

MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY
2025-2026 ACADEMIC GUIDELINES

CURRICULUM AND REQUIREMENTS

The MIDP is an interdisciplinary graduate program where fellows design their own course of study according to their personal and professional goals. Fellows participating in the Rotary Peace and Conflict Resolution program follow a more specific curriculum of coursework as outlined in their course brochure. To facilitate course selections and academic planning, fellows are assigned to faculty advisors who will assist them in designing a curriculum to meet their needs. In addition, MIDP staff serve as academic advisors to monitor fellows' progress towards completion of program and graduation requirements. Faculty and administrative advisors are meant to support, not substitute for, a student's own responsibility and attention to their academic planning and progress towards completing their degree requirements. Fellows may choose to take advantage of Duke's interdisciplinary options as well as MIDP areas of focus. These areas of focus, outlined below, provide course curriculum guidance to allow fellows to acquire a more specialized set of skills and competencies.

DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

The MIDP offers three program tracks: the traditional Master's degree, the accelerated Master's degree, and the one-year, non-degree certificate. Fellows are admitted to one of these tracks based on their application. Below are the academic regulations and guidelines for each one. Fellows are expected to read these guidelines carefully and consult the MIDP staff with any questions.

TRADITIONAL DEGREE

Forty-eight (48) graded course credits are required to obtain the traditional degree. The courses are typically spread over four academic semesters and must be divided as follows: 24 credits must be MIDP courses, while the remaining 24 credits may be graduate-level courses chosen from any department at Duke or outside institution (UNC-Chapel Hill, NC State, NCCU) through the inter-institutional agreement.

Students in the traditional degree program must complete no fewer than 24 course credits offered by the MIDP, including the following mandatory classes:

- PUPBPOL 700S Policy Analysis for Development: 3 credits. Required of all students. Students are placed in sections by the MIDP office. Taken in the fall semester of the 1st year.
- PUBPOL 701 Economic Foundations for Development: 3 credits. Taken in the fall semester of the 1st year. Required unless exempted through the economics assessment. If exempted, take PUBPOL 702 Applied Development Economics in the spring semester of the first year.
- PUBPOL 702 Applied Development Economics: 3 credits. Required of all traditional students. Typically taken in the spring of the first year.
- PUBPOL 741D Empirical Analysis for Development: 3 credits. Required of all traditional degree seekers unless exempted through the statistics assessment. Taken in the fall semester of the 1st year. Students who have been exempted by the statistics assessment and who are interested in taking optional higher-level statistics classes may work with MIDP staff to identify an appropriate level course. See Statistics Assessment Policy below.
- PUBPOL 704 Master's Project Preparation seminar: 1.5 credits. Required of all students. Taken in the student's second-to-last semester.

- PUBPOL 705 Master's Project: 1.5 credits. Required of all students. Taken in the student's final semester.
- PUBPOL 800 Career and Professional Skills Development Lab: 0 credits. This course covers various professional development topics in preparation for fulfilling the internship requirement, as well as helping with U.S. style career searches. Taken in the fall semester of the 1st year. Students should take the course section designated for MIDP students. More information in the Required Practical Training section below.
- Public Policy Writing and Communication Practicums (PUBPOL 711, 712, 713): 0 credits. These practicum courses support the work done in the core classes. All students are required to complete the writing assessment during orientation, which will be evaluated by the MIDP Director of Writing and Communication Services. Writing and Communication practicums are required as follows:
 - PUBPOL 711 Writing practicum (0 credits): Required in the first fall semester for all fellows in the traditional degree track.
 - PUBPOL 713 Editing practicum (0 credits): Required in the first fall semester for all fellows in the traditional degree track unless exempted based on the writing assessment results as evaluated and communicated by the MIDP Director of Writing and Communication.
 - PUBPOL 712 Presentation practicum (0 credits): Required in the final spring semester for all fellows in the traditional degree track.

The remaining MIDP credits may be chosen from courses offered by MIDP each semester (courses numbered PUBPOL 700-799) and/or those listed in the Sanford International Development Course Bank on the MIDP course information sheet distributed each semester.

Non-MIDP Courses (24 credits)

Fellows may choose the remaining half of their graduate-level courses from any department at Duke or partner institution (UNC-Chapel Hill, NC State, NCCU) through the inter-institutional agreement. In any given semester, the number of interinstitutional credits must be no more than the number of Duke-based credits taken. In addition, there is an overall cap of 2 courses (maximum 6 credits) that can be taken inter-institutionally during a semester. Elective courses must be selected in consultation with the faculty advisor to ensure that the course is appropriate. Please note important regulations regarding elective courses:

- Courses numbered below the 500 level are undergraduate-level courses and do not count toward the required credits needed for the graduate MIDP degree. They also do not count towards the GPA.
- Physical education, music, foreign language, and other recreational elective courses do not count toward the degree.
- English language and pronunciation courses offered elsewhere at Duke do not count toward the degree.
- Courses whose grading basis is No Grade Associated or Pass/Fail (i.e., credit/no credit) do not count toward the degree.

