

*Washington State University*



Health Policy and  
Administration  
Policies and Procedures

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## MISSION

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The **mission** of the Department of Health Policy and Administration is: 1) to offer a world-class graduate education to the next generation of health administrators, policy analysts, and health services researchers; and 2) to generate new knowledge and competencies that improve access, quality, efficiency, and equity of health services, both domestically and internationally.

## VISION

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The **vision** of the WSU Department of Health Policy and Administration is to expand and improve our nationally recognized health administration education program and to enhance our portfolio of extramurally funded research.

## VALUES

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The **values** of the Department of Health Policy and Administration are consistent with the land grant status of a public university, including:

- **Rigor** – HPA students, alumni, faculty, and staff will rigorously assess all available evidence and apply appropriate analytic strategies.
- **Respect** – HPA students, alumni, faculty, and staff will respect the identity, perspective and experience of all stakeholders, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, disability status, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs or political affiliation.
- **Integrity** – HPA students, alumni, faculty, and staff will demonstrate integrity, honesty and professionalism in all interactions with peers and with all community stakeholders.
- **Collaboration** – HPA students, alumni, faculty, and staff will participate in collaborative efforts of the University and the community to expand the health science programs in Spokane and ensure that quality healthcare providers will be available to serve the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) regions.

## **GRADUATE PROGRAM PLANNING**

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You should begin thinking about your overall graduate program plan during the first semester. Although specific planning for the internship can wait until you have completed several basic courses, you should begin thinking immediately about a project that would be of the greatest interest and value to you professionally.

You should also begin now to identify which courses you wish to take in addition to the required core courses. These courses are drawn from the supporting course list or from appropriate graduate courses. We encourage you to select a grouping of support courses that can serve as a specialization. For example, some of you may be interested in a community health, nutrition, pharmacy, or nursing specialization and could draw supporting courses from those graduate programs, or you may be interested in further enhancement of your administration or management skills and could select courses from the WSU Departments of Management, Economics, or Public Administration.

Your program must be developed and approved in consultation with a faculty graduate committee consisting of at least three people. Faculty are selected from the HPA instructional faculty or other WSU faculty in your field of special interest. Your graduate committee (particularly the committee chair) will serve as your primary advisors during your graduate study and will supervise your internship and final oral examinations. Your graduate committee must confirm with their signatures on a Graduate School form that you have successfully completed your program and are eligible for the MHPA degree.

It is appropriate to begin the process described above by selecting a committee chair. A second and third person may be added during the next semester. For both thesis and non-thesis programs, a master's committee should include at least three faculty members. At least two members must be from the Graduate Faculty. If you would like to select a third person from other faculty not on the list, please consult with your committee chair in advance of a formal decision.

When your program is developed and approved by your graduate committee, it must be filed with the Graduate School for approval as a formal record of your program plan. You may apply to change courses or committee members if for any reason you change your interest at a later date.

The forms are available electronically at <http://www.gradsch.wsu.edu/current-students/forms/>

If you have any specific questions about planning your program, please contact the Department Chair, academic advisor, or HPA faculty.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

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The core courses provide basic understanding and experience in managing health care systems in the context of enhancing community health status. A multidisciplinary systems perspective in many courses helps students develop knowledge and skills in communication, ethics, interpersonal relations, team building, management, and delivery of cost-effective health care. The learning environment is both rigorous and flexible. Students are encouraged to design individualized programs suitable to a variety of career goals and future employment opportunities. Practical and individualized experiences, through internships, fellowships, research assistantships, and special projects build students' skills and values in varied administrative settings.

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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Admission standards conform to the requirements of the WSU Graduate School. An undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 or better is expected. GRE and GMAT scores are required for admission to the HPA Program, except for applicants holding a professional doctoral degree (e.g., M.D., J.D., D.D.S.) or Ph.D. from a United States accredited school. Significant weight is given to GRE aptitude (verbal and quantitative combined) total scores of at least 1000, or a GMAT aptitude score of at least 500. However, indications of academic ability as expressed by undergraduate grade point average and professional experience will be of greater importance than specific undergraduate background and GRE or GMAT scores.

A letter of intent and introduction indicating career goals, commitment to a health care profession, and any distinctions in professional activity should be submitted to the Department of Chair with application forms. The letter should include a discussion of the student's education background, experiences related to health policy and/or management, and professional interests.

Three original letters of recommendation must be submitted to the Department Chair to help the Program assess the quality of the student's academic and work experiences. Send letters of recommendation to: Department of Health Policy and Administration, Washington State University, P.O. Box 1495, Spokane, WA 99210-1495.

Students may be admitted to the Program following satisfactory completion of the above requirements. Before students may enroll in the Program, they must satisfy two undergraduate prerequisites. The prerequisites are basic financial accounting (e.g., Accounting 230, Introduction to Financial Accounting), microeconomics (e.g., Economics 101, Fundamentals of Microeconomics), and computer skills (word processing, spreadsheet competence). Prerequisites must be completed prior to enrollment in any HPA courses. Please contact the Program for computer-assisted programs and a listing of classes available in the area that will meet Program prerequisite requirements.

