Master of Public Policy
Duke University - Sanford School of Public Policy
Join our Close Community

- By limiting enrollment to 65-80 students each year, we keep our class sizes small.
- Nearly all admitted students receive a merit-based scholarship.
- Sanford delivers on the promise of individualized career counseling.
- Professors are known for high-quality teaching and provide one-on-one mentoring.
- Our program’s personalized nature creates a fiercely loyal alumni network.

Easy Access to DC & Major East Coast Cities

More than half of the U.S. population lives within a day’s drive or an hour’s flight of Duke University. RDU International Airport is only 20 minutes away, so it’s easy to get away for a job interview or a break.

“You’re going to be so busy with classes and academics that you’ll be essentially wasting money if you go to school in a really expensive city like San Francisco or New York. You will get way more bang for your buck living in Durham.”
— Eric Nakano MBA/MPP’14 Consultant, Accenture, San Francisco, CA

“…for a better world, to maximize your potential, and to take part in the remarkable intellectual and personal environment Sanford provides.”
— Kelly Brownell, Dean of the Sanford School of Public Policy

“I chose Duke because of the people. The folks who sat by my side during the Open House became my classmates and friends. The professors and staff I met became my mentors. I felt I was not just joining the Sanford School, but a community of passionate public servants invested in making a difference in the world.”
— Megha Bansal MPP’12, Growth Strategy Consultant, World Bicycle Relief, Nairobi, Kenya

sanford.duke.edu
Sanford students have many opportunities to learn from the leaders who are shaping the future. Policymakers, politicians and other dignitaries regularly speak to Sanford students in classes, small-group lunches, and public lectures.

“Your ‘true north’ should be a constant search for the right answer. Distrust the sound bite or talking point that is not backed up by objective evidence or reliable analytics. Seek to raise the level of dialogue to ensure that fair, substantive and multi-layered analyses drive our public policy outcomes.”

—Danny Werfel MPP’99, Partner and Managing Director, The Boston Consulting Group; Chair, MPP Alumni Advisory Board

“Seek to raise the level of dialogue.”
After a successful career in housing and community development, Sanford alum Donna Dyer returned to Sanford in 1997. Her work experience in government, nonprofit management and public-private partnerships, along with her direct and realistic advising style, generate loyalty among Sanford MPP students and alumni.

Over her career, she has built a deep understanding of the complicated federal job search process, the government consulting market and the field of international development. She excels at helping students find work options to match their skills and passions. She is a certified career advisor.

“The Career Services Office provides personalized attention to each MPP student. Our individualized services result in tremendously dedicated alumni who help our students with advice and connections. When hiring, they always look to Sanford for great candidates.”

— Donna Dyer, Assistant Dean for Career and Professional Development

MPA, NC State University; BA (Public Policy), Duke University

“My goal coming out of Sanford was not just to find a job, but to build a career in public service. Donna understands how success in this sector looks different than in other sectors. She made the process of finding my own path more accessible, structured, and sensible. Her guidance remains one of the most valuable aspects of my time at Duke.”

— Austen Edwards MPP’16, Associate Policy Analyst, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Lead & Innovate on Campus

Student Groups
Duke Interdisciplinary Social Innovators
National Security Club
Sanford Board Leadership Initiative
Sanford Journal of Public Policy
Sanford Energy and Environment Club
Sanford Latin American and Caribbean Group
Sanford MPP Student Council
Sanford Pride
Sanford Women in Policy
Social Innovation and Policy Initiative

“Bass Connections allowed me to research policy challenges facing the N.C. Medicaid program by interviewing legislators, Medicaid officials and healthcare executives. Ultimately, this project sparked my interest in state health policy and led me to intern at the N.C. Office of State Budget and Management.”

— Madhu Vulimiri MPP'18
Margolis Scholar in Health Policy & Management

Bass Connections
This Duke-wide initiative creates interdisciplinary project teams to tackle complex problems.
Bassconnections.duke.edu

CREATE SOLUTIONS • “We were at Dame’s Chicken and Waffles, where all good ideas start,” remembers Danny Heller MPP’14. PhD student Jen Shen “drew a flowchart that had engineers, business people and policy people, with an arrow pointing to good ideas.” Duke Interdisciplinary Social Innovators was born.

Our Grads Pursue Diverse Interests
MPP First Positions by Policy Area, 2012-2016

sanford.duke.edu
In the Classroom

Our challenging core courses provide a strong foundation in economics, statistics, policy analysis, and the politics of policymaking throughout the domestic and international spheres. Sanford faculty experts develop and teach our core courses. Our two-year, full-time program includes a summer internship.

Students can choose from a diverse array of electives within the Sanford School and in schools and departments at Duke and neighboring universities. Electives give students the flexibility to gain general expertise in multiple policy areas and to specialize in a policy concentration.