Required Practical Training

The traditional MIDP degree track requires that fellows demonstrate completion of at least 300 hours of relevant, hands-on practical training. Students may choose to fulfill this requirement either through the completion of an internship during the program or demonstration of prior relevant experience.

Internship. For students who fulfill the practical training requirement by undertaking an internship, the following criteria are applicable:

1. The student must follow Sanford Career Services procedures and deadlines (as outlined in Handshake and the Career Services emails and website) to receive credit for the internship and apply it to the practical experience degree requirement.
2. Students who wish to undertake an internship during their program must enroll in PUBPOL 800 Career and Professional Skills Practicum in their first fall semester to gain skills necessary to secure and successfully complete an internship.

3. Internships are typically completed during the summer after the first year of the program; fall and spring-semester internships do not fulfill the practical experience degree requirement.
4. The internship must meet the criteria below to fulfill the practical training degree requirement for the MIDP traditional degree track:
 - a. The internship must be directly related to international development policy as determined by the Sanford Career Services office.
 - b. The internship must be with a recognized employer as determined by the Sanford Career Services office.
 - c. The internship must be a minimum of 300 hours total (two part-time internships may be combined to meet this requirement if approved by the Sanford Career Services office).
 - d. The internship should not overlap with spring or fall class schedules.
5. Past internships cannot be used in lieu of an internship during the program.
6. The MIDP program will not count any additional practical training beyond the required internship. Fellows who wish to engage in additional practical training opportunities may do so at their own discretion.
 - a. F-1 and J-1 international students require work authorization to complete practical training while in the U.S. As a result, F-1 and J-1 students need to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) (F-1) or Academic Training (J-1) for any practical training beyond the required internship. Please work with Duke Visa Services to learn more about OPT, Academic Training, and the application process.

Prior Experience. Students who have at least 8 years of relevant post-graduate professional experience may petition to fulfill the practical training degree requirement through demonstration of their prior experience. To do so, the student must submit a request via the [Prior Experience Practical As Training Fulfilment Form](#) and include supporting documentation such as employment records, letters of recommendation from previous employers or supervisors, and samples of work or projects completed. Students whose requests are approved by the drop/add period for the student's first fall semester will also be considered to have fulfilled the PUBPOL 800 Career and Professional Skills Practicum and are not required to enroll in it (although they may elect to enroll if they choose).

The MIDP degree program is very rigorous, and many students find the academic commitment alone to be quite intensive. Therefore, students should think carefully about their ability to successfully manage their time and performance in both their courses and additional practical training opportunities before making such a commitment.

Master's Project

Traditional degree-seeking fellows are required to complete a final Master's Project during their second year of study. The master's project is a thirty to thirty-five-page paper required of all candidates for the master's degree. It is intended to demonstrate mastery in defining a policy problem, analyzing it in an interdisciplinary manner, and recommending a specific course of action to address that problem. More specifically, the master's project must also meet the standards of good analysis, including a precise definition of the problem, careful evaluation of the evidence from an interdisciplinary viewpoint, review of other countries' experiences, identification of important costs and benefits, and feature a clear presentation of the results and recommendations. Additional guidelines on the master's project are issued annually. All Masters' Projects must be pre-approved through an oral defense of a Masters' Project prospectus, usually in the penultimate semester of the program. A committee comprised of the MP advisor and at least one additional faculty member constitutes the MP Prospectus Defense Committee.

Course Sequencing

Fellows who start the traditional degree program in a semester other than the fall, or who complete the traditional degree within a different timeframe due to a leave of absence, different pace of study, etc., will have a different sequencing of classes but must still complete at least 48 credits to graduate.

ACCELERATED DEGREE

Thirty (30) course credits are required to obtain the accelerated degree. The accelerated degree program can be completed over three traditional semesters (e.g., fall, spring, fall) or may be completed within a calendar year if the student enrolls in a summer semester and takes a sufficient number of credits (e.g., Fall, Spring, Summer). Students in the accelerated degree program must complete a minimum of 15 course credits offered by the MIDP Program, including these mandatory classes:

- PUPBPOL 700S Policy Analysis for Development: 3 credits. Required of all students. Students are placed in sections by the MIDP office. Taken in the fall semester.
- PUBPOL 701 Economic Foundations for Development or PUBPOL 702 Applied Development Economics: 3 credits. Based on economic placement test results. A more advanced development economics class may be substituted with permission from the MIDP.
- PUBPOL 704 Master's Project Preparation seminar: 1.5 credits. Required of all students. Taken in the student's penultimate fall or spring semester.
- PUBPOL 705 Master's Project: 1.5 credits. Required of all students. Taken in the student's final fall or spring semester.