### ***International Students***

International students are a vital part of the HPA student body that brings significant experiences and a global perspective to our campus. Many of our students come from abroad, with, for example, representatives from the countries and territories of India, China, Taiwan, Korea, Holland, and Gaza.

In addition to documents required for admission to the Graduate School, International applicants are required to submit the following:

- Official TOEFL, IELTS, or MELAB scores;
- Transcripts or other grade reports and official translations of these documents from all previous degree-granting universities and/or institutions;
- Evidence of Financial Support;
- Immigration Documents (F-1 or J-1);
- Any additional requirements set forth by the HPA program.

English skills testing scores must be less than two years old and sent directly to the Graduate School from the testing service. Photocopies and student-reported scores are not official and will not be used in the admissions

evaluation process. For the TOEFL, the minimum acceptable paper score is 600; the minimum acceptable computer score is 250; for internet it is 100. The minimum acceptable IELTS score is 7. The minimum acceptable MELAB score is 86. The Educational Testing Service reporting code for Washington State University is 4705 (for the TOEFL only).

At times, some international students may need to strengthen their English language skills with one-on-one tutoring or classes. In this case, students are directed to a number of available resources by their advisor or academic coordinator in the Program. Students may also contact ASWSU or the Office of Student Affairs for more information. Depending on individual student schedules, classes and tutoring can occur outside of regular HPA program courses. Generally, English tutoring or classes are available for help in writing, reading, and conversation at WSU as low- or no-cost resources.

WSU-Spokane does not offer student housing on campus, but it is not difficult to find an apartment in Spokane. The region offers many apartment complexes within five miles of campus, with rent ranging from \$350 to \$600 for an unfurnished, one bedroom apartment. Most apartments supply an oven, refrigerator, dishwasher, and laundry facilities. Renters are usually responsible for their own monthly utilities. Students should contact their academic coordinator or the Office of Student Affairs if they have housing issues or questions.

Qualified international students are encouraged to apply for financial assistance in the form of assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, and loans from the HPA Program, other public, or other private sources. All HPA applicants are provided with a "Fellowship and/or Assistantship" application with their admission packet and are encouraged to apply.

International students should work closely with the Graduate School in order to assure they have all required application materials.

Further information on international student admissions, student life, and other resources can be found online at <http://www.gradschool.wsu.edu/FutureStudents/International/>.

## ADVISING

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Program advising will be available through the Department Chair, faculty, and academic coordinator. According to the Graduate School: “**Master’s programs should be submitted on forms provided by the Graduate School at the beginning of the second semester of graduate work.** Preparation of the program is the responsibility of the student in consultation with the advisor and the master’s committee.” Each student’s proposed program of study will be designed and guided by a graduate committee consisting of at least three faculty members with whom the student will be taking courses, graduate project or thesis, and internship credits. Both the committee and the Department Chair must approve the program. The committee will be responsible for evaluating the student’s course work, examinations, graduate project or thesis, and internship.

Beginning Fall 2006, training on the “Responsible Conduct of Research Education – Mandatory” will be required of all graduate students. This is Web based training located at [myResearch.wsu.edu](http://myResearch.wsu.edu). Students are encouraged to take this training as soon as possible. The training will need to be repeated after a five-year period. After you complete the training, please go back into the training site, print out the date completed information, and submit this information to your departmental secretary or advisor.

## REQUIRED CREDITS

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A minimum of 50 credit hours is required for HPA Program completion. The following list is a breakdown of the number of credits required for each category of courses.

- Introductory courses 19
- Core courses 18
- Electives 3
- Internship (HPA 597) 4 (ranges between 3 to 5 credits)
- Capstone course (HPA 590) 3
- Graduate project (or thesis) 3 (or 5)

Total Minimum Credits Required 50

## INTRODUCTORY COURSES

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Course #	Credit Hours	Course Description
HPA 500	3	Introduction to the Health Care System
HPA 502	3	Law and Ethics of Health Management
HPA 503	3	Government Regulation of Health Services
HPA 510	3	Health Care Cost Accounting
HPA 515	3	Health Care Management
HPA 519	3	Biostatistics and Epidemiology for the Health Sciences
HPA 570	1	Marketing for Health Care Organizations

## CORE COURSES

Course #	Credit Hours	Course Description
HPA 501	3	Health Care Policy and Politics
HPA 509	3	Health Care Economics
HPA 511	3	Health Care Finance – Prerequisite: 510
HPA 517	3	Health Care Human Resources Management
HPA 520	3	Research and Evaluation Methods – Prerequisite: 519 or statistics
HPA 530	3	Health Care Information Systems

