage students seeking an interdisciplinary education in urban planning and public policy or administration, and prepare them for leadership positions at the intersection of these fields. The joint degree programs permit students to pursue a Master in Urban Planning (MUP) degree at the GSD and a Master in Public Policy (MPP) or Master in Public Administration (MPA) degree at HKS simultaneously and to complete both degrees in three years rather than the four years that would be required if the two degrees were pursued independently. Students in the joint degree programs must complete all of the basic requirements for both the MUP and MPP or MPA degrees, as further described below.

A committee made up of HKS/GSD Professor Jose A. Gomez-Ibanez and GSD Professor Jerold S. Kayden (“Faculty Committee”) oversees the joint degree programs. The Faculty Committee is responsible for making decisions regarding the structure and requirements of the program and for working with the students enrolled in the program.

ADMISSIONS

Prospective MUP/MPP and MUP/MPA students must apply, and be separately admitted, to the GSD and HKS, each of which will independently review and admit applicants. Questions relating to the admissions process at each school should be addressed directly to HKS Admissions and to the Admissions Office at the GSD.

Prospective MUP/MPP and MUP/MPA students may choose to apply to the GSD and HKS at the same time in advance of admission to both schools, or to the GSD or HKS during their first year at the school to which they have already matriculated. Students interested in applying to either school should be careful to observe the application deadlines for each school. All GSD applicants are required to submit a GRE score, in accordance with application guidelines. All HKS applicants are required to submit a GRE or GMAT score, in accordance with application guidelines. Once admitted, students should follow the notification procedures at each school regarding acceptance of admission and plans to matriculate.
Students admitted to both schools at the same time must inform both schools no later than the deadline at which they must accept admission at both schools that they intend to pursue the joint degree program and that they plan to attend either the GSD or HKS during their first year of the three-year program. Students admitted to the GSD or HKS during their first year at the other school must inform both schools no later than the deadline at which they must accept admission that they intend to pursue the joint degree program. All information must be communicated to Sean Conlon, GSD Registrar, Debra Isaacs, Associate Dean of Programs and Student Affairs HKS, and both Admissions Offices.

**STRUCTURE OF COURSEWORK**

Students in the joint degree programs have three academic years to complete both degrees and are required to spend three terms in residence at the GSD and three terms in residence at HKS, for a total of six terms. During their three years, students must satisfy all curricular course requirements for both the MUP and MPP programs required of all non-joint-degree students.

In the first two years of the joint degree programs, students are required to enroll for one full year of study at the GSD and for one full year of study at HKS. Either can come first. In the third year of the program, joint degree students will enroll for a single term at the GSD and a single term at HKS, in any order. To meet the requirements for the MUP/MPP and MUP/MPA joint degree programs, students must at least 60 units during the three terms they are enrolled at the GSD and complete at least 14 credits during the three terms they are enrolled at HKS. See below for more information about the coursework and meaning of credits and units at each school. Students in the joint degree programs will have faculty advisors at both the GSD and HKS. Faculty advisors will supervise a student’s academic work and assist in determining the most appropriate sequencing for each student’s course of study, keeping in mind the requirements for both degrees.

**First-Year Requirements**

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The first year at the GSD consists of 20 units each term. A lecture or seminar course is 4 units, and a studio course is 8 credits. In the first term, students normally take 16 units of required courses and 4 units that can be an elective or satisfy other curriculum requirements. In the second term, students normally take 12 units of required core courses and 8 units that can be electives or satisfy other curriculum requirements. For a complete articulation of curriculum requirements, please refer to the on-line listed requirements in effect at the time of matriculation into the joint degree program at: [http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/urban-planning-design/master-in-urban-planning/degree-requirements/](http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/urban-planning-design/master-in-urban-planning/degree-requirements/)
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First-year Master in Public Policy (MPP) students take four core courses in the fall term plus one elective credit, and 3.5 core courses in the spring term (including the Spring Exercise) plus 1.5 additional elective credits. Normally, students earn ten credits in their first year. For a complete list of the core courses, please refer to: https://www.hks.harvard.edu/educational-programs/masters-programs/master-public-policy/curriculum

During the last two weeks of the spring term, all first-year MPP students participate in Spring Exercise. This simulation provides practice in integrating the skills of the core by requiring students to develop solutions to real policy problems. In addition, during one of their three terms at HKS, students must fulfill the distribution requirement in financial management.

The MPA program is more flexible. MPA candidates need to complete 2 courses from one of the HKS Policy Areas (https://www.hks.harvard.edu/educational-programs/masters-programs/master-public-administration-international-development/degree), and one course in each of the following areas:

- Economics & Quantitative Analysis
- Management & Leadership
- Political Thought & Institutions.

The remainder of the courses a student must take during their three semesters in residence at the HKS is up to the student, with guidance from faculty and administrators.

Upper Level Requirements

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During their third term in residence at the GSD, joint degree students are required to complete 20 units, including a project-based option (8 units) and courses that satisfy remaining curricular requirements or are electives. During the third and final year in the joint degree program, students must fulfill any remaining MUP curriculum requirements.

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During their third term in residence at HKS, joint degree students are required to complete at least three HKS credits in order to fulfill the HKS residency requirement. For their PAE, MPP students examine an existing public or nonprofit sector problem presented by a real-life client organization. The PAE is a professional-quality product, usually around 40 pages in length, where MPP students have the opportunity to integrate the technical skills and specialized knowledge they have gained from the MPP core curriculum. The PAE is carried out within each
student’s chosen policy area of concentration. For the purpose of the joint degree program, students must write their Policy Analysis Exercise (PAE) on an urban planning topic.

MPA students need to complete all necessary courses and credits.

TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID

Tuition

Enrollment in the joint degree programs will result in significant tuition savings compared with the cost of pursuing the two degrees separately. Tuition is paid as follows: during the first two years, students will pay full tuition to the school in which they are enrolled full-time. During the third year, students will pay 50% of the annual GSD tuition and 50% of the annual HKS tuition in each of the two terms.

Financial Aid

Joint degree program students should apply for financial aid through the GSD Financial Aid Office for the first year at the GSD and through the HKS Student Financial Services for the first year in HKS. For the fifth and sixth terms, students should apply to the respective school in which they will enroll for a given term.

CONTACT INFORMATION

GSD

Admissions: Geri Nederhoff and Gail Gustafson, Admissions Directors; 617-495-5453 http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/admissions/index.html

Program Information: Sean Conlon, Registrar; 617-496-5154
Financial Aid Office: financial_aid@gsd.harvard.edu; 617-495-5455

HKS

Admissions: admissions@hks.harvard.edu; 617-495-1155
Program Information: Debra Isaacson, Associate Dean of Students at HKS; 617-496-8382
Financial Aid Office: financial_aid@ksg.harvard.edu; 617-495-1152