Optional Concentrations
- Social Policy
- Health Policy
- Environment and Energy
- National Security
- International Development
- Global Policy
- Population Studies

The Master’s Project
A year-long policy research project, conducted with guidance from faculty advisors, is the capstone to the MPP degree. Recent MPs have included:
- The Need for Needs Assessments
- Improving Healthcare Delivery to Post-9/11 Women Veterans Within the Veterans Health Administration
- What is the Relationship Between Racial Disparities in Housing Wealth and Violence in Cities?
- Financing a Pre-K Expansion in Durham: Lessons from Other Communities
- Adoption and Short-term Impacts of Improved Cookstoves in Rural India

Assistant Professor Jay Pearson, 2017 winner of the Richard Stubbing Award for Graduate Teaching and Mentoring, leads a seminar.

Dual Degree Options
- Business (MBA-MPP)
  Duke's top-ranked Fuqua School of Business or UNC-Chapel Hill’s Kenan-Flagler Business School
- Divinity (MDiv-MPP)
  Duke Divinity School
- Environment (MEM-MPP)
  Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment
- Law (JD-MPP)
  Duke Law School, UNC-Chapel Hill Law School or NC Central Law School
- Medicine (MD-MPP)
  Duke School of Medicine

sanford.duke.edu
In the Field

First-Year Consulting Projects
The projects help MPP students build concrete teamwork skills as well as experience with real-world clients. Students define a problem, frame a policy question, conduct interviews in the field, research policy options, undertake analysis, draw conclusions, and present their recommendations to the client.

Summer Internships
Internships allow MPP students to field-test their analytical skills, make connections for their master’s projects, and explore career paths. Our career services office helps students secure summer internships with employers across the country and internationally, such as:

- US Government Accountability Office
- Eli Lilly and Co.
- US Department of the Treasury
- Deloitte Consulting
- USAID
- Booz Allen Hamilton Consulting
- World Health Organization
- FBI Counterintelligence Unit
- Congressional Research Service
- The World Bank
- NC Department of Public Instruction

“Despite reading tons about randomized controlled trials and behavioral economics this past year, nothing really prepared me for the field realities in rural India.”
— Nina Brooks MPP’14, PhD Candidate at Stanford University. She interned with Professor Pattanayak’s household energy and health research project.

“IT has been tremendously satisfying to embark on a program evaluation process that I’ve learned about through our statistics classes. This work is perfect for my interests in education, labor, and social policy.”
— Connie Ma MPP’15, on her internship with Taiwan Fund for Children and Families

UN Secretary General Bahn Ki-moon shakes hands with Raphael Obonyo MPP’14 during his UN internship. Obonyo is co-founder of Youth Congress, Kenya, and Africa’s representative to the World Bank’s Global Coordination Board on Youth and Anti-Corruption.
Influential Faculty

“The Sanford School faculty aren’t just academics. Within a few moments of talking with any of your professors, you realize they are drawing on a vast wealth of actual policymaking experience.”

— Rob Laika MPP’08, Professor of Practice and Executive Director, Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Tulane University

DAVID SCHANZER directs the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security. He served as staff director for the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security and legal counsel to Senators Joseph Biden Jr. and William Cohen. He also held executive branch positions in the departments of Defense and Justice.

“These job losses are not just changing people’s calculations about job search or college, but actually really making them distressed.”

— Associate Professor Anna Gassman-Pines, WUNC-FM

BRUCE JENTLESON served as a senior advisor to the U.S. State Department, on the National Security Advisory Steering Committee for the Obama 2012 campaign, and as a foreign policy aide to two senators. He was selected for the 2015-16 Henry Kissinger Chair at the Library of Congress Kluge Center.

“‘A broader transformation of the US-Iran relationship could conceivably compare in scope and strategic importance to the US-China shift.’”

— Professor Bruce Jentleson, The Christian Science Monitor

ANNA GASSMAN-PINES researches low-wage work, family life and the effects of welfare and labor policy on child and family well-being in low-income families. Her work has been funded by grants from the National Science Foundation, the William T. Grant Foundation and the Russell Sage Foundation.

“The main terrorist threat in the U.S. is not from Muslim extremists, but from right-wing extremists. Just ask the police.”

— Associate Professor of the Practice David Schanzer, The New York Times
Global Reach

Internships

“If I’ve done a lot of things in my life and this internship was by far one of the most amazing experiences I’ve ever had.”
— David Cohen MPP’07, Deputy Director, Office of Private Capital and Microenterprise, USAID. He worked on land rights disputes with ActionAid International in Kapchorwa, Uganda.

Summer School for Future International Development Leaders

UDAIPUR, INDIA • “If you want to help those in poverty, you need to experience the hardships firsthand,” says Professor Anirudh Krishna. MPP students work on a project team with an Indian graduate student and an early career staff member from an NGO.

Duke Program on Global Policy and Governance

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND • “Thanks to the reputation that the Duke program has cultivated, we were treated to intimate dialogues with diplomats, ambassadors, and high-ranking officials from prominent NGOs,” said Adrian Evans-Burke MPP’12, Analyst, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC. The unique program combines coursework and internships with unparalleled access to global policy experts at leading international organizations, including UNDP, WHO, and WTO.

sanford.duke.edu
Student Life
Durham, NC: ‘Where Great Things Happen’
Durham, Chapel Hill (home of UNC), and Raleigh, the state capital, are collectively known as North Carolina’s Research Triangle area. With 1.8 million people and three major state universities in addition to Duke, it is home to high-powered scholarship and an entrepreneurial spirit.