## ELECTIVE COURSES

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<b>Course #</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>Course Description</b>
HPA 516	3	Health Quality Management
HPA 572	3	Health Care Ethics
HPA 573	3	Comparative International Health Care
HPA 574	3	Rural Health Care in America
HPA 579	3	Mental Health Policy and Law
HPA 580	3	Disability and Aging Policy
HPA 597	4 (3-5 credits)	Internship
HPA 599	1-3	Special Topics: Health Policy and Administration
HPA 600	3	Special Topic: Healthcare Leadership
NURS 554	3	Epidemiology Approaches to Community Health
PSY 542	3	Community Psychology
FSHN 526	2	Advanced Community Nutrition
STAT 510	3	Statistics for Social/Behavioral Sciences

## OTHER REQUIRED COURSES

<b>Course #</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>Course Description</b>
HPA 590	3	Strategic Management and Marketing – Prerequisite: HPA 511, 515
HPA 597	4 (3-5 credits)	Internship
HPA 702	3	Graduate Project

## COMPLETION TIME

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The program is designed to facilitate both full-time and part-time participation. The time required for completion of the program will vary for each student depending upon course load. The average time for completion of the program for a full-time student is two years. Part-time students will obviously require additional time depending upon the intensity of study. According to the Graduate School, “The time limit for use of graduate credit toward a master’s degree is six years from the beginning date of the earliest course applied toward the degree.”

Most courses are scheduled to begin at 4:00 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

## DESCRIPTION OF COURSES

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Please see the HPA Graduate Planning Sheet (page 9) for a listing of courses by category: Introductory, Core, Capstone, or Elective.

### **HPA 500 - Introduction to the Health Care System (3 credits)**

Orientation to delivery, financing, and organization of the health care system.

### **HPA 501 - Health Care Policy and Politics (3 credits)**

History, methods, results, and evaluation of health care policy and politics.

### **HPA 502 - Law and Ethics of Health Management (3 credits)**

Private health law and ethics, including professional liability, relationship of physician and patient, malpractice reform, health institutions, and health access.

### **HPA 503 - Government Regulation of Health Services (3 credits)**

Public law regulation; health care quality, personhood and individual autonomy, life/death decisions, antitrust, health care financing and cost control.

### **HPA 509 - Health Care Economics (3 credits)**

Allocating, financing, and delivering medical care services. *Prerequisite:* Microeconomics (see Appendix A)

### **HPA 510 - Health Care Cost Accounting (3 credits)**

Basic cost accounting concepts, principles, and applications in the health care setting. *Prerequisite:* Basic Financial Accounting (see Appendix A)

### **HPA 511 - Health Care Finance (3 credits)**

Aspects of health care financial management fundamentals and managerial accounting for strategic financial management.

### **HPA 515 - Health Care Management (3 credits)**

Introduction to the knowledge, skills and values associated with the practice of health management.

### **HPA 516 - Health Quality Management (3 credits)**

Overview of the total field of health quality, including strategic quality management programs, quality assurance, quality control and design.

### **HPA 517 – Health Care Human Resources Management (3 credits)**

Application of human resource management principles (e.g., recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, compensation, benefits, retention, and termination) in health care.

### **HPA 519 - Biostatistics and Epidemiology for the Health Sciences (3 credits)**

Application of quantitative methods to problems in the health sciences. Introduction to statistical analysis software.

**HPA 520 - Research and Evaluation Methods (3 credits)**

Basic research and evaluation methods for health care professionals. *Prerequisite:* statistics or HPA 519

**HPA 530 - Health Care Information Systems (3 credits)**

Key attributes of health care information systems and their evolution in the health care environment.

**HPA 570 - Marketing for Health Care Organization (1 credit)**

Basic marketing concepts, principles, and issues related to marketing public and private health care.

**HPA 572 - Health Care Ethics (3 credits)**

Ethical issues affecting health care institutions, professionals, and consumers.

**HPA 573 - Comparative International Health Care (3 credits)**

Analysis of key attributes of health care policy in selected countries and comparisons with the US health care system.

**HPA 574 - Rural Health Care in American (3 credits)**

The unique characteristics, professional opportunities, problems, and reform alternatives in rural health care.

**HPA 579 - Mental Health Policy and Law (3 credits)**

Professions regulation, negligence, consent, privacy; civil commitment, treatment rights, guardianship, trial competency, insanity defense, sex offenders, executing capacity, entitlements, discrimination.

**HPA 580 - Disability and Aging Policy (3 credits)**

Policy aspects of disability, aging and chronic illness; including work disability, health and long term care, rationing, gender and class.

**HPA 590 - Strategic Management and Marketing (3 credits)**

Key components and processes in strategic planning. *Prerequisite:* HPA 511, 515

**HPA 597 - Internship (Variable, 1-5 credits)**

Student experience in professional work settings. S, F grading.

**HPA 599 - Special Topic: Health Policy and Administration (Variable, 1-3 credits)**

May be repeated for credit; cumulative maximum 9 hours.