The following classes are highly encouraged for accelerated degree-seeking fellows:

- PUBPOL 741D Empirical Analysis for Development: 3 credits. Not available for those who have previously taken a graduate-level statistics course and/or placed out of statistics on the assessment. Students who have been exempted by the statistics assessment and who are interested in taking a higher-level statistics class may work with MIDP staff to identify an appropriate course. See Statistics Assessment Policy below for more information.
- PUBPOL 800 Career and Professional Skills Development Lab: 0 credits. Optional for accelerated degree-seeking fellows. This course will cover various professional development topics in preparation for fulfilling the graduate internship requirement, as well as help with U.S.-style career searches and professional networking. Recommended for those not returning to their previous employer and/or those who wish to pursue employment in the U.S. during or following their degree completion.
- Public Policy Writing and Communication Practicums (PUBPOL 711, 712, 713): 0 credits. These practicum courses support the work done in the core classes. All students are required to complete the writing assessment during orientation, which will be evaluated by the MIDP Director of Writing and Communication Services. Writing and Communication practicums are strongly encouraged as follows:
 - PUBPOL 711 Writing practicum (0 credits): Offered in fall only. Strongly encouraged in the first fall semester for all fellows in the traditional degree track.
 - PUBPOL 713 Editing practicum (0 credits): Offered in fall only. Strongly encouraged in the first fall semester for all fellows in the traditional degree track unless exempt based on the writing assessment results as evaluated and communicated by the MIDP Director of Writing and Communication.
 - PUBPOL 712 Presentation practicum (0 credits): Offered in spring only. Strongly encouraged in the final spring semester for all fellows in the traditional degree track.

The remaining MIDP classes may be chosen from courses offered by MIDP each semester (courses numbered PUBPOL 700-799) and/or those listed in the MIDP development course bank on the MIDP course information sheet distributed each semester.

Non-MIDP Courses (15 course credits)

Fellows may choose the remainder of their graduate courses from any department at Duke or outside institution (UNC-Chapel Hill, NC State, NCCU) through the inter-institutional agreement. In any given semester, the number of interinstitutional credits must be no more than the number of Duke-based credits taken. In addition, there is an overall cap of 2 courses (maximum 6 credits) that can be taken inter-institutionally during a semester. Elective courses must be selected in consultation with the faculty advisor. Please note important regulations regarding elective courses:

- Courses numbered below the 500 level are undergraduate courses and do not count toward the required credits needed for the degree. They also do not count towards the GPA.
- Physical education, music, foreign language, and other recreational elective courses do not count toward the degree.
- English language and pronunciation courses offered elsewhere at Duke do count towards the degree.
- Courses whose grading basis is No Grade Associated or Pass/Fail (i.e., credit/no credit) do not count toward the degree

Summer Internship

The summer internship is not required for completion of the accelerated degree. It is common for these fellows to take classes and/or write their Master's Project during the summer. Accelerated degree candidates who wish to complete an internship may do so after completion of their degree. They should check with MIDP staff, sponsors, and Duke Visa Services to confirm eligibility well in advance of securing an internship (e.g., 3-4 months ahead).

Master's Project

Accelerated degree-seeking fellows are required to complete a final master's project and will start this process during their penultimate traditional semester (spring or fall) of study. The master's project is a thirty to thirty-five-page paper required of all candidates for the master's degree. It is intended to demonstrate mastery in defining a policy problem, analyzing it in an interdisciplinary manner, and recommending a specific course of action to address that problem. More specifically, the master's project must also measure up to the standards of good analysis, including a precise definition of the problem, careful evaluation of the evidence from an interdisciplinary viewpoint, review of other countries' experiences, identification of important costs and benefits, and feature a clear presentation of the results and recommendations. Additional guidelines on the master's project are issued annually. All Master's Projects must be pre-approved through an oral defense of a Master's Project prospectus, usually in the penultimate semester of the program. A committee comprised of the MP advisor and at least one additional faculty member constitutes the MP Prospectus Defense Committee.

Course Sequencing

Fellows who are completing the accelerated degree within a different time frame than described above will have a different sequencing of classes, but must still complete at least 30 credits to graduate.

NON-DEGREE CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

Twenty-four (24) course credits are required to obtain the non-degree certificate. The courses are typically taken over two academic semesters. A non-degree program cannot confer a diploma and will appear on Duke transcripts as 'discontinued'. Completion of the certificate will be noted on the transcript. Students in the non-degree certificate program must complete a minimum of 12 MIDP course credits, including these mandatory seminars:

- PUBPOL 700S Policy Analysis for Development: 3 credits
- PUBPOL 701 Economic Foundations for Development: 3 credits or PUBPOL 702 Applied Development Economics: 3 credits.

The following MIDP classes are optional but highly encouraged for non-degree certificate seekers:

- PUBPOL 741D Empirical Analysis for Development: 3 credits, highly encouraged but optional
- Public Policy Writing and Communication Practicums (PUBPOL 711, 712, 713): 0 credits. These courses support the work done in the core classes but do not count towards the total credits required for the certificate. They are Credit/No Credit classes. Open to all non-degree seekers.

