

Guidelines for Policy Management Project

Introduction

The Policy Management Project is the “capstone” requirement in the Executive MPM program at GPPI. The major purpose of the Policy Management Project is to demonstrate the student’s ability to integrate consideration of analytic and management issues in the pursuit of solutions to a specific policy problem.

The Policy Management Project is the culmination of the student’s academic training at GPPI and thus should draw upon and expand many of the skills learned during the course of the MPM program.

Project Guidelines

At its core, policy management is about identifying and analyzing alternatives, advocating specific options and approaches, and devising and delivering programs. The MPM curriculum provides students with the intellectual background as well as the management and analytical skills necessary to be successful policy managers. The Policy Management Project gives students an opportunity to apply these skills in a systematic and rigorous way.

In general, the Policy Management Project should be a strategy paper that does the following things:

- Introduces the policy problem to be addressed. The problem should be described as specifically as possible. For example, a general issue in public policy – say, “education reform” – is not appropriate for this paper. Rather, continuing the example of education reform, a more specific topic might be “Developing an Evaluation Framework for Charter Schools in the District of Columbia.”
- Discusses the key individuals and institutions relevant to the policy problem. For example, such individuals and institutions could include senior government officials, government agencies, international organizations, the media, corporations, interest groups, etc.
- Identifies at least three alternative approaches to solving the policy problem, and describes the criteria that will be used to assess the relative merit of each alternative approach.
- Analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative approach, including associated resource constraints.
- Recommends a preferred approach and provides the rationale for selecting this approach.

- Describes an implementation strategy necessary to adopt the preferred approach. The implementation strategy should take into account any relevant resource and political issues.

The Policy Management Project final paper should be 30-40 pages long, typewritten and double-spaced. The format should be structured as follows (these are general guidelines):

1. Title Page (1 page)
2. Executive Summary (2-3 pages)
3. Introduction (2-3 pages)
4. Key Individuals and Institutions (5 pages)
5. Identification and Analysis of Alternatives (10-15 pages)
6. Recommended Approach (3 pages)
7. Implementation Strategy (5-7 pages)
8. Conclusion (3 pages)
9. Attachments and Appendices (if necessary)

The ideal Policy Management Project would not only satisfy the requirements of the MPM degree but would also be a useful strategy paper for actual policymakers struggling with the issue under review.

Topic Selection

Topics can be generated from various sources:

- **Student's Professional Career.** Having begun and sustained a career in the policy management field, the typical MPM student is likely to have already formed an interest in specific policy issues, including issues that engage the student's attention at his/her employing organization. This is a good source for potential topics. For example, an MPM student from the World Bank may be working on economic development in central Europe and may want to do his/her Policy Management Project on this topic. An MPM student from the Department of Defense may be working on peacekeeping operations and may want to do his/her paper on that topic.
- **MPM Coursework.** Another source of potential topics is the MPM coursework. Students should review the syllabi and readings for their MPM courses, including the elective courses and the summer institutes. In particular, the weekend policy seminars might be very useful for generating ideas.
- **MPM Faculty.** Another way of generating ideas is discussing potential topics with MPM faculty. MPM instructors may themselves be conducting research in a policy field of interest to the MPM student.
- **MPM Students.** Similarly, students should consult one another as they consider potential topic ideas.

Registration and Completion

To register and receive formal credit for the Policy Management Project, students enroll in PPOL 800. Although they may (and should) begin work on their project earlier in their course of study, students will typically enroll in PPOL 800 during their final semester. During that final semester, students will meet regularly with a designated faculty advisor, who will guide them and evaluate their performance. Typically, the faculty advisor will request that the student submit a brief prospectus for review and approval.

In order to graduate, each MPM student must complete the Policy Management Project, which must be in accordance with these guidelines and approved by a designated faculty advisor. Students may not waive the Policy Management Project requirement based on prior professional or academic work.