A Public Affairs Degree

How is a Public Affairs degree different from a Public Policy or a Public Administration degree?
A Public Affairs degree combines the key elements of Public Policy and Public Administration – the evaluation and analysis of policies, projects, and programs plus policy and program management and implementation in public and other institutions.

A La Follette School degree in Public Affairs provides knowledge about policy creation and implementation from a public management perspective. Public Affairs students gain practical skills to evaluate and analyze policies and programs both qualitatively and quantitatively. With these skills and knowledge, La Follette School graduates serve the public good by using practical and achievable evidence to address some of the world's most challenging issues.

What courses do Public Affairs students take?
Master of Public Affairs (MPA) students at the La Follette School take six core courses: Policymaking Process, Introduction to Statistical Methods for Public Policy Analysis, Microeconomic Policy Analysis, Introduction to Public Management, Introduction to Policy Analysis, and Workshop in Public Affairs. In the Workshop course (similar to a thesis), students work in teams on a real-world policy project. Students also may take La Follette School electives or courses in other UW–Madison departments.

Master of International Public Affairs (MIPA) students at the La Follette School take six core courses: International Governance, Introduction to Statistical Methods for Public Policy Analysis, Microeconomic Policy Analysis, Trade, Competition, and Governance in a Global Economy **or** Macroeconomic Policy and International Financial Regulation, Introduction to Policy Analysis, and Workshop in International Public Affairs. In the Workshop course (similar to a thesis), students work in teams on a real-world policy project. Students also may take La Follette School electives or courses in other UW–Madison departments.

What types of jobs do graduates with a degree in Public Affairs get?
La Follette School graduates work for local, state, and federal governments and in the nonprofit and education sectors. MIPA graduates often seek employment outside of the United States for international governments or non-governmental organizations. A growing number of students work as private sector consultants. Job titles include policy analyst, department manager, nonprofit director, budget analyst, and many more. Recent La Follette School graduates work at these and other organizations: Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Ecuador Ministry of Foreign Relations, U.S. Department of Transportation, Wisconsin State Assembly, U.S. Government Accountability Office, Grant Thornton LLP, Deloitte, UW-Madison Carbone Cancer Center, National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Education International Corporation, and Ministry of Justice of Ukraine.

What kind of research do Public Affairs professors conduct?
La Follette School professors conduct research on a wide range of topics, from health and aging policy to energy and the environment to international trade and development. Faculty members are highly regarded for their expertise in social policy and public management. Recent faculty publications include research on the effect of housing assistance on student achievement, the impact of uncertainty shocks on the global economy, and the complicated partisan effects of state election laws.

How can I explore my interest in Public Affairs?
- Take classes in political science, economics, statistics, international relations, and languages. Some of these classes are prerequisites for La Follette's MPA and MIPA programs and provide insights into the types of issues and topics addressed by Public Affairs graduate students.
- Find an internship, volunteer, or join a student organization for hands-on experience with public policies and programs, as a resume-builder, and to discover new interests or reignite old ones.
  - One specific example to explore is the UW-Madison in Washington, DC, Internship Program, which allows students to spend a semester or summer on an internship in Washington, DC, focusing on domestic or international policy issues while living in the nation's capital.
  - The La Follette School's accelerated program allows UW-Madison undergraduate students to start taking Public Affairs classes during their senior year and to complete an MPA or MIPA with one year of graduate study. Admission to this program is highly competitive, so students considering the accelerated program are encouraged to explore the traditional two-year program as well.
- Attend one of the La Follette School's many presentations from top public management and public policy scholars.
- Talk to a La Follette School advisor to hear more about the program. Contact David Wright-Racette at wrightracette@lafollette.wisc.edu or 608-262-9163 to schedule an appointment.

What do students say about the program?
"I decided to attend the La Follette School of Public Affairs because of its strong reputation, small class sizes, and great location. Madison is an awesome city to attend school – it's the state capitol, so there are policy-related opportunities everywhere, and it's just a really fun and vibrant city in which to be a young person. I also had heard that La Follette had a smaller, closer-knit policy school than other, larger schools I was considering, and that turned out to be 100 percent true." Miranda Ehrlich, MPA '17

"My coursework at La Follette has given me a solid foundation for policy analysis. In addition to a greater understanding of the political/economic forces at work, it was important to me that I possess the core skills necessary to provide the best advice possible to senior, strategic decision-makers. Accordingly, understanding the genesis of sound policies and how to efficiently produce these was extremely important to me." Matt Smalley, MIPA '17

Questions about applying, scheduling a visit? Contact us: 608-262-9163, admissions@lafollette.wisc.edu