



Doctorate in Public Policy (DPP) Program Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to the Doctorate in Public Policy program. The DPP is a professional degree that prepares working professional and community leaders to address complex policy problems. This degree is meant to prepare students to affect policy change in the public, non-profit, and private sectors. Graduates of this program will be able to acquire professional employment in policy environments at the local, state, and national level.

The DPP is designed to address the demand for leaders and policymakers in the professional arena to build advanced skill in successfully navigating the policy making process to solve complex community issues. Students are trained to study and engage in policy development activities on contemporary issues that are vital to our society. These issues are explored within the context of stakeholders being affected by public policy implementation and public sector practitioners' decisions.

The program is designed to promote scholarship and innovation in public affairs through significant interactions between students, faculty, thought leaders, and policymakers in learning, research, and the application of expertise in public issues. In addition, the degree will prepare graduates with the knowledge, skills, and abilities applicable to creating policy solutions in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

One core characteristic of our program is the emphasis training leaders who are currently in the workforce in the public arena. Our commitment to building the skills and knowledge of students includes engaging students in evidence based public policy solutions that not only create unique learning experiences but also benefit the Southern Nevada Community and beyond. This includes actively engaging students in both academic and applied research as part of their program of study in the Ph.D.

Our goal for you as a student is to ensure you are ready to better serve your community and enhance your career.

Jayne Farmer, PhD
Interim Director, School of Public Policy and Leadership

Mission Statement

The mission of the DPP is to prepare students to conduct policy analysis, advocate for public policies and community-based solutions, or serve in decision-making positions. This will be accomplished by building enhanced competencies and skills in policymaking and policy implementation at all levels of government to enable them to assume leadership roles in workplace settings.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide program specific information that is not found in the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#). Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and [the UNLV Graduate Catalog](#), as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College: valarie.burke@unlv.edu or gradassociatedean@unlv.edu.

Program Handbook

Department Graduate Faculty

A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#). Faculty must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in your department, visit the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#).

Program Information

Doctor of Public Policy https://catalog.unlv.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=25&poid=6984

Contact Information

School of Public Policy and Leadership

<http://unlv.edu/publicpolicy>

Interim Director of the School of Public Policy and Leadership

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DPP Coordinator

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Department Main Office

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Program Requirements

Program requirements regarding **admission, coursework and culminating experience** are found in the **graduate catalog**.

The DPP program is a 51-hour program that requires students to fulfill course work and a policy project including a written paper and presentation. The coursework is designed to be completed in six semesters. Thirty nine hour of course work is offered sequentially and students must enroll in courses as a cohort. The core courses are designed to build advanced skills in three competency areas including: knowledge of the policy process, analytics, and policy communication. In addition, students will complete a 12-hour doctoral capstone. As part of the program students will travel for one week to Washington DC to meet with policymakers.

A full listing of courses and program description are available on the Doctor of Public Policy (DPP) program page at: <https://www.unlv.edu/degree/dpp>

Capstone Advisor Guidelines

Each cohort will have an assigned capstone instructor. That persons will act as instructor for the 12 capstone credit hours and act as capstone advisor for students in that cohort during their three years of study. This advisor will guide the students through their capstone project. It is the student's responsibility to obtain all of the required signatures on required Graduate School forms related to the Culminating Experience which is the Doctoral Capstone.

Degree Program Benchmarks

In all six semesters students in the program enroll in courses as a cohort. With the exception of the final semester where students take six credits, all students must enroll in the designated nine credits hours during the academic year semesters (Spring and Fall).

Doctoral Capstone Paper

DPP Candidates must complete a doctoral capstone that proposes a policy solution to a contemporary policy problem. Student must address five areas in their capstone project:

- Problem identification/framing

- Policy alternatives
- Policy adoption
- Policy implementation
- Policy evaluation

Students will identify their policy problem in the first semester of study in their PPY 780 capstone

course. Each academic year semester (Fall and Spring) students will take a 2-credit course that advances their capstone work. Students must complete 12 credits of capstone coursework during their degree.