Non-degree certificate seekers may choose the remainder of their elective graduate courses (6 course credits) from any department at Duke or outside institution (UNC-Chapel Hill, NC State, NCCU) through the inter-institutional agreement.

Non-MIDP courses must be selected in consultation with the faculty advisor. Please note important regulations regarding elective courses:

- Language courses do not count toward the non-degree certificate.
- Courses numbered below the 500 level are undergraduate courses and do not count toward the required credits needed for the MIDP non-degree certificate.
- Physical Education, music, foreign language, and other recreational elective courses do not count.
- English language and pronunciation courses offered elsewhere at Duke do not count.
- Courses whose grading basis is No Grade Associated or Pass/Fail (i.e., credit/no credit) do not count toward the non-degree certificate.

Summer Internship

The summer internship is not required for completion of the non-degree certificate.

Master's Project

The Master's Project is not required for the non-degree certificate.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Fellows in the MIDP may self-select into one of the following *informal* areas of focus that build on the best of Duke. These focus areas serve to aid the course selection process and facilitate professional growth. These focus areas do not appear on student transcripts or diplomas.

APPLIED DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS. This area emphasizes the economic policy aspects of development—including issues of international trade and competitiveness, public finance and evaluation of public expenditures, banking and financial sector management, privatization, external debt management, factors that bolster economic growth, domestic revenue generation, and international capital markets.

INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNANCE, AND ORGANIZATIONS. This area has a strong foothold in political science and covers issues of public and private partnerships, civil society and governance, fiscal decentralization, political risk analysis, aid coordination, regional planning, and other sector development issues.

SOCIAL WELFARE AND POLICY. This area focuses on how to improve the lives of citizens by supporting their education, health, work, and well-being. It focuses on safety net policies as well as on issues of gender, ethnic and economic inequality, health policy, building human capital, and social entrepreneurship.

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY MANAGEMENT AND POLICY. This area emphasizes international environmental and energy policy, security, regulation, and institutional development. Sanford's expertise is complemented by the resources from the Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment, and Sustainability in areas such as natural resource economics, energy access, climate change, and environmental advocacy and regulation.

GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT. This area focuses on health equity and policy alternatives for current global health challenges. Sanford's expertise is complemented by the resources of the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy and the Duke Global Health Institute. Those interested may pursue the Global Health graduate certificate offered by the Duke Global Health Institute.

PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION. This area equips future leaders to promote greater tolerance, cooperation, and peace among people. Course choices focus on democracy, negotiation, and conflict resolution, and the promotion of effective cooperation in international development. Those interested may pursue a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill certificate in peace and conflict resolution offered to two-year MIDP fellows through the Duke-UNC Rotary Peace Center.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT. Technology plays a crucial role in sustainable and inclusive development. This area focuses on the impact that technology has on society across industries, as well as the role of technology in governance and democracy.

PRIVATE SECTOR AND DEVELOPMENT. This area focuses on the range of strategies that promote economic growth in developing countries by creating healthy enabling environments for private enterprises, whether small, medium, or large. Strategies include political risk analysis, regulation, and global value chains. Additional options are also available at Duke's Fuqua School of Business.

INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP. This area of focus draws on Duke's Innovation & Entrepreneurship Initiative and its pioneering leadership in policy and social entrepreneurship education. It aims to further enhance fellows' abilities to

explore the I&E ecosystems and complexities and to develop innovative and entrepreneurial methods to address local and global challenges. Those interested may pursue a graduate certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

CONCURRENT GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

MIDP Fellows with an interest in specific areas of development may want to pursue a graduate certificate offered by other departments at Duke. Graduate courses taken toward certificates may also count towards the MIDP degree. See our website for a [full listing](#).

Fellows should discuss their interests in pursuing a graduate certificate with their faculty advisors and/or MIDP staff. Formal registration is required for courses taken towards a certificate to be counted. Successful certificate completion is recognized with a note on the transcript. It is important to note that if a fellow signs up and then fails to complete the certificate requirements, it will appear on the official transcript as “discontinued” and **cannot** be removed. Certificate seekers registered as Inter-Institutional students will show a status of ‘discontinued’ on their Duke transcript, as non-degree programs cannot be conferred.

ASSESSMENTS OVERVIEW

As described above, all fellows are required to take MIDP core classes, as well as placement assessments for economics, statistics, and communication and writing.

ECONOMICS ASSESSMENT POLICY

Assessment: All incoming fellows are required to take the online economics assessment prior to their arrival. The following core economics courses are required for the degree:

Traditional degree seekers:

- PUBPOL 701 Economic Foundations for Development: 3 credits. Required unless exempted through the assessment.
- PUBPOL 702 Applied Development Economics: 3 credits. Required. Taken after the student has completed or been exempted from PUBPOL 701 Economic Foundations.

Accelerated degree seekers:

- PUBPOL 701 Economic Foundations for Development or PUBPOL 702 Applied Development Economics, depending on economics assessment results.

