



Academic Year 2026-2027

Master of Public Management (MPM)
Student Handbook Addendum

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. MPM Mission Statement and Program Outcomes.....	3
3. Departmental Personnel.....	4
4. Curriculum.....	4
4.1. Course Commitments and Length of Program.....	4
4.1.1. Federal Financial Aid Eligibility.....	5
4.1.2. Tuition Remission for CMU Employees.....	5
4.2. Core Courses and Sequencing.....	6
4.2.1. Course Sequence(s).....	6
4.2.2. Fall Start Sequence(s).....	7
4.2.3. Spring Start Sequence(s).....	8
4.2.4. Summer Start Sequence(s).....	9
4.3. Electives.....	11
4.4. Credit for Prior Courses.....	11
4.5. Exemption of Core Courses.....	12
5. Specialization Areas.....	12

1. Introduction

This handbook addendum provides specific information on the curriculum and program requirements for the Master of Public Management (MPM) program. The Heinz College also publishes a separate [handbook](#) which details College-wide policies and procedures pertaining to educational planning, program committee, teaching, scheduling and course credit, performance standards, academic standing, ethics and discipline, student privacy rights and major forms and deadlines.

While this handbook addendum is specific to your academic experience in the MPM program, it is just one element of the Graduate Student Handbook Suite. There are several other resources within the suite that you should consult when needed:

- [The Heinz College Handbook](#)
- [University-Wide Graduate Student Handbook](#) (Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs)
- [The Word Student Handbook](#)

2. MPM Mission Statement and Program Outcomes

The mission of the Master of Public Management program is to educate people of intelligent action to lead, manage and transform public, private, and non-profit sector organizations.

Students in the MPM program should be able to:

- Apply evidence-based, data-driven, quantitative decision making and leadership;
- Apply technical and analytical tools, skills, and techniques in solving real-world problems;
- Communicate effectively in verbal, written, and visual form and prepare and convey conversations suitable for a diverse audience; and
- Function effectively in diverse groups and operate in an increasingly connected world.

The MPM Program values:

- individual attention to the needs and aspirations of working professionals;
- a culture that nurtures a personal commitment to serve the public interest; and
- an academic community that values diversity, promotes creative thought and encourages ethical behavior

3. Departmental Personnel

Dr. Sara Moussawi	Senior Associate Dean of Academic Programs	smoussaw@andrew.cmu.edu
Jessica Bowser Acrie	Director of Nonprofit and Public Management Programs, MPM Program Director	jabowser@andrew.cmu.edu
Jessi Znosko	Associate Director, Academic Advisor for the MPM Program	jessi@cmu.edu
Annie Julian	Director of Student Experience & Engagement	ajulian@cmu.edu
Matt Spangler	Associate Director, Career Advisor for the MPM Program	mbspangler@cmu.edu

4. Curriculum

The MPM curriculum is structured with a set of required Core courses and electives. In order to successfully complete the MPM program, you must:

- Successfully complete 120 units of graduate-level coursework
- Successfully complete or exempt all Core courses
- All other standards for graduation, including meeting a minimum 3.0 quality point average

4.1. Course Commitments and Length of Program

Students complete the MPM program on a part-time basis, enrolling in fewer than 36 units per semester. Carnegie Mellon offers two main course formats: full-semester courses worth 12 units, and mini courses which run for half a semester and worth 6 units. Both require approximately 12 hours of work per week, including class time.

Most part-time students take 1 to 4 courses per semester (generally 18–24 units e.i. 18-24 hours of work per week) and finish the program in 20-24 months. However, the program allows up to five years for completion, providing flexibility for students to take a lighter course load of 6–18 units per semester. In cases involving extenuating circumstances and approved leaves of absence, students may petition to extend the timeline up to a maximum of seven years.

There are three Course Paces recommended and planned for MPM students: Standard Pace, Extended Pace, and Accelerated Pace. Following one of these planned course paces will ensure graduation within the specified timeframe. Students who do not follow one of the planned Course Paces cannot be guaranteed to finish within the planned program durations.

Standard Pace: Students take 24 units per semester to complete the program in 20 months.

Extended Pace: Students take 18 units per semester to complete the program in 24 months.

Accelerated Pace: A student who transfers 24 units from a previous master's degree program or completed CMU certification program can select the Accelerated Pace. Qualified students take 24 units a semester to complete the program in 15 months.

4.1.1. Federal Financial Aid Eligibility

To be eligible for federal education loans in any given semester, MPM students must enroll in at least 18 units of coursework (the equivalent of half-time enrollment as defined by federal financial aid guidelines) in the Spring and Fall semesters. Students can enroll in fewer than 18 units during the summer semester without it affecting their financial aid eligibility.

