



Master of Public Administration (MPA):
Innovation, Public Policy and Public Value



Introduction

Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose

Rethinking how public
value is created, nurtured
and evaluated



The UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose leads the world in rethinking the role of the public sector in co-creating value and driving change.

Our Innovation, Public Policy and Public Value MPA teaches the dynamic skills required for purpose-driven organisations in public, private, and civil sectors to confront the grand challenges of the 21st century.

There is no equivalent postgraduate degree that combines our alternative approach to policymaking, with a focus on structural change and innovation. Innovation, Public Policy and Public Value MPA teaches the dynamic skills required for purpose-driven organisations — in public, private, and civil sectors — to confront the grand challenges of the 21st century. Tackling these challenges requires new ways of thinking and new organisational capabilities. As graduates you will be equipped to help reshape organisations to be mission-led, experimental, and driven by public purpose.

"At the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, we lead the world in rethinking how the public sector can co- create value and drive change. Our MPA isn't just another public policy degree; we're equipping the next generation of leaders with dynamic capabilities to make organisations more mission-led, experimental, and driven by public purpose. Through hands-on experience with world-leading faculty and purpose-driven placements, our students learn how a new economics and approach to public value can tackle the grand challenges of the 21st century — from the climate and water crises to digital and health inequalities."

Mariana Mazzucato, Founding Director and Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value

Study with world-leading faculty, innovating public policy worldwide



Tap into a world-leading faculty, influencing innovation and public policy around the world.

Founder and Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, **Mariana Mazzucato**, has been described as “One of the world’s most influential economists... on a mission to save capitalism from itself” by Quartz. She is an academic, advisor and communicator on innovation-led inclusive and sustainable growth. **Professor Rainer Kattel** has published an award-winning book on creative bureaucracies, a path-breaking study on how governments innovate. **Associate Professor David Eaves** is a public policy entrepreneur and specialist in the governance of digital public infrastructure. He was named one of 20 most influential on Apolitical's World's 100 Most Influential People in Digital Government.

Studying in London, you will be at the heart of the debate. You will have exclusive networking opportunities engaging with our alumni and partners driving change in purpose-driven organisations. London is also the best city in the world for students (QS Best Student Cities 2025).

Choose your pathway

Tailor your studies with a bespoke pathway in Public Administration, Economic Policy and Political Economy or Digital Transformation. After exploring the MPA's four disciplinary pillars of economics, politics, public administration, and design, you will choose the specialist pathway to match your interests and ambitions.

The Public Administration pathway offers you an opportunity to specialise in the ways in which governments can increase public sector capabilities to tackle the main challenges faced by societies.

The Economic Policy and Political Economy pathway explores the relationship between states and markets, and the economic challenges facing modern capitalist economies.

The Digital Transformation pathway will develop your critical digital era skills in the public sector.

All pathways build on the same core modules in Terms 1 and 2, focusing on challenging out-dated economic models of value creation and linear theories of policy change and evaluation, and shifting to building organisational capabilities and design skills.

Compulsory modules for all MPA students in Term 1:

- New Economic Thinking and Public Value
- Economics of Innovation and Public Purpose
- Politics, Power and Systems Change
- Making Decisions: Evidence and Evaluation



Compulsory modules for all MPA students in Term 2:

- Creative Bureaucracies
- Transformation by Design

Students can also specialise their studies via elective modules in Term 2.

The Public Administration pathway offers a variety of elective modules, from digital transformation to capitalism, political philosophy on social justice, equality and poverty, innovation and smart cities.

The Economic Policy and Political Economy pathway, elective modules cover economics of property rights, international political economy, economic history, environmental economics, energy and the environment, alternatives to capitalism, international development, social development, global business, and systems thinking and dynamics.

For the Digital Transformation pathway, example elective modules cover digital design, strategy, rights, health, technology, infrastructure, dilemmas and transformation, including from sociology, humanities, anthropology geography, history and governance perspectives.

In Term 3, students deeply engage with areas of particular interest via the Placement or research-based thesis.



Placements with purpose to kickstart your career pathway

Putting theory into practice, you will undertake either a research-based thesis or industry placement with one of our partners, apply new ideas from the classroom to real organisations tackling 21st century challenges, and gain skills for the next step in your career. Placements take place with a wide range of organisations within the UK and around the globe. Many placement organisations are members of our Mission-Oriented Innovation Network (MOIN) which brings together over 100 public organisations around the world, including state investment banks, innovation agencies, strategic design units in cities, and other public organisations with that are engaged in cutting-edge policymaking.

“The placement helped us develop the language and networks to make informed decisions to fulfil our professional aspirations after the program.”

Fernanda Torres Alam and Josefina Mas, graduates of the MPA

Top-tier students

100% of our graduates were in highly skilled work 15 months after graduation (HESA Graduate Outcomes Survey 2017–21). Our alumni are now public sector leaders, tackling societal challenges and changing how the state is imagined, practised and evaluated around the world.

“Going back to academia after nearly 20 years in the private sector was quite daunting, but the IIPP MPA programme has been exactly what I wanted — challenging, stimulating and of course educational. Most of all it’s given me a sense of optimism that collectively we can fix our Grand Challenges, if we harness our cross-sectoral strengths effectively.”

Rachel Bentley, MPA student



At the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose our mission is to change how the state is imagined, practised and evaluated to tackle societal challenges. We push frontiers at the cutting-edge interface between research and policy. We believe that innovation in public policy can create fairer and more sustainable societies.

Discover more about the MPA on the IIPP website: ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/public-purpose/

Follow us on social media:

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