Students within the DPP program are required to do use School of Public Policy guidelines to format their Doctoral Capstone final written paper and to submit their project through iThenticate. The iThenticate report must be submitted to their advisor with their Culminating Experience form. Guidelines concerning formatting and the format approval process are available from the Graduate College: <https://www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/thesis>.

Capstone Policy Brief

In the fifth and sixth semester of the program students will create a public-friendly short policy brief designed to summarize the capstone policy problem and solution with a focus on advocacy for the solution. A draft of written Capstone Policy Brief must be submitted to their capstone advisor, participating faculty, and policy experts at least two weeks prior to their capstone presentation.

Capstone Presentation

In the final semester of the program students will participate in a School of Public Policy planned policy conference during which each capstone student will present their work. At the direction of the DPP committee in consultation with the student and their advisor, each student will present to a set of invited faculty and policy experts in the student's policy area. Students must present their capstone work prior to the Graduate College's deadline for culminating experience form submission. A preliminary draft of written Capstone project must be submitted to their capstone advisor, participating faculty, and policy experts at least two weeks prior to the presentation.

In the fifth and sixth semester of the program students will work with UNLV TV to film their final presentation of their doctoral capstone suitable for public dissemination to policy experts and advocates. The final video presentation must be submitted to their capstone advisor and policy experts at least two weeks prior to the presentation of their work in the School of Public Policy planned policy conference.

After submission of the written Capstone Project, Policy Brief, and the Capstone presentation, the advisor must sign the appropriate forms including the Culminating Experience form to be submitted to the Graduate College. These signatures will substantiate the successful passing of the Doctoral Capstone.

Time Limit

If the Doctoral Capstone project is not completed in conjunction with coursework, a meeting or conference call with the student will be held with the advisor and the Graduate Coordinator to evaluate progress toward completion of the project. Based on the progress review meeting, the student will submit a detailed work plan and time table for completion of the project within one semester. This must be approved by the project chair and the Graduate Coordinator.

If the program is not completed within three (3) years the student will be required to meet with the Graduate Coordinator to make a plan for completion.

Per Graduate College policy, students must fulfill all degree requirements within six (6) years of beginning the program.

The Culminating Experience Form is provided by the Graduate College at https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/GradCollege-CulminatingExperience.pdf.

Sample Program Timeline

The table below shows the timeline for progression through the DPP program. Courses are designed to be taken sequentially. Any adjustment must be approved in advance by the Graduate Coordinator and/or policy project chair.

Cohort	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total Credits
First Year	7 course credits 2 Capstone credits	7 course credits 2 Capstone credits		18
Second Year	7 course credits 2 Capstone credits	7 course credits 2 Capstone credits	Trip to Washington	18
Third Year	7 course credits 2 Capstone credits	4 course credits 2 Capstone credits		15

Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in [the graduate catalog](#). However, within the DPP program students are expected to maintain the highest professional and academic decorum. This means that students are expected to maintain etiquette in their attire and their actions. The classroom is a safe space for students to gain instruction, express ideas and to fully engage in the process of learning. Any form of disruptive behavior, harassment or violence can lead to immediate dismissal from the program. Instructors within the program reserve the right to have a disruptive student removed from the classroom.

Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at:

https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/StudentConduct-Code.pdf.

In general, academic dishonesty includes the following:

- Reusing material developed for other courses to meet writing assignments in the current course
- Receiving unauthorized external assistance with exams or other assignments. This includes but is not limited to collaborating with other students, using outside consultants (i.e. professional editor, professional research company) for assignments, and using a camera or smartphone or other devices for assistance
- Copying information or ideas from a book, article, or website without proper credit to the author
- Falsifying information for inclusion in an assignment
- Attempting to influence or change an academic evaluation or assignment

- Falsifying or misrepresenting attendance
- Acting or attempting to act as a substitute for another student

Plagiarism and academic misconduct in any form will face disciplinary action that could result in receiving an "F" in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the University.

Annual Mandatory Individual Development Plan

Each winter break and early spring term, graduate students are required to complete the Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP) form [Formerly known as the Student Annual Review]. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress, and it establishes reasonable goals for the year ahead.

