

Master of Public Administration

The Master of Public Administration Program is pleased to offer new applicants the opportunity to earn credit for prior experience. New applicants completing the Prior Learning Credit Application (Below) can be awarded up to 9 credits which serve to replace electives required for the program thus recognizing their past accomplishments and shortening the time required to complete the degree. Prospective students with questions about prior learning credit should contact the director of the master of public administration program at taengbers@usi.edu.

Prior Learning Credit Application

Students who wish to receive credit for prior learning should submit a portfolio of experience to the (MPA) program director in hard copy. The portfolio should be received after they are accepted to the program but prior to the completion of 6 credits. The six-credit deadline refers to those graduate classes taken after acceptance to the program. The portfolio will be evaluated by a committee of faculty of the program. The portfolio should include the following information:

Portfolio Composition:

Most portfolios will be structured to include the following content:

1. Title page
2. Table of contents
3. Goal statement that relates experiences to educational goals
4. Resume or curriculum vitae including work history, position, dates of employment and other relevant information
5. A narrative explanation of the request for credit that includes:
 - a. A description of the work setting or relevant organization, including its mission, role, and the size and scope of work
 - b. A statement of how the work aligns with the program objectives.
 - Obtain knowledge of the theoretical and institutional foundations and the internal operations of the public and nonprofit sectors, and how these sectors are shaped by their economic, social, and political environments.
 - Master an understanding of how key concepts and theories in the field of public administration can be used to formulate applied solutions to problems associated with public and nonprofit administration.
 - Acquire practical skills necessary for the management of public and nonprofit organizations, such as grant writing, budgeting, public speaking, human resources management, organizational behavior, electronic communication, and report writing.
 - Learn how to gather and analyze qualitative and quantitative data (through data bases, web sites, printed material, and other information-based resources) and develop research skills that can be used to advance the knowledge and practice of public administration.
 - Understand the ethical consequences of decisions made by managers and administrators in the public and nonprofit sectors.

6. Index of supporting documentation
7. Attach evidence of professional learning, including documentation of non-college training, certifications, and professional artifacts that demonstrate the application of learning to a career setting
8. A degree plan.

Additional Policy Details:

- All credit is applied as PLA credit and serves to satisfy program electives.
- PLA credit refers to credit which is not tied to specific course numbers or departmental requirements. Instead, PLA credit serves as earned credit hours toward the degree that satisfies elective credit.
- Students may not receive credit for which they have previously been granted credit at USI.
- Experience must have occurred prior to beginning the current graduate degree.
- PLA credit for prior learning will only be awarded once per student. Once a student has been awarded PLA credit, he/she cannot request further credit for prior learning.
- Portfolio reviewers may choose not to award any credit for a portfolio and may award no more than 9 credits.
- The university allows students to transfer up to 12 credit hours from another university. For degree programs of 36 credit hours or less, the total number of combined transfer credits and PLA credits may not exceed 12.
- A faculty committee of the student's degree program or their designee will evaluate each experience for the number of credits to be awarded as demonstrated by the level of professional learning that occurred.
- Portfolios are reviewed on a rolling basis.
- The decision of the committee or their designee is binding and there is no appeal.
- All portfolio reviews for PLA credit will have a \$250.00 (USD) fee. The fee is non-refundable regardless of the decision to award PLA credit. Portfolio reviews for PLA credit will not be conducted until the portfolio review fee has been paid by the student/potential student.