**HPA 600 - Special Topic: Healthcare Leadership (3 credits)**

S, F grading.

**HPA 700 - Masters' Research, Thesis, (Variable)**

S, F grading.

**HPA 702 - Masters' Special Problems, Directed Study, and/or Examination (Variable)**

S, F grading.



## ROTATION OF REQUIRED COURSES

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### FALL SEMESTER

			FACULTY
HPA 500	3 credits	Introduction to the Health Care System	James J. Kennedy
HPA 501	3 credits	Health Care Policy and Politics	James J. Kennedy
HPA 502	3 credits	Law and Ethics of Health Management	Gerald Kobluk
HPA 509	3 credits	Health Care Economics <i>Prerequisite:</i> Microeconomics	Sean Murphy
HPA 510	3 credits	Health Care Cost Accounting <i>Prerequisite:</i> Financial Accounting	Joseph S. Coyne
HPA 517	3 credits	Health Care Human Resources Management	Gary Smith
HPA 519	3 credits	Biostatistics and Epidemiology for the Health Sciences	Sterling M. McPherson
HPA 570	1 credit	Marketing for Health Care Organizations	Josh Engle
HPA 597	4 credits	Internship	Staff
HPA 700	3 credits	Thesis	Staff
HPA 702	3 credits	Graduate Project	Staff

### SPRING SEMESTER

HPA 503	3 credits	Government Regulation of Health Services	Brent Stanyer
HPA 511	3 credits	Health Care Finance <i>Prerequisite:</i> HPA 510	Joseph S. Coyne
HPA 515	3 credits	Health Care Management	Gary Smith
HPA 520	3 credits	Research and Evaluation Methods <i>Prerequisite:</i> HPA 519 or statistics	Sean Murphy
HPA 530	3 credits	Health Care Information Systems	Sean Murphy
HPA 580	3 credits	Disability and Aging Policy	James J. Kennedy
HPA 590	3 credits	Strategic Management and Marketing <i>Prerequisites:</i> HPA 511, 515	Gary Smith
HPA 597	3-5 credits	Internship	Staff
HPA 600	3 credits	Health Care Leadership Special	Fred Peterson
HPA 700	5 credits	Thesis	Staff
HPA 702	3 credits	Graduate Project	Staff

### SUMMER SESSION

Several courses may be offered in the Summer Session.

## INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES

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The purpose of the required three to five-credit internship is to assure that all students graduating from the program in Health Policy and Administration have substantive first-hand experience in an administrative setting within one or more health care organizations. It gives students the opportunity to better organize, understand, and retain classroom learning and assist them in career planning. Sixty-four hours of contact are required to fulfill one credit hour of internship. Student internships average approximately 4 credit hours or 256 contact hours.

The following guidelines establish the parameters for such experiences, and the evaluation criteria to determine what constitutes a satisfactory internship:

1. The experience must involve
  - a. A meaningful administrative role. “Meaningful” means that the student has responsibility for completion of one or more projects of importance to the institution or organization in which the experience takes place.
  - b. Independent responsibility under the supervision of an experienced health administrator, called the community preceptor.
  - c. Participation in administrative planning and project implementation meetings of the sponsoring organization.
  - d. Involvement in teams, ideally in both supportive and leadership roles.
  - e. Exposure to multiple administrative experiences, including upper management levels.
2. Preparation by the student of a proposal describing the proposed activity, the setting, the specific objectives and expected outcomes, and the timeline for completing the project (number of hours per week committed to the organization and the project).
  - a. The proposal is to be developed in consultation with the faculty advisor, academic coordinator, and community preceptor with whom the student will work, and must be formally approved and signed by all. The proposal is returned to the academic coordinator and filed in the HPA Program offices with the student’s records.
  - b. The proposal will serve as the basis for evaluation of the internship experience by the community preceptor and faculty advisor.
3. The student must prepare a report on the internship experience. The report should include a portfolio of products from the experience to be shared and discussed with the community preceptor and faculty advisor as part of the evaluation process.
4. The student is supervised on-site by an experienced health administrator, called the internship community preceptor.

*Role of the community preceptor:*

Guidance to the student in planning the internship project.

- a. Signed approval of the internship proposal.
- b. Primary contact and on-site supervision in the internship setting.

- c. Evaluation of student's performance in the administrative role(s) undertaken during the internship.
  - d. Review of student's written products in consultation with the faculty advisor.
5. The student must select an internship faculty advisor.

*Role of the faculty advisor:*

- a. Guidance to student in planning the internship project.
  - b. Signed approval of the internship proposal.
  - c. Off-site supervision of the student, in consultation with the academic coordinator.
  - d. Evaluation of the student's written products, in consultation with the academic coordinator.
  - e. Review of the student's on-site performance in the administrative role(s) undertaken during the internship, in consultation with the community preceptor.
6. The student needs to consult with the academic coordinator to fulfill the requirements of the internship.