Faculty Advisors/Graduate Coordinators have the option to provide feedback to each students' submitted IDP and provide acknowledgement that they have reviewed the IDP.

Reported student data is shared with students' graduate coordinators and advisors to foster opportunities for discussion about students' strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and next requirements, and mentoring plans so that students know what they need to do in order to progress successfully through their programs in a timely manner.

Students who are graduating are also required to complete the form in order to record their achievements since the data is also used to track UNLV metrics related to the annual productivity of all students.

Grade Policies

At the instructor's discretion, a grade of incomplete (I) may be assigned to a student. A student receiving an incomplete grade, will have one calendar year to complete all course requirements and remove the incomplete grade. Failure to complete the course requirements within one year will result in the "I" automatically becoming a record grade of "F." Within a given semester, a student may have no more than two incomplete grades in order to maintain good academic standing. Having more than two incompletes will result in the student being deemed as unsatisfactory and being placed on academic probation.

Attendance Policies

Missing any Thursday, Friday, or Saturday class will result in a reduction of the in-class participation grade/points. Students will incur a grade deduction for each unapproved absence. A course calendar, outlining all program dates, will be provided to students. The schedule does not include whether the course will be delivered online or face-to-face, synchronous online, or asynchronous online. Students are expected to block those dates for class attendance in anticipation that the classes will be happening in-person and/or synchronous online. Students may request whether an alternative assignment is possible for a missed class by completing an alternative assignment request form. The DPP program faculty coordinator and the SPPL Director will decide if make-up coursework is possible based on course attendance expectations. Students in reserve or active military service may be granted excused absences for time missed due to temporary or permanent reassignment related to military operations. Military students should schedule an appointment with the Military & Veterans Services Center before their absence and provide a copy of their military orders for appropriate guidance. Students will be granted excused absences for religious holidays. If this applies, they are encouraged to notify their instructor in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students requiring accommodations should follow the Disability Resource Center's guidelines. The DRC will communicate with the department/instructor to offer support and guidance.

Course Delivery and Communications

Classes within this program use the WEBCAMPUS/Canvas course site platform, which enables online instruction and communication. In order to gain access to courses, course material and information, students must have a Rebelmail (with @unlv.nevada.edu) account to log in. To activate your Rebelmail account go to <https://rebelmail.unlv.edu>.

Students must also obtain a student ID (RebelCard). Without your student ID, students will not be able to partake of certain campus resources, such as the University libraries. To obtain a RebelCard:

- Register for at least one credit hour at UNLV

- Wait 5 to 7 business days for the system to update
- Take a photo ID to the RebelCard Office located in the Student Union

Per FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations, all email correspondences

regarding student affairs, requests or any academic business must come from university email accounts.

Additional Program Information

The Graduate Coordinator is responsible for handling the oversight, management and direct handling of the doctoral program and its admission process. The coordinator is advised by the School of Public Policy and Leadership's DPP Committee along with input from the School Director. The Committee consists of the Graduate Coordinator along with a minimum of two additional School tenured/tenure-track faculty members with graduate faculty status. The Committee makes decisions on admissions, capstone requirements, and student separations/dismissals.

Academic Advisor

Upon admission into the program, the Graduate Coordinator will be the student's primary advisor until the beginning of the first semester when the Capstone Advisor will become the students primary advisor.

Discipline Resources

Writing Style Guide

In general, the School of Public Policy and Research uses the American Psychological Association style for references and citations. It is strongly recommended that student purchase a copy of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, latest edition. This style guide can be used in most of your courses to help format your papers and assignments.

Important Journals

Below is a list of important scholarly journals in the fields of public policy and public administration including journals which focus on nonprofit management.

- *Administration and Society*
- *Administrative Theory & Praxis*
- *American Review of Public Administration*
- *Governance*
- *International Journal of Public Administration*
- *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*
- *Journal of Public Affairs Education*
- *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*
- *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*
- *Policy Studies Journal*
- *Public Administration Quarterly*
- *Public Administration Review*
- *Public Budgeting & Finance*
- *Publius* (focus on federalism)
- *Review of Public Personnel Administration* (human res. focus)
- *State & Local Government Review*

University Resources

The Graduate Academy: Innovative Leadership, Professional, and Career Development

The goal of the Graduate Academy is to serve as a virtual resource providing support and many professional opportunities to UNLV graduate students. The Academy offers information about events and services such as graduate certificate programs, workshops, training sessions and career services. You can follow Academy activities via social media or look for regular updates on the website.