4.1.2. Tuition Remission for CMU Employees

Benefits-eligible, full-time and part-time CMU staff members are able to utilize the university's [tuition benefit program](#).

- Full-time staff members: two courses at any one time per term (at one or multiple institutions)
- Part-time staff members: one course at any one time per term at Carnegie Mellon only

A course for CMU employees is defined as the equivalent of a semester-length class on the Pittsburgh campus during the fall, spring, or

first or second summer semesters. Alternatively, up to four 6-unit minis may be taken per semester, provided no more than two are taken at a time.

4.2. Core Courses and Sequencing

There are eight Core courses and one Bin Core course that all students in the MPM program must successfully complete or exempt by demonstrating significant competency. The core curriculum exposes students to management practices, data analysis, information systems, organizational management, financial analysis, and communication.

The required Core courses are as follows:

Number	Title	Units	Semester
91-801	Statistical Methods for Managers	12	Fall
90-723	Financial Statements and Analysis	6	Spring
90-728	Intro to Database Management	6	Spring
91-819	Optimization and Risk Modeling	6	Fall
91-729	Agentic AI in Practice	6	Spring
90-877	Strategic Communication for Public Policy and Management	12	Summer
94-700	Organization Design & Implementation (ODI)	6	Summer
91-XXX	Leadership Bin (6 units minimum)	6	
	94-822 Change Management		
	94-854 Developing as a Leader		
	94-837 Leading with Equity & Inclusion		
	94-869 Conflict Resolution		
	<i>Total Core Units</i>	<i>60</i>	
	<i>Approved Elective Units</i>	<i>60</i>	
	Total Units to Complete Program	120	

4.2.1. Course Sequence(s)

Students in the MPM program shall progress through the program using one of the recommended sequences or the degree completion time cannot be guaranteed. Adherence to the planned sequences allow students to take a balance of core classes and electives in each semester.

During the summer semester there are less electives available. Therefore, students are advised to plan ahead and take the majority of their electives in the Fall and Spring semesters.

4.2.2. Standard Pace - 24 Units/Semester

Fall Start

- **Fall Y1:** Statistical Methods (12), Electives (12)
- **Spring Y1:** Financial Statements (6), Database (6), Electives (12)
- **Summer Y1:** Strategic Communications (12), ODI (6), Electives (6)
- **Fall Y2:** Optimization (6), Leadership Bin (6) Electives (12)
- **Spring Y2:** Agentic AI in Practice (6), Electives (18)

Spring Start

- **Spring Y1:** Financial Statements (6), Database (6), Electives (12)
- **Summer Y1:** Strategic Communications (12), Electives (12)
- **Fall Y1:** Statistical Methods (12), Optimization (6), Electives (6)
- **Spring Y2:** Agentic AI in Practice (6), Electives (18)
- **Summer Y2:** ODI (6), Leadership Bin (6), Electives (12)

Summer Start

- **Summer Y1:** Strategic Communications (12), Electives (12)
- **Fall Y1:** Statistical Methods (12), Electives (12)
- **Spring Y1:** Financial Statements (6), Database (6), Agentic AI in Practice (6), Electives (6)
- **Summer Y2:** ODI (6), Leadership Bin (6), Electives (12)
- **Fall Y2:** Optimization (6), Electives (18)

4.2.3. Extended Pace - 18 Units/Semester

Fall Start

- **Fall Y1:** Statistical Methods (12), Electives (6)
- **Spring Y1:** Financial Statements (6), Database (6), Electives (6)
- **Summer Y1:** Strategic Communications (12), Electives (6)
- **Fall Y2:** Optimization (6), Electives (12)
- **Spring Y2:** Agentic AI in Practice (6), Electives (12)
- **Summer Y2:** Leadership Bin (6), ODI (6)
- **Fall Y3:** Electives (18)

Spring Start

- **Spring Y1:** Financial Statements (6), Database (6), Electives (6)
- **Summer Y1:** Strategic Communications (12), Electives (6)
- **Fall Y1:** Statistical Methods (12), Electives (6)
- **Spring Y2:** Agentic AI in Practice (6), Electives (12)
- **Summer Y2:** Leadership Bin (6), ODI (6)
- **Fall Y2:** Optimization (6), Electives (12)
- **Spring Y3:** Electives (18)