*Role of the academic coordinator:*

- a. Guidance to student in developing and planning the internship site.
- b. Signed approval of the internship proposal.
- c. Off-site supervision of the student, in consultation with the faculty advisor.
- d. Review of the student's evaluation of the internship experience, in consultation with the program director.
- e. Coordination of completed evaluations prepared by the student and community preceptor.

7. *Basis for evaluation*

- a. Performance of the administrative role(s) undertaken during the internship, including attention to completing tasks and initiative in securing meaningful administrative experience. The community preceptor has primary responsibility for the evaluation.
- b. Quality of the portfolio and report completed by the student. The faculty advisor has primary responsibility for the evaluation.

Students who already have managerial work experience in the health care sector are encouraged to broaden their experience in different types of settings, including exposure to patient care settings and professionals. Students intending to waive all or part of the internship requirements must still fulfill the minimum Program requirements of 50 credit hours. However, students who have extensive managerial experience in the health care sector and wish to waive part or all of the internship requirements must petition the faculty in writing, supporting their position with such documentation as resumes, letters from employers, written performance appraisals, or other relevant materials. Students with administrative experience should discuss possible alternative experiences with faculty advisors.

## THE REQUIRED GRADUATE PROJECT OR OPTIONAL THESIS

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There are two options for completion of the MHPA degree requirement. One is the Graduate Project and the other is the thesis. The required Graduate Project or optional thesis will serve as the final requirement on which the candidate will be examined prior to completion of the MHPA degree. The required graduate project (3 credits) or optional thesis (5 credits) will consist of a unique investigation selected by the student and faculty advisors. Graduate project or optional thesis data may be collected as part of the internship if the student is able to clearly demonstrate an appropriate combination of investigative and administrative activities.

“Prior approval for use of human subjects or animals in research is required. If the student plans to utilize human or animal subjects for research, please contact either the Office of Grant and Research Development or the Laboratory Animal Resources Center.....” (Graduate School Policies and Procedures, section 4.4)

The primary objectives of the Graduate Project or optional thesis are to provide

- experience with first-hand application of health administration theory,
- hands-on experience with research methods and statistics, and
- an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to communicate theory, methods, and results.

## GRADUATE PROJECT GUIDELINES

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**Rationale:** The Graduate Project is generally conceptualized as an applied project providing the student with additional depth, breadth, and integration relative to the student’s chosen area of study. The rationale for students completing a Graduate Project is two-fold. The Graduate Project is designed as an integrative experience for students, requiring that they connect and apply concepts and tools mastered throughout the MHPA program to important real-world situations. In addition, the Graduate Project is designed to contribute to students’ portfolios by providing a structured opportunity to demonstrate the following: initiative; ability to integrate concepts and skills in a cohesive project; and leadership and management skills in working effectively on a team. All of these skills are highly valued by managers in health and health care in today’s environment.

**Graduate Project Content:** The Graduate Project is a participatory, applied project rather than research *per se*. The Graduate Project is the application of findings of research and scholarly activity to real-world problems.

**Committee Composition:** For either Graduate Project or thesis programs, the master’s committee should include at least three faculty members. The Chair of the master’s committee will be an HPA core faculty member. The master’s committee is nominated by the student to the Graduate School when completing the Program of Study form.

**Graduate Project Format:** The Graduate Project follows the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the APA in either of two options: (1) a poster presentation, with an abstract and references that is defended before the master’s committee; or (2) a paper that is submitted to a peer-reviewed journal that has been accepted as technically complete and ready for review.

## ***Graduate Project Requirements***

While the Graduate Project enables diversity in approaches, all Graduate Projects must:

1. Generate new knowledge and competencies that improve access, quality, efficiency, and equity of health services, both domestically and internationally.
2. Apply and integrate the concepts and tools that the student has learned in the MHPA program to the extent delineated by the committee.
3. Include, a systematic literature review, with appropriate references.
4. Include an evaluative component. The graduate committee will specify the format of that component. It is anticipated that the evaluative component of the Graduate Project may specify a proposed evaluative component (as in a Grant Application). Alternatively, the Graduate Project may contain a qualitative (case study) or analytical (conceptual cost-benefit analysis) evaluative component, rather than a quantitative evaluative component.
5. Include recommendations as appropriate for health and health care policy makers and decision-makers. Be disseminated as appropriate to organizations and individuals for whom the material is useful and relevant.

### ***Examples of past graduate projects are:***

- A Longitudinal Cost Analysis of Implementing an Electronic Health Record and a Medical Group
- A Return on Investment Analysis of a Digital Radiology System in a Critical Access Hospital: An Intensive Case Study of Shoshone Medical Center
- A Case Study of Hospital Admissions With Inappropriately Long Lengths of Stay in a Hospital in the Pacific Northwest
- A Descriptive Analysis of the Emergency Patient Population Admitted to Kootenai Medical Center's North Idaho Behavioral Health
- A Proposal to Evaluate Translational Research in the Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes
- Qualitative Evaluation of a Bar-Code Medication Administration System
- A Comparative Analysis of the Characteristics and Trends of the Adult Uninsured in Spokane County and King County, 1998 Through 2006

## OPTIONAL THESIS GUIDELINES

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The optional thesis is available for students interested in pursuing a doctoral degree upon completion of their MHPA degree.