STATISTICS ASSESSMENT AND ENROLLMENT POLICY

Assessment: All incoming fellows are required to take the statistics assessment. The results of this assessment determine placement in or exemption from the core MIDP statistics course, PUBPOL 741D, as well as help identify appropriate level elective statistics courses. The assessment also helps the MIDP program understand each fellow’s statistical knowledge and skill level to assist them with access to a variety of quantitatively focused courses offered at Duke that they may wish to take. The MIDP core statistics course is required or encouraged as follows:

Traditional degree seekers:

- PUBPOL 741D Empirical Analysis for Development (3 credits). Required unless exempted by assessment. Students who have been exempted by the statistics assessment and who are interested in taking a higher-level statistics class may work with MIDP staff to identify an appropriate advanced statistics class.

Accelerated degree seekers:

- PUBPOL 741D Empirical Analysis for Development (3 credits). Highly encouraged but optional for accelerated degree seekers. Not available for those who have previously taken a graduate-level statistics course and/or placed out of statistics on the placement test. Students who have been exempted by the statistics assessment and who are interested in taking a higher-level statistics class may work with MIDP staff to identify an appropriate advanced statistics class.

Advanced Quantitative Courses: If an MIDP student wants to enroll in advanced quantitative courses in Sanford (such as PUBPOL 813, PUBPOL 822, etc.), the student should first consult the MIDP DGS and PUBPOL 741 Instructor by sending an email to the MIDP DGS, PUBPOL 741 instructor, and instructor of the course of interest (with CC to the MIDP Director of International Student and Academic Services) to indicate their course of interest and reasons for wanting to take the course. If approved, the MIDP Director of International Student and Academic Services will issue a permission number for the course. Those who were exempt from PUBPOL 741 need only to consult the MIDP DGS and the instructor of the course of interest. Students who were exempt from PUBPOL 741 or who received an A in PUBPOL 741 can generally expect to have access to advanced quantitative courses in the Sanford School, but should still follow the procedure above to ensure proper course placement. To enroll in advanced quantitative courses outside of the Sanford School, students should consult with the MIDP DGS to identify courses of interest and/or ensure a course of interest is at the appropriate quantitative level.

OTHER ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES

With the approval of their Director of Graduate Studies, graduate students may enroll in undergraduate courses (numbered below 500), but these courses will not count toward any graduation requirements, **will not be included in a student's GPA calculation, and will not count towards their full-time status**. The grading basis for such courses will be indicated with an asterisk (*) on the transcript. Graduate students must be classified as full-time students based on their graduate-level course enrollment as a prerequisite for enrolling in courses numbered below 500.

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT (Sanford registration forms are located on the [Sanford School Registrar's website](#))

The drop/add period begins each semester immediately following the last day of registration and extends approximately through the first two weeks of the new semester (students should refer to the academic calendar for specific deadlines each semester). Students may drop a course through DukeHub any time prior to the end of drop/add, without permission from the instructor, and the course will not appear on the Duke transcript.

After the drop/add period ends, students can no longer drop a course, but may be able to "withdraw" by completing a withdrawal form with the approval of the course instructor and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students may withdraw from a course up until the last day of classes of the current semester and will receive a W (withdrawn) grade on the transcript. No class may be added after the drop/add deadline.

SPECIAL ENROLLMENTS

Courses at the Fuqua School of Business, Duke Law School, Pratt School of Engineering, and Inter-institutional Courses require a separate registration process and approval for enrollment. Instructions and forms will be distributed at the time of registration each semester.

AUDITING

Fellows who wish to complement their studies by auditing an additional course or seminar outside their expertise may do so with the approval of their advisor and with written approval by the course instructor (the Course Audit Form, is available on the [Sanford Registrar site](#)). A full-time, degree candidate may audit courses without additional charges during the fall and spring semesters. Registering for an official audit must be completed before the end of the drop/deadline. **No credit hours or grades are earned towards degree requirements for auditing a course**, but the course will appear on the transcript as AD (audited). Students who officially audit a course are expected to attend and participate in all classes and may be asked to complete some or all assignments, depending on the faculty's guidelines for auditors in their course. Informal audits require instructor permission, but do not appear on the transcript. **Note: any course that has been audited may NOT be taken later for a grade.*

COURSE OVERLOAD

12 credits is the typical and recommended load per semester for MIDP fellows. The Duke system will allow graduate students to enroll in up to **16 credits per semester**, though this is not advised. If a fellow wishes to take more than 16 credits, he/she must seek the advice and approval of their academic adviser and the Director of Graduate Studies. If approved, the student must complete the Term Overload request on the [Sanford Registrar site](#).