Alumni Engagement

With an alumni base 150,000+ strong, the UNLV Alumni Engagement offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

Commencement Office

Located in the UNLV Office of the Registrar, the [commencement office](#) is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College. It is the students' responsibility to ensure they apply for [graduation on time](#) and submit all required forms to the Graduate College. Questions regarding thesis/dissertation should be directed to the Graduate College [Student Services Team](#) and questions regarding required forms should be directed to the Graduate College [RPC Team](#).

Institutional Engagement and Experience

The vision of the [Institutional Engagement and Experience](#) is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission is to provide leadership and support for UNLV's engagement mission: *to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment*. This Office is housed under the Division of Human Resources and also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The [DRC](#) is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

Graduate Appeals and Issue Resolution

The Office of Graduate Student Services at the Graduate College assists graduate and professional students with addressing concerns and overcoming personal, academic, or financial challenges that might hinder their ability to be successful in their program. The office also provides information and student-centered issue-resolution services and offers guidance, information, and assistance when regular channels have failed to provide graduate students with the information they need to solve problems. Please see website for more information: <https://www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/appeals-issue-resolution>

UNLV Global and the Office of International Student and Scholar Compliance

[International Student and Scholar Compliance \(ISSC\)](#) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.

The Care Center

The [Care Center](#) is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women's Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

The Intersection

[The Intersection](#) is a one-stop resource for UNLV's highly diverse student body — a comprehensive multicultural center grounded in the academic life of our students. As an intersecting campus resource, the Intersection helps ensure students, particularly first-generation and students of color, successfully

navigate their academic careers. Here, all members of campus can discuss their differences, discover their similarities, and build a shared sense of belonging.

UNLV Libraries

[UNLV Libraries](#) has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)

The [Graduate & Professional Student Association](#) serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141 and Gateway Building PDAC Room. The facility is a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The GPSA also provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.

Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities

The [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the *UNLV Student Code of Conduct* by:

- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

Military and Veteran Services Center

The [Military and Veteran Service Center](#) is staffed with veterans and veteran education benefits-experienced staff to assist more than 1,800 veterans, dependents, active-duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists attending UNLV. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office

The [Financial Aid & Scholarships Office](#) supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

Writing Center

This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) page.

University Policies and Procedures

Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the following websites:

- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Activation for Military Service](#)
- [Change of Address](#)
- [FERPA/Privacy Rights](#)

- [Health Insurance - Mandatory](#)
- [Jean Clery Campus Safety and Security Report](#)
- [Proof of Immunization](#)
- [Policies and Procedures on the Protection of Research Subjects](#)
- [Rebelmail Policy](#)
- [Student Conduct Code](#)
- [Student Computer Use Policy](#)
- [Title IX](#)

UNLV does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities, including admissions, on the basis of sex/gender pursuant to Title IX, or on the basis of any other legally protected category as is set forth in NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 8, Section 13. Reports of discriminatory misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and/or concerns about noncompliance with Title IX or any other anti-discrimination laws or policies should be directed to UNLV's Title IX Coordinator Michelle Sposito.

The Title IX Coordinator can be reached through the [online reporting form](#), by email at titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu, by phone at (702) 895-4055, by mail at 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 451062, Las Vegas, NV, 89154-1062, or in person at Frank and Estella Beam Hall (BEH), Room 555.

To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the [Graduate Catalog](#):

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Academic Policies](#)
- [Admission and Registration Information](#)
- [Degree Progression Policies & Procedures](#)

In addition, the [Graduate College website](#) contains additional information regarding policies and procedures.

Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.

Handbook Information

This handbook was reviewed and approved by the program's DPP Committee.

Last revised	Revised by	Changes summary
3/26/2025	DPP Committee	Updates to program contacts, capstone description, attendance policies