### *University Requirement*

The Graduate School has stipulations regarding the thesis requirement including timelines and formats. Please review their guidelines at <http://www.gradsch.wsu.edu/current-students/forms/>. The HPA program has the following additional guidelines.

### *Program Requirements*

1. The written thesis should include the following sections:
  - a. Introduction/Significance of the Study
  - b. Theoretical Basis/Literature Review
  - c. Methods
  - d. Results
  - e. Conclusion/Limitations of the Study
  - f. References
  - g. Tables, Figures, Appendix Material
  
2. Contents and Methods:
  - a. Content of each section – the Introduction and Theoretical Basis/Literature Review should provide a compelling basis for the study, but should also be succinct. An exhaustive literature review is not required. The Methods section should describe what you did to collect and analyze information in sufficient detail that someone else could replicate the study. The Results section should clearly present your findings. The Conclusions/Limitations section should offer interpretations of the findings and significance of the study relative to the issues under study, limitations, and directions for further research.
  - b. Clear logic of presentation – throughout the thesis, you should strive for clarity of expression, succinctness, appropriateness of methods, and logic of conclusions. The thesis should follow a logical progression from problem explication to conclusions related to the original problem.
  - c. Nature of the thesis – the thesis is a “scientific project” that evaluates an important health or administrative issue in a scientific way. Examples of such projects include applied evaluations (for example, the impact of a new program or new process), rigorous case studies (for example, how managers should effectively disseminate outcome information to physicians or how volunteers in a community could collaborate to improve community health), community or population-based analyses (for example, the difference in indigent vs. non-indigent use of the emergency room).
  - d. Case studies – if you decide to do a case study, you need to understand the methodological material related to case studies so that the study can yield valid and reliable results. Your

decision about what method to use should be made in consultation with members of your graduate committee.

- e. Graduate Committee – a master’s committee should include at least three faculty members. At least two members must be from the Graduate Faculty. The chair should be conversant with the substantive area of your inquiry. Other committee members should be chosen to optimize a graduate program of high quality.
- f. Publishability – ideally, your thesis should be of sufficient rigor to merit publication in an academic journal. The type of publication depends on your topic and your career goals.

3. Data:

- a. Primary Data Sets – new information is usually referred to as “primary data”. The information would be collected through a survey or through recording information to construct a case study. If you collect your own data, you may need to emphasize the processes and potential problems with collecting original data.

- b. Secondary Data Sets – alternatively, you may choose to use a “secondary” data set, e.g., one collected by someone else. Examples include the HIP data set related to Spokane community health characteristics or data available from faculty research. If you use data collected by someone else, you will likely need to emphasize the potential problems with using secondary data. You may need to examine appropriate methods of data analysis more thoroughly; however, you will avoid the time and other costs of collecting data yourself.

If you are particularly interested in gaining knowledge about surveys, using secondary data is not recommended. Alternatively, if you want detailed financial information from all the state’s hospitals to achieve your thesis goal, then you will rely on secondary data. You may decide it is appropriate to combine a current data set with some new data that you collect. Your data needs will directly depend on your topic, and time and cost constraints.

- c. Limitations of Data (and other limitations) – no matter what data and information you use, there will be limitations to the data and to your methods. Be candid about these limitations. Ideally, you should know in advance what the limitations will be and will need to clarify them. A clear statement of limitations of the study makes the study more credible and publishable, provided the limitations are not serious.

4. Style Manual (Format): Specific style is the student’s option, subject to committee approval. The sooner you conceptualize a topic and begin working on it, the greater the probability that you can finish it in a timely manner. The probability that the thesis will be publishable depends upon having time to correct mistakes and refine the analysis.

Do not assume you can complete the process from beginning to end in one semester. In fact, it is unlikely that you can do so. You should begin working your committee at the outset. Committee members should be consulted and kept informed of your progress. They should see draft of work completed and provide constructive feedback. By the time of the thesis oral defense, all committee members should be familiar with your work, and any serious problems should already have been resolved.