COMMUNICATION AND WRITING SERVICES

Unique to the MIDP program is our in-house writing and communication service that includes practicums in writing, editing, and presentations. These courses focus on professional communication skills in an international policy setting and are designed to serve as a supportive supplement to existing coursework. These courses are strongly recommended for all, but required for some, depending on degree track and results of the orientation writing assessment. Practicums, PubPol 711, 712, and 713, carry 0 credits and do not count toward the total credits required for the degree. In addition, the MIDP program offers one-on-one tutoring upon request.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES INCLUDING ENGLISH

Foreign language courses do not count towards any MIDP degree. Duke's English for International Students (EIS) courses do not count toward the degree and are not permitted by the MIDP.

INDEPENDENT STUDY/RESEARCH

In exceptional cases and during the second year of studies, fellows may request an independent study from a Sanford Faculty member for a broad topic not otherwise addressed or offered in regular classes. Such requests must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies according to procedures in Annex 1. Traditional program students may only complete one independent study during their degree program. Requests from accelerated degree-seeking fellows will be considered for their summer semester only.

FIELD RESEARCH

In cases of research involving field interviews and personal or household surveys, fellows are expected to submit their surveys (after prior review by their master's project advisor) for clearance by Duke University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

ASSISTANTSHIPS

The MIDP has a very limited number of assistantships reserved for second-year fellows. Opportunities for assistantships will be communicated in the semester prior to the semester in which the assistantship is available. Rising second-year fellows may apply for advertised assistantships once they are announced.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

GRADES

Grades in the MIDP program are as follows: A, B, C, F, I, and W (with +/- modifiers available).

"I" (incomplete) indicates that some portion of the student's work is missing, for an acceptable reason, at the time that final grades are reported. Sanford School graduate students have up to one year to resolve an incomplete (I). The student and instructor should coordinate a timeline for submission of the missing work. Incompletes must be resolved and converted to a letter grade for the credits to count towards graduation requirements. Incomplete grades that are not resolved within 1 year will remain on the student's transcript as "incomplete" and will not count for credit for the degree. Program or continuation/registration fees will be charged for students who must register for an additional semester to resolve an incomplete.

"W" indicates withdrawal from a course; this grade is typically assigned when a student drops a class after the drop/add deadline has passed.

ACADEMIC STANDING

All MIDP fellows are expected to remain in "good academic standing" throughout their studies at Duke University. To remain in good academic standing and to graduate from the MIDP program, students must maintain at least a 3.0 (B) cumulative grade point average. Students are also expected to attend **ALL** classes, complete required assignments on time, and obtain A or B grades. Students falling below a 3.0 GPA risk losing their financial support and may be dismissed from the program.

Grades starting at a C+ and below are considered unsatisfactory. Fellows who receive a C+ grade or lower in any core MIDP course (Policy Analysis for Development, Economic Foundations for Development, Applied Development

Economics, Empirical Analysis for Development), and/or have a cumulative GPA below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and informed of such in writing. Academic probation may result in the suspension of financial support awarded by MIDP or other funding sources. If the fellow continues to perform poorly while on academic probation, he/she will be considered for academic dismissal from the program.

Grades below “C-” are considered failing (there are no “D” grades in MIDP) and are assigned an “F.” A grade of “F” in a core course will normally result in dismissal from the program. A grade of “F” in any other course will result in academic probation and possibly program dismissal.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Unforeseen circumstances (e.g., family crisis, medical issue) may require a student to take a leave of absence (LOA) from the program for a period of up to two semesters. A request for a LOA should originate from the student and be endorsed by the Director of Graduate Studies. Students who have been on a LOA and intend to resume a degree program must give their Director of Graduate Studies and program administrators written notice thirty days before registration. Typically, a student can request a LOA only after completion of at least one full semester of the program.

TIME LIMIT FOR COMPLETION OF THE MASTER’S DEGREE

Students who are unable to complete the master’s degree requirements within 150% of the normal time for completion may appeal for an extension due to extraordinary circumstances or reasons approved by the Dean. Students must submit an appeal to and obtain the approval by their Director of Graduate Studies and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. The change of an expected graduation date may be subject to the completion of new program requirements.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Plagiarism is the use of other’s work without attribution. Cheating may include, but is not limited to, copying another student’s work, working with others (both giving and receiving help) on individual assignments and exams, sharing answers to exams taken in a course, having someone else write a paper or complete an assignment (including generative AI software), or obtaining copies of an exam prior to the exam period. Duke University and MIDP consider plagiarism and cheating in **any class** to be a violation of the honor code. As provided under University regulations, failure to adhere to the Sanford Code of Professional Conduct may result in **immediate dismissal**. Information on how to avoid plagiarism and cheating will be provided in MIDP orientation sessions and in individual courses. Should any fellow require further clarification about plagiarism or cheating, it is **his/her responsibility** to consult with his/her faculty advisor or course professor. **It is always advisable to ask questions about plagiarism or cheating before turning in an assignment instead of finding out “after the fact.”** Each fellow is required to sign an acceptance of the Sanford Code of Professional Conduct during orientation, which binds the fellow to the academic rules and regulations of MIDP, the Sanford School, and Duke University.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

