

Policy Memorandum

Graduate Program in Public Policy
Institute for Public Policy Studies

Guidelines & Requirements
Academic Year 2009-2010

Purpose

In response to the MPP student's need to experience first-hand the type of practical and professional work typical of a policy analyst, the Graduate Program in Public Policy requires all students to produce a "Policy Memorandum."

The project is designed to provide MPP students with a capstone experience that will synthesize the knowledge and skills that were acquired during the 56-quarter hours of formal coursework. Included among the skills that students will apply to the Policy Memorandum are problem definition, critical analysis, research, quantitative methods, economic analysis, and cost-benefit analysis.

Defining the Policy Memorandum

The Policy Memorandum is a practical and professional document that will represent the level of work that is expected from modern professional policy analysts.

Students will:

- Identify and define a real-world policy issue
- Analyze the issue by interviewing professionals with opposing views, conducting research, and gathering data
- Analyze the costs and benefits of the issue
- Recommend courses of action.

The appropriate topic of study for the Policy Memorandum will:

- Involve a policy *decision* to be made within the public, private, or nonprofit sectors
- Require a *precise* problem statement
- Involve *conflicting viewpoints* or alternative points-of-view
- Require careful delineation of *actors* and *stakeholders*
- Involve the use of *information*, both qualitative and quantitative
- Be *specific* to relevant issues; *not* general
- Require *cost - benefit* analysis

Length, Formatting and Submission Requirements

The Policy Memorandum is expected to be 30-40 pages, *before* tables, charts, endnotes, and reference list. The standard formatting that should be used is 11-point "Times" font, double-spaced with 1" margins.

Students must submit *four unbound* copies on the date of final submission. On the date of the presentation, students must submit an additional *three unbound* copies and *one bound* copy.

Organization

There should be seven main sections to the Policy Memorandum:

- (1) Problem definition
- (2) Methods
- (3) Proposed solutions
- (4) Issue analysis
- (5) Strategic recommendations
- (6) Weaknesses and limitations
- (7) Cost-Benefit Analysis

Students may add sections or sub-sections to this general guideline, but should not omit any of these seven primary areas.

Credit Hours

Students must register for four-quarter hours of required credit in the Public Policy Program (PPOL 4995, Independent Research).

Professional Ethics

All of the content of the Policy Memorandum should be the student's original thought—or properly attributed in accordance with MLA standards. Any unattributed content will result in a failing grade, with the consequence of a completely rewritten Policy Memorandum (on a new topic) or expulsion from the Program without the MPP degree. The Director and IPPS faculty will determine the consequences after review of the severity of the offense.

Timeframe

The due dates for the Policy Memorandum are strict. The advisor will consider the student's ability to meet deadlines when determining the final grade.

See deadline charts (attached).

Grading

The student's final grade will be determined by the student's primary advisor (up to 60 points possible), cost benefit analysis advisor (up to 20 points possible), and panel members (up to 20 points possible), for a total of 100 points.

Students will be evaluated on their public policy problem definition; analytical abilities; thoroughness and quality of research; quality of writing; professionalism; and presentation skills, among others. If a student's final grade is lower than a B- (80 points), he or she must rewrite the portion(s) of the paper that need(s) improvement. The student's graduation will be postponed until such time that an acceptable version (80 or more points) is submitted.

Presentation

The panel members will consist of the student's primary advisor, the cost-benefit advisor, and one faculty or community member.

The student will present for approximately 45 minutes, the panel members will discuss the student's project and presentation (student is absent at this time) for 15 minutes, and finally, the student will answer questions from panel members and be critiqued for approximately 30 minutes.

Professional attire and practiced presentation skills are encouraged.

Deadlines for Fall 2009 graduation:

Date:	Due:
Monday, April 6, 2009	Topic proposal due (email to cgable@du.edu)
Monday, April 27, 2009	Revised topic proposal due to advisor
Monday, June 22, 2009	1 st draft of Policy Memorandum due to advisor (full text; all references, charts, and tables; and draft CBA)
Monday, August 10, 2009	2 nd draft of Policy Memorandum due to advisor (full text; all references, charts, and tables; and complete CBA)
Monday, September 28, 2009	Final submission of Policy Memorandum to IPPS office (four unbound copies); only very minor revisions will be accepted after this date
Mid-October, 2008	All advisors will meet to review all Policy Memos submitted and make a decision about whether each student will proceed to the presentation stage; if declined, students will need to revise their graduation plans to Winter 2010
Late-October, 2008	Student presentations (1 bound copy and 3 unbound copies)

Deadlines for Winter 2010 graduation:

Date:	Due:
Monday, October 26, 2009	Topic proposal due (email to cgable@du.edu)
Monday, November 9, 2009	Revised topic proposal due to advisor
Friday, December 18, 2009	1 st draft of Policy Memorandum due to advisor (full text; all references, charts, and tables; and draft CBA)
Monday, January 18, 2010	2 nd draft of Policy Memorandum due to advisor (full text; all references, charts, and tables; and complete CBA)
Friday, February 12, 2010	Final submission of Policy Memorandum to IPPS office (four unbound copies); only very minor revisions will be accepted after this date
February 15-19, 2010	All advisors will meet to review all Policy Memos submitted and make a decision about whether each student will proceed to the presentation stage; if declined, students will need to revise their graduation plans to Spring 2010
February 22-March 5, 2010	Student presentations (1 bound copy and 3 unbound copies)

Deadlines for Spring 2010 graduation:

Date:	Due:
Monday, September 28, 2009	Topic proposal due (email to cgable@du.edu)
Monday, November 9, 2009	Revised topic proposal due to advisor
Monday, January 4, 2010	1 st draft of Policy Memorandum due to advisor (full text; all references, charts, and tables; and draft CBA)
Monday, February 8, 2010	2 nd draft of Policy Memorandum due to advisor (full text; all references, charts, and tables; and complete CBA)
Monday, March 29, 2010	Final submission of Policy Memorandum to IPPS office (four unbound copies); only very minor revisions will be accepted after this date
Mid-April, 2010	All advisors will meet to review all Policy Memos submitted and make a decision about whether each student will proceed to the presentation stage; if declined, students will need to revise their graduation plans to Summer 2010
April 26-May 14, 2010	Student presentations (1 bound copy and 3 unbound copies)

Deadlines for Summer 2010 graduation:

Date:	Due:
Monday, January 4, 2010	Topic proposal due (email to cgable@du.edu)
Monday, February 8, 2010	Revised topic proposal due to advisor
Monday, March 22, 2010	1 st draft of Policy Memorandum due to advisor (full text; all references, charts, and tables; and draft CBA)
Monday, April 26, 2010	2 nd draft of Policy Memorandum due to advisor (full text; all references, charts, and tables; and complete CBA)
Monday, June 21, 2010	Final submission of Policy Memorandum to IPPS office (four unbound copies); only very minor revisions will be accepted after this date
Monday, July 5, 2010	All advisors will meet to review all Policy Memos submitted and make a decision about whether each student will proceed to the presentation stage; if declined, students will need to revise their graduation plans to Fall 2008
July 19-30, 2010	Student presentations (1 bound copy and 3 unbound copies)