5. Grading: Thesis hours are graded on an S/F basis.

6. The last three hours of thesis credit must be taken during the semester you complete and defend the thesis.

***Examples of past theses are:***

- Emergency Services for Children: The Effects of Methods of Reimbursement of Primary Care Providers on Utilization
- A Financial Analysis of the Impact of Physician Practice Management Companies on Medical Groups' Performance: A National Longitudinal Study
- Financial Viability for a Cardiothoracic Surgical Practice in an Environment of Declining Revenue, Declining Volume, and Increasing Cost: A Rigorous Case Study
- Examining the Association Between Two Types of Anesthesia Staffing and Anesthetic Complications During Caesarean Section: A Retrospective Analysis
- Critical Access Hospital Designation and Access to Capital for Rural Hospitals in Washington State
- A Comparison of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Patient Safety Indicators (Psi): Does Size Matter?
- Reasons for and Factors Associated With Prescription Medication Non-Adherence Among Younger and Older Medicare Beneficiaries
- An Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Debt Management in Washington State Critical Access Hospitals
- Measuring the Association of the Medicare and Medicaid Revenue Proportion With the Profitability of Washington State Hospitals
- A Comparative Financial Analysis of Washington State Hospitals: An Application of the Du Pont Model

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---

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## APPENDIX A

### HPA Policy Guidelines Regarding Satisfaction of Prerequisites for Enrollment in the HPA Program

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The prerequisites specified in the Policies and Procedures Manual must be satisfied prior to enrollment in any HPA course (enrollment means first day of class; this will allow all admitted students to take prerequisites during the summer prior to enrollment if they choose).

Questions concerning prerequisites should be referred to the instructor of the course. Students who have not met all prerequisites may be excluded from the course, or the instructor may waive prerequisites based on demonstrated competence or equivalent academic experience.

Any student who has an undergraduate grade point average significantly below 3.00, or a GRE quantitative score or GMAT score significantly below 500, is strongly advised to satisfy the prerequisites by taking the equivalent undergraduate coursework (microeconomics, financial accounting) rather than satisfying them through self-study and the waiver exam. Program experience is that such students who attempt the self-study and waiver exam approach run a significant risk of failing the waiver exam and failing the Program's quantitative courses (e.g., Health Care Economics; Health Care Cost Accounting).

### Policy Regarding Microeconomics Prerequisite for HPA 509 Health Care Economics

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All graduate students in the MHPA program must satisfy a prerequisite of an undergraduate course in microeconomics, in preparation for the graduate HPA 509 course Health Care Economics, prior to enrollment in that course.

*To satisfy that prerequisite, students have three options to pursue.*

*First*, students may take a basic undergraduate microeconomics course to satisfy the prerequisite requirement. Four courses that are usually offered in the Spokane area would satisfy this prerequisite. These include the following:

- Eastern Washington University  
Econ 200 (Introduction to Microeconomics)  
For further information <http://sftp.ewu.edu/groups/recordsreg/Catalog09-10.pdf>
- Gonzaga University  
Econ 101 (Microeconomics)  
For further information <http://www.gonzaga.edu>
- Spokane Community College  
Econ 202 (Introduction to Microeconomics)  
For further information <http://www.scc.spokane.edu/>
- Spokane Falls Community College  
Econ 202 (Introduction to Microeconomics)  
For further information <http://www.spokanefalls.edu/>

Second. students may purchase a self-study package and pass a standard test in conjunction with this course material on a 70% or better pass-fail basis.

Third. students may choose to purchase a recommended microeconomics text (N. Gregory Mankiw's Principles of Microeconomics 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), study on an individual basis, and take a standard microeconomics test developed by the Program. Students would be required to pass this Waiver Exam on a 70% or better pass-fail basis.

The next three pages show the concepts that are covered in all three options above.

**These concepts represent the standard concepts covered in a basic microeconomics course.**

### **Introduction to Microeconomics**

- Methodology used in economics
- Theories, Models, Assumptions
- Differences between microeconomics and macroeconomics
- Positive vs. normative economics
- Structure of an economy

### **Graphing**

- Difference between analytical and data graphs
- Graphs with two variables
- Slopes and intercepts
- Tangents and points
- Pie charts, bar charts, line graphs
- Graphs with more than two variables

### **The Economic Problem**

- What are the three basic economic questions?
- Rational behavior, Scarcity, Choice, Opportunity
- Production possibilities frontier (PPF)
- Increasing opportunity cost
- Efficiency

### **Economic Interaction and Trade**

- Production possibilities frontier (PPF)
- Absolute advantage
- Comparative advantage, Gains from trade

### **Overview of the U.S. Economy**

- Definition of an economic system
- Description of the U.S. economy
- Size of the sectors
- Economic growth
- Comparison with other economies in the world

### **Demand**

- Definition of market
- Definition of demand
- Willingness to pay
- Demand schedule
- Law of demand
- Movements along the curve; i.e., changes in quantity

### **Shifts in the Demand Curve**

- Determinants of demand other than price
- Income
- Information
- Preferences
- Price of related goods
- Expectations
- Substitutes and complements
- Normal and inferior goods
- Shifts of the demand curve; i.e., changes in demand
- Moving from an individual curve to a market demand curve

### **Supply**

- Definition of supply
- Law of supply
- Movements along the curve; i.e., changes in quantity supplied
- Determinants of supply
- Input prices
- Expectations
- Shifts of the supply curve; i.e., changes in supply
- Moving from an individual curve to a market supply curve