All fellows are expected to be respectful of their professors, their classmates, and all others in the Duke and Sanford community. Fellows are expected to submit all of their assignments on time and to be punctual for their classes. Any form of harassment, particularly sexual harassment, **will not** be tolerated and may result in immediate dismissal from the program. We recognize that the definition of harassment differs from one culture to another, so we encourage fellows to seek advice from program faculty and staff and/or the Duke International Student Center if they are unsure of appropriate behavior in the United States. A copy of Duke’s harassment policy may be found at <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/conduct/z-policies/harassment>, and is applicable to all Duke students, faculty, and staff. In addition, all students are required to complete a mandatory harassment prevention training prior to joining their program. Information about how to complete this training is emailed directly to students from the unit responsible for administering this requirement in the months leading up to their admission term.

ADVICE AND ACADEMIC ADVISING

The Director of Graduate Studies, faculty, and the MIDP staff follow a two-pronged approach to academic advising in which the MIDP administrative team and faculty advisors support the following roles and responsibilities in the academic advising process:

- **MIDP Admin Staff:** advise students on progress to degree completion and meeting curricular and graduation requirements (e.g., taking sufficient credits each semester, advising which required courses should be taken in which semester, advising students when the graduation application window is open and other academic or administrative deadlines), and identifying potential courses in other departments.
- **Faculty Members:** advise students on course selection (subject to the above), help suggest courses in other units that might be of interest, refine their MP ideas and approaches, discuss their professional goals, and connect them with MP clients/advisors and people for informational interviews, etc.

More generally, faculty and staff are always prepared to provide guidance to fellows experiencing unexpected difficulties. Please consult them as needed, both for academic issues and personal challenges.

MIDP POLICY ON INDEPENDENT STUDIES

General policy: In exceptional cases, and normally for fellows in their second year of studies, the MIDP program may consider requests for independent studies with a Sanford faculty member. Such studies should be for a topic that is not offered through a course and in which the proposed supervising faculty has special expertise. An Independent Study Proposal approved by the supervising faculty member and the MIDP DGS, and a completed Sanford Registrar Independent Study Form are required to enroll. Independent studies are not a substitute for the summer internship.

Qualifying Faculty Members: The supervising faculty member must be a Sanford faculty member (including adjuncts) during the academic year in which the student undertakes the independent study.

Scope of the study: The independent study project must be narrowly defined enough to lead to a paper in which an answer to a specific policy question is provided, or a specific research tool is developed (e.g., a survey, an evaluation of a past project, construction of a data set, etc.).

Relation with Master's Project: Independent study papers may not serve as the initial draft of one's master's project, although they may address related or peripheral topics. The master's project must address a broader issue and contain analyses that go well beyond the issue considered in any independent study project. (See the guidelines for master's projects.). Literature reviews in preparation for one's master's project are not an acceptable independent study project.

Limit per fellow: MIDP fellows may only enroll in one independent study during the course of their MIDP program.

The Proposal: The Independent Study Proposal is a 2-page written agreement between the student and supervising faculty detailing assignments and deadlines. The student must develop the proposal in which he/she: (i) clearly defines the proposed topic and study program (it should have a high intellectual content, equivalent to a 3-credit load; in special cases, fewer credits may be allowed); (ii) explains why he/she wishes to study this topic, (iii) demonstrates that it is not offered at Duke or UNC, (iv) specifies the expected deliverables; (v) provides a preliminary bibliography; (vi) indicates the faculty member with whom they propose to study and why; and (vii) proposes a timetable for completion of the study. An example template is available at the end of Annex 1.

Procedures: The fellow should initially consult with the faculty member with whom they wish to study ~3 months in advance of the intended semester of enrollment in the independent study. If the faculty agrees based on initial discussions, the student should submit a formal proposal as described above to the faculty member (with CC to the MIDP DGS). If the faculty member approves and agrees to formally supervise the independent study, the proposed faculty member will sign the fellow's proposal and CC the MIDP DGS. The MIDP DGS will then review the proposal and give their approval and any comments. Once the proposal has been approved and signed by the supervising faculty member and the MIDP DGS, the fellow must then complete the independent study form on the [Sanford Registrar's website](#), which includes uploading a copy of the approved proposal.

Timeline and Decision Process: There are two separate approval/administrative processes for Independent Studies. The first is approval of the actual independent study by the faculty and MIDP DGS. The second is the administrative process of adding the IS to the student's schedule by the Sanford Registrar. The timeline and deadlines on the following page should be observed in regard to these processes.

Accelerated degree-seeking fellows: Fellows in the accelerated degree program are generally only permitted to do an independent study during the summer. In special cases, an exception can be made by the MIDP DGS.

Study Outcome: In addition to the final paper written for the independent study (which must be graded and approved by the supervising faculty member), fellows may occasionally be asked to make a public presentation of their findings for the benefit of the MIDP community.