- 10 Best Places to Live – *US News & World Report*
- America’s Foodiest Small Town – *Bon Appétit magazine*
- Best Places for Businesses and Careers – *Forbes*
- Ten Most Educated Cities in America – *Forbes*

“Durham offers big-city activities without the big-city hassle. It’s the best of both worlds – you can be outdoors hiking in nature and then have dinner at a terrific restaurant. The residents here love their city, and our students often don’t want to leave.”

– Pope “Mac” McCorkle, Director, Graduate Studies, MPP

Average sunny days each year 216

Apply for New Scholarships in Public Policy Studies
The Sanford School is offering two new scholarships for MPP students that cover full tuition, fees, and living expenses.

The Terry and Laurie Sanford Family Fellowship is awarded to outstanding student leaders committed to addressing disparities affecting underserved communities. It is made possible by a gift from the family of the school’s founder.

The Duke-Margolis Scholarship in Health Policy & Management is for applicants with a strong interest in health policy and professional experience in the health field. The program combines academic and experiential training in health policy and management, and is a joint project of the Sanford School and the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy.

1st Sanford Fellow: Maurice Baynard
Maurice Baynard worked with autistic children in the Minneapolis Public Schools and then for several law firms in Chicago. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, he will study education and law as a dual degree student with the Duke Law School.

1st Margolis Scholar: Minahil Shahid
Minahil Shahid worked for the government of Punjab, developing and implementing health sector reforms. She holds a BA in economics and political science from Lahore University of Management Sciences and is an Andi Leadership Fellow.
Getting In

MPP Typical Class Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>65-80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>24-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate GPA</td>
<td>3.4-3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-undergraduate work experience</td>
<td>2-6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE</td>
<td>Top 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL (iBT)</td>
<td>110-115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is Our Program Right for You?

The Sanford School's two-year, professional Master of Public Policy (MPP) program prepares students for careers as analysts, managers, and leaders in various levels of business, government, and nonprofit organizations in the United States and around the world.

MPP or MPA? In recent years, the two degree programs have begun to look similar. However, policy analysis is at the heart of the MPP curriculum, which typically includes economics and quantitative courses. MPA coursework at universities across the country often puts greater emphasis on management, public organizations and budgeting. The Sanford School offers the MPP degree. It also offers a Master's in International Development Policy and a PhD in Public Policy.

Scholarships

The Duke MPP program is among the very few that offer a merit-based scholarship to nearly all admitted students. Scholarships range from partial to full tuition, and teaching or research graduate assistantships may also be awarded.

In addition, through agreements with the Duke MPP program, these partners may provide tuition funding for qualified applicants:

- AmeriCorps Educational Program
- Charles B. Rangel Fellowship Program
- City Year Fellowship Program
- Institute for International Public Policy (IIPP)
- Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program (Peace Corps)
- Teach for America Educational Program
- Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program
- Yellow Ribbon Military Veterans Program
- U.S. Military Academy Teaching Position Agreement

Who Can Apply?

Diversity is a core value at Sanford. We seek applicants from diverse academic, professional, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Factors that influence acceptance:

- Undergraduate academic performance and courses taken
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores
- English and writing skills
- Statement of purpose
- Relevant work experience (2+ years preferred after completion of the undergraduate degree)
- Faculty and employer evaluations

Prerequisite coursework: Prior to matriculation, students are required to complete both basic statistics and microeconomics at an accredited academic institution and achieve a grade of B or better.

Seeing is Believing

We strongly encourage prospective students to:

- Visit our campus. Engage with our supportive, close-knit community and explore Duke's beautiful campus. Please complete the Visit Request Form at least two weeks before your projected arrival date: sanford.duke.edu/admissions/mpp
- Attend an in-person or virtual recruiting event. View our schedule online: sanford.duke.edu/admissions/mpp/recruiting
- If admitted, attend our Open House in late March or early April.

Apply Online

All materials, including official GRE and TOEFL scores, must be received by January 5 at 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. A completed application includes:

Electronic Application
sanford.duke.edu/admissions/master-public-policy/how-apply

Transcript(s)
An uploaded unofficial undergraduate transcript with degree posted and other transcripts for all colleges and universities attended.

Test Scores

- GRE
- TOEFL/IELTS (non-native English speakers who are not U.S. citizens or Permanent Residents)
- GMAT (MPP/MBA applicants only)
- LSAT (MPP/JD applicants only)

Three (3) letters of recommendation

Statement of Purpose: 1,500-word limit

Resume: 2-page limit

Video Essay (Strongly Recommended): 1-minute limit

Application Fee

Deferrals

An admission offer is for the semester specified in the letter of admission. We do not permit deferrals.

Contact us: 919.613.9205 MPPadmit@duke.edu

FAQs?

Visit our website
sanford.duke.edu
"We will not flinch from change; we will lead it. We will not shy away from challenge; we will welcome it."
—Terry Sanford