## **Market Equilibrium**

Definition of equilibrium price and quantity  
Consumer surplus  
Producer surplus  
When does a shortage occur?  
Excess demand  
When does a surplus occur?  
Excess supply  
How do markets clear; i.e., What is the invisible hand?  
The price system

## **Government Intervention in the Market**

Price controls  
Price ceilings  
Price floors  
Subsidies  
Taxes

## **Price Elasticity of Demand**

Definition of price elasticity of demand  
Calculate price elasticity of demand  
Elastic and inelastic demand  
Unit elasticity  
Total revenue test  
Determinants of price elasticity of demand      Substitute  
Time  
Proportion of income spent on goods  
Necessities vs. luxuries

## **Other Elasticities**

Income elasticity of demand (normal and inferior goods)  
Cross price elasticity of demand (substitutes and complements)  
Definition of price elasticity of supply  
Calculate price elasticity of supply

## **Elasticity and Tax Incidence**

Excise tax  
Tax incidence  
Deadweight loss

## **Consumer Behavior and Choice**

Preferences  
Budget constraint  
Total utility  
Marginal utility  
Law of diminishing marginal utility

## **Consumer Choice and Demand**

Utility maximizing rule  
Deriving the demand curve  
Income and substitution effects

## **Firm Behavior**

What is a firm?  
Definition of profit maximization  
Total revenue  
Total cost  
Marginal revenue  
Implicit and explicit costs  
Factors of production  
Two Types of Costs  
Product function  
Law of diminishing returns

## **Short Run Costs I**

Definition of short run  
Definition of long run  
Total cost  
Total fixed cost  
Total variable cost

## **Short Run Costs II**

Deriving marginal cost from total variable cost  
Average variable cost  
Relationship between average variable cost and marginal cost  
Relationship between average total cost and marginal cost

## **Long Run Costs**

Definition of long run  
Differentiate between short run and long run for firms  
Economies of scale  
Diseconomies of scale  
Long run average cost

## **Perfect Competition**

- Definition of perfect competition
- Demand curve faced by competitive firm
- Average revenue
- Marginal revenue and the demand curve
- Short run supply curve
- Definition of the shutdown point

## **Perfect Competition: Short Run**

- Short run firm equilibrium under profit maximization
- Short run supply and demand curves of competitive industry
- Short run industry equilibrium

## **Perfect Competition: Long Run**

- The effects of entry and exit in the long run
- Adjustments from short run conditions to long run equilibrium
- Definition of zero-profit model
- Long run industry equilibrium
- The efficiency of perfect competition

## **Monopoly**

- Definition of imperfect markets
- Definition of monopoly
- Market power
- Reasons for monopolies
- Barriers to entry
- Demand and marginal revenue for a single-price monopoly
- Determining prices and output in monopolistic markets

## **Monopoly vs. Perfect Competition**

- How are monopolistic and competitive Market outcomes different
- Social costs of monopolies?
- Definition of a natural monopoly
- Price discrimination

## **Monopolistic Competition**

- What is monopolistic competition?
- Product differentiation and advertising
- Short run price and output determination
- Long run price and output determination

## **Oligopoly**

- What is an oligopoly?
- Collusion
- Dominant firm model
- Game theory
- Prisoner's dilemma
- Cooperative outcome
- Non-cooperative outcome
- Market concentration

## **Income Distribution**

- Sources of income
- Income inequality
- Lorenz Curve
- Distribution of wealth
- Poverty rate

## **Prerequisite Policy Regarding Financial Accounting Prerequisite For HPA 510 Health Care Cost Accounting**

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The prerequisite for HPA 510 Health Care Cost Accounting is a basic financial accounting course. This may be satisfied through either taking an undergraduate or junior college course in financial accounting or by demonstrating competence through passing a waiver exam.

To satisfy this prerequisite by taking a financial accounting class, you may take:

- Washington State University  
Acctg 230 (Introduction to Financial Accounting)  
For further information <http://www.catalog.wsu.edu/General>
- Eastern Washington University  
Acct 251 (Principles of Financial Accounting)  
Acct 301 (Financial Accounting)  
For further information <http://sftp.ewu.edu/groups/recordsreg/Catalog09-10.pdf>
- Similar course from another University

The waiver exam is available from the Department office. *You should complete this open-book waiver exam prior to the first class meeting.* The exam is graded on a pass/fail basis so that you must answer correctly 70% of the questions to receive a waiver of the prerequisite course. Allow about two hours for completing this exam. It is multiple choice and matching and calculations.

For those that want to prepare for the waiver exam, see the following text: Anthony, R.N. and Pearlman Breitner, L., *Essentials of Accounting 10th Edition*, Pearson, 2003. This is a self-study guide to prepare you for taking the waiver exam. This text is used with executive groups nationwide and has been for decades. You will not be tested on all parts of this self-study guide but only on those parts that are pertinent to the preparation for this course.

The book for this course can be ordered online by going to the Bookie website at <http://wsubookie-spokane.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/TBListView>