MIDP Independent Study Timeline and Deadlines

Responsible party	Action	Deadline
Student	Approach proposed supervising faculty member with initial idea for independent study. Student may move forward in process if faculty accepts based on initial discussions.	Recommended at least 3 months in advance of the start of the semester in which IS will take place.
Student	Submit the formal independent study proposal to the proposed supervising faculty member with CC to the MIDP DGS. A sample template is below.	Fall semester: June 1 Spring semester: October 1 Summer semester: February 1
Supervising faculty member	Respond to student to either accept, accept with proposed changes, or decline the request to supervise the independent study with CC to the MIDP DGS.	Within 1 week of receiving complete request from student.
MIDP DGS	Respond to student and faculty to approve, approve with changes, or deny the independent study request (assuming supervising faculty approved student's proposal).	Within 1 week of receiving approved proposal from student and faculty.
Student	Complete and submit the Sanford Registrar Independent Study Form on the Sanford Registrar's website .	No later than 1 week prior to the drop/add deadline of the semester in which the IS will take place.
MIDP DGS and Supervising Faculty	E-sign the Sanford Registrar Independent Study form.	Within 24-48 hours of receipt of the email routing the form for signature.
Sanford Registrar	Email the student a permission number and instructions to enroll in PUBPOL 786 (the MIDP independent study course) or manually add the student to the course (depending on whether the add deadline has passed).	Flexible. As long as the student submits the form by the deadline above, the request is considered "on time" and the registrar will process it.

MIDP Independent Study Proposal

Student Name:

Semester of intended enrollment:

Proposed number of course credits:

Topic and description of study program

Provide a brief description of your proposed topic for the independent study. The independent study should have a high intellectual content, equivalent to the requested credits. It cannot serve as the initial draft of one's Master's project, although it may address related or peripheral topics. In addition, the independent study project must be narrowly defined enough to lead to the specific deliverables proposed below.

Explanation of student's interest in topic

Explain why you are interested in learning about this topic or what significance it has to you.

Demonstration of a lack of course offerings at Duke or UNC

Independent studies should be for a topic that is not offered through a course. Describe your efforts to find a course on the proposed topic and the resulting lack of offerings.

Deliverables

For example, a paper, a case study, the development of a tool, the construction of a data set, etc.

Preliminary Bibliography

List all the sources you used to conduct your initial research about your topic.

Faculty Information

Identify the faculty member with whom you propose to do the independent study and briefly explain his/her particular expertise on the proposed topic of your independent study.

Timetable for completion

Deliverable	Due Date

Approvals

[Insert Supervising Faculty Member's Name and title here]

Date

Corinne Krupp, MIDP Director of Graduate Studies

Date

2025 EVALUATING MIDP MASTER'S PROJECTS PRESENTATIONS

Name of MP Advisor:

Name of MIDP fellow:

Please use the descriptions below to evaluate the student's performance in specific areas on the Master's Project Presentation.

Criteria	Excellent	Competent	Does not meet expectations
QUALITY OF ANALYSIS AND DELIVERY OF THE MAIN POLICY ISSUES			
Presentation of the core content	The body of the presentation had strong logic, a compelling storyline, detailed analysis and evidence, and a clear core message. Recommendations were clearly linked to the problem analysis.	The body had good logic, storyline, analysis and evidence, but the core message was not as clear as it could have been, and the thread of the argument was difficult to follow at times. Not all recommendations were linked to the problem analysis.	The body of the presentation was difficult to follow. The analysis and evidence were not compelling, and the recommendations were not linked to the problem analysis.
ORGANIZATION AND CONNECTION TO AUDIENCE			
Opening	The introduction clearly posed a problem, not just the topic, and mapped out the goals of the presentation. The introduction named not only the technical policy challenges but also the human impact.	The introduction posed a problem and mapped out the goals of the presentation, but not as clearly or concisely as possible. The human impact of the problem was not effectively stated.	The introduction gave little or no sense of the problem or its human impact. The introduction gave little or no sense of the goals of the presentation or its recommendations.
Closing	The presentation ended with a review of the message and a clear call to action.	The presentation ended with a review of the message and/or a call to action, but not as concisely or effectively as possible.	The presentation ended with no clear review of the message or call to action.
Visual Design	The slides, graphs, and images were interesting and well-designed and visually highlighted the argument.	The slides, graphs, and images were generally interesting and well-designed but could have highlighted the argument.	The slides, graphs, and images were poorly designed and did not highlight the argument.
Connection to Audience	The presentation was completed within the allotted time. The presenter appeared confident and, overall, connected well with the audience (voice, posture, eye contact) and handled questions smoothly.	The presentation was completed within the allotted time. The presenter mostly appeared confident and mostly connected well with the audience (voice, poster, eye contact). They handled questions competently.	The presentation was not completed within the allotted time. The presenter did not appear confident and, overall, did not connect with the audience. They did not handle questions well.

Final Comments:

(Include any additional comments about the fellow and the project)