Summer Start

- **Summer Y1:** Strategic Communications (12), Electives (6)
- **Fall Y1:** Statistical Methods (12), Electives (6)
- **Spring Y1:** Financial Statements (6), Database (6), Electives (6)
- **Summer Y2:** Leadership Bin (6), ODI (6), Electives (6)
- **Fall Y2:** Optimization (6), Electives (12)
- **Spring Y2:** Agentic AI in Practice (6), Electives (12)
- **Summer Y3:** Electives (12)

4.2.4. Accelerated - 24 Transfer Units, and 24 Units/Semester

Fall Start

- **Fall Y1:** Statistical Methods (12), Electives (12)
- **Spring Y1:** Financial Statements (6), Database (6), Agentic AI in Practice (6), Electives (6)
- **Summer Y1:** Strategic Communications (12), ODI (6), Leadership Bin (6)
- **Fall Y2:** Optimization (6), Electives (18)

Spring Start

- **Spring Y1:** Financial Statements (6), Database (6), Electives (12)
- **Summer Y1:** Strategic Communications (12), ODI (6), Leadership Bin (6)
- **Fall Y1:** Statistical Methods (12), Optimization (6), Electives (6)
- **Spring Y2:** Agentic AI in Practice (6), Electives (18)

Summer Start

- **Summer Y1:** Strategic Communications (12), Electives (12)
- **Fall Y1:** Statistical Methods (6), Optimization (6), Electives (12)
- **Spring Y1:** Financial Statements (6), Database (6), Agentic AI in Practice (6), Electives (6)
- **Summer Y2:** ODI (6), Leadership Bin (6), Electives (12)

4.3. Electives

In addition to the required Core courses, students will select electives to support their chosen career path or interest area to supplement areas of expertise. Your advisor and program director are available for consultation when choosing electives. To fulfill the elective requirements for graduation, you may take relevant graduate-level courses outside of the Heinz College. You can take a maximum of 24 units of graduate-level, degree-relevant courses outside of the Heinz College to count towards your 120-unit minimum. Please reference the [Heinz College Handbook](#) section titled “Registering for Courses Outside of Heinz College” for information about registering for classes outside of Heinz College or CMU and receiving approval for non-Heinz classes to count towards your MPM degree.

4.4. Credit for Prior Courses

MPM students can receive credit toward graduation for **graduate-level courses taken prior to entering the MPM program**. Students will be required to provide an official transcript and syllabus for the course to the MPM Program office for consideration. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and depend on several factors, such as when the coursework was taken, the subject in which it was taken, relevance to the MPM curriculum and the grade that was earned. Minimum criteria include that the credit was earned with a grade of B or better **within the last 5 years** at a regionally accredited university to be considered for transfer credit.

A student can transfer in up to two, relevant, 12-unit classes (each class equivalent to a 3 or 4 credit class taken at a different institution) or 24 units of select CMU certificate programs. Approved transfer credits will be assigned units and a Pass/No Pass grade. Letter grades earned in those courses are not used in the computation of the Heinz College quality point average.

4.5. Exemption of Core Courses

A student may request an exemption from the following Core course in which they have demonstrated proficiency:

- Financial Statements and Analysis
- Statistical Reasoning
- Introduction to Database Management

To request exemption, students will complete a [Course Exemption Form](#) online petition form. The student will complete the form and upload appropriate documentation to the form and submit. More information regarding exemptions can be found on the Heinz College [Current Student Website](#).

The documentation required includes copies of syllabi from relevant classes, copies of transcripts reflecting the successful completion of relevant coursework, or a letter of explanation regarding related professional work experience.

The submission is automatically forwarded to the Faculty member designated as the authority (typically, but not always, the faculty member teaching the course).

In some cases, a student may be required to take and pass an exemption exam.

Students do not earn units for coursework they have exempted, and an exemption will not reduce the number of units required to graduate.

5. Specialization Areas

MPM students have the option to pursue a self-declared specialization to tailor their academic experience to their professional interests and career goals. Specializations are not required, but they can provide structure and focus to elective coursework.

To declare a specialization, students must complete a minimum of 24 units of related coursework that demonstrates a clear, coherent focus in a particular area of study. Courses may be drawn from across Heinz College and other CMU departments, with advisor approval, provided they support the student's intended area of specialization.

Common areas of specialization include:

- Health Care Management
- Arts Management
- Nonprofit Management
- Leadership and Strategy
- A customized focus area (approved by the student's academic advisor)

Students will work with their academic advisor and/or the program director to declare a specialization prior to completing 60 units in the program. Early planning ensures appropriate course sequencing and alignment with career goals.

Specializations are not formally recognized on the transcript or diploma but may be referenced on resumes and in interviews as part of a student's professional narrative.