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- The *Graduate Certificate in*

### **Bachelor's Degree and GPA:**

Students wishing to gain admittance into the MPA program must have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited College or University in the U.S., or an equivalent institution abroad. Holders of all undergraduate fields are welcome to apply.

Students must have a minimum overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in their undergraduate studies. Applicants with relevant work experience can apply with a GPA lower than a 3.0, but they should include a statement in their letter of intent directly addressing their readiness for graduate school.

### **Letter of Intent:**

A letter of intent, also known as a statement of purpose, must be submitted with the online application. The letter of intent must clearly describe the applicant's academic and professional background, as well as articulate their interest in public administration. Applicants should consider this letter as an opportunity to express the specific academic goals they would like to pursue within the MPA program and beyond.

### **Resume:**

Applicants should include an updated resume, also known as a curriculum vitae, with their application, that indicates relevant professional experience.


### **Letters of Recommendation:**

A minimum of two letters of recommendation must be submitted online as part of the application packet. Prospective students should solicit letters from sources familiar with their academic/work history and performance. At least one of these references should come from an academic instructor. However, if an applicant has been out of school for a while and can no longer get a letter from an instructor, they can provide letters from professional references.

### **International Applicant Requirements:**

In addition to the program-specific requirements listed above, international applicants from non-English speaking countries must comply with the following requirements:

- ***English Proficiency: TOEFL/IELTS/Duolingo Scores***  
International applicants from non-English speaking countries must provide a minimum TOEFL iBT score of 79, a minimum IELTS score of 6.5, -or- a minimum Duolingo score of 110 taken within two years of the desired term of entry.
- ***English Proficiency: Writing Sample***  
International applicants from non-English speaking countries need to submit a writing sample along with their graduate application. The writing sample should demonstrate their ability to analyze information and display their communication skills at a graduate-level.
- ***Foreign Transcript Evaluation Services***  
All foreign transcripts and documents that are not in English must be accompanied by a certified English translation. The credential evaluation must be submitted directly to the



USF Office of Admissions. A list of several credential evaluation services can be found [here](#).

Late applications may be considered, if space is available and time permits, at the discretion of the MPA Program Director. Admissions decisions are ultimately made by the MPA Admissions Committee on a case-by-case basis. The committee reviews the full application packet to determine the applicant's suitability for graduate study.

The entire application packet is designed to be paperless. An application must be completed online [here](#) and the non-refundable \$30 application fee must be paid once the application is submitted. All documents must be uploaded online by the student as PDF files, and applicants can request their recommenders to submit the letters electronically by supplying their email addresses. Documents can be uploaded as they are received. Once the application is complete, it will be released to the department for review.


## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **Advising:**

The MPA Program Director serves as the [advisor](#) of all newly admitted and continuing students in the program. The role of the advisor is to guide the student in selecting appropriate courses each semester and to review each student's progress as graduation approaches.

Students must continue to work with the MPA Program Director throughout their course of study so that they are provided with appropriate guidance for course selection and sequencing. Periodically, the MPA Program Director may refer students to meet with another faculty member with the expertise in the student's area of interest. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the MPA Program Director before registering for classes each semester.

*The MPA Program Director must approve all deviations from the standard curriculum, including all course selections and*



books. The USF Office of Financial Aid (OFA) administers the Federal Work Study program as well as several loan programs.

Students interested in loans or work-study should apply as soon as possible each year (after October 1<sup>st</sup>) for the upcoming academic year, which begins in August. For more information, or to complete an application packet, students are advised to contact Financial Aid by phone at



experience,







## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

There are over 600 registered student organizations at USF. Information about student organizations can be found on the USF Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement (CLCE) [webpage](#).

There are student organizations that may be of special interest to MPA students specifically:

- **Robert R. Green International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Student Chapter:** The USF ICMA student chapter introduces and integrates students to local government and provides professional, social, and networking opportunities.
- **American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Student Chapter:** The USF ASPA student chapter strives to connect theory and practice by putting an emphasis on value systems such as professionalism, social equity, and code of ethics.
- **Student Planning Organization (SPO):** The SPO provides professional support, advising, and networking opportunities to MPA students interested in urban and regional planning.

Enrolled MPA students can log onto [BullsConnect](#), using their USF NetID and password, to join a student organization.

### **Community Engagement:**

MPA students have numerous opportunities to engage with local governments throughout the Tampa Bay region. Students may network by attending public meetings attended by elected and appointed officials:

- [Hillsborough County Government](#)
- [City of Tampa](#)
- [City of Temple Terrace](#)
- [Pinellas County Government](#)
- [City of St. Petersburg](#)

The USF Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) offers service learning and applied research opportunities for MPA students seeking relevant, real-world experience in community engagement. For more



## STUDENT SUPPORT AND SERVICES

### **International Students:**

The Office of International Services (OIS) at USF World

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- [Housing and Dining](#)
  - [Technology Resources](#)
  - [Financial Resources](#)
  - [Health and Safety](#)
  - [Internships and Student Employment](#)
  - [Activities and Programs](#)
  - [Arts and Culture](#)
  - [Athletics and Fitness](#)
  - [Graduation Preparation](#)

### STUDENT-TO-STUDENT MESSAGE

The purpose of this handbook is to help you succeed in your graduate studies and to prepare you for a career in public administration. Our MPA students have offered some of their own recommendations for success in the program:

- Become active in one of the School of Public Affairs' student organizations;
- Monitor your Canvas and USF email accounts frequently;
- Get to know the faculty and staff members, and consult with them often;
- Attend regional and national conferences if/when possible; and
- Take advantage of our mentorship and internship opportunities.