Public Policy


For more information contact publicpolicy@brown.edu and visit our website at watson.brown.edu/public-policy.
Public policy begins with an exhilarating belief: We can make a difference. We can improve our communities, our nation, and the world. The discipline of public policy cultivates decision-making skills, but we never forget that those skills serve the larger purpose of building just, peaceful, and prosperous societies. We embrace Brown University’s ethos of idealism and service.

This is an exciting time to study public policy at Brown. We have designed a new one-year MPA that offers rigorous analytical thinking, domain knowledge, active fieldwork, advanced training in communications skills, an international experience at one of four partner programs around the world — and much more.

We invite you to join our community of dedicated leaders who draw on Brown’s rich tradition of collaboration across approaches and disciplines. Together we search for fresh ways to address the public challenges of our time.

You can make a difference. Improve our communities, our nation and the world.

James A. Morone
Director, Brown Public Policy Program
What is distinctive about Public Policy? It is rooted in the concrete. No matter what the issue, we always start with a real-world problem. When you study public policy, you join a special community of dedicated leaders looking to make a difference in the world by discovering and devising innovative ways to solve the policy challenges we face today.

What is distinctive about Public Policy at Brown University?

The one-year MPA in the Brown Public Policy program is...

Rigorous. We provide students with the analytical skills to address some of the key challenges facing the world today. However, more than simply gaining a “tool kit,” our students become proficient in specific policy areas and draw on Brown University’s expertise in several policy domains, such as health, environment, economic development, and security, among others.

Relevant. We focus on solving some of the world’s great challenges through cutting-edge research, innovative teaching, and public engagement. Because politics matter and solutions do not exist in a vacuum, the Brown Public Policy program brings politics back into the study of policy. Policy analysis must be savvy about the realities of governing. Robust solutions must always be prepared to withstand the decision-making process that puts any idea into effect.
Interdisciplinary. The problems we face are often deep and complicated, requiring diverse disciplines and perspectives to understand and solve them. In a setting where crossing disciplinary boundaries is not only possible but encouraged, the Brown Public Policy program takes full advantage of the interaction among the University’s many areas of expertise, including the departments of Political Science, Economics, History, and Computer Science, the schools of Medicine, Public Health, and Engineering, the Political Theory Project, and the Watson Institute for International Studies.

Global. We live in a single, interconnected global village. Problems, solutions, ideas, technologies, finance, and people move swiftly across continents. An international perspective therefore informs all our courses, and students are encouraged to further explore international perspectives through affiliated programs in countries around the world and in collaboration with the Watson Institute for International Studies.

Experiential. Recognizing that students learn as much through real-world experience as they do in traditional classroom settings, the Brown Public Policy program provides all students with an in-depth action-learning experience in which they work with policy-focused organizations located in both the US and abroad on real-world problems and solutions. These intensive internships are central to our approach to education, which promotes the interplay between theory and practice and provides students with opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge they acquire in the classroom to real-world settings.

Making a difference. We always come back to the same powerful idea: You can make a difference. Our mission, first and foremost, is to train you to make a difference in the world.

The Brown University program in Public Policy provides students with the analytical skills and deep knowledge about key policy issues and challenges to make a difference in the world, and to help build just, peaceful, and prosperous societies. This mission is aligned with Brown University’s ethos of idealism and service.
Master of Public Affairs (MPA)

The Brown MPA is a one-year accelerated (summer – fall – spring), full-time degree program that prepares students with analytical tools, management skills, international study, and real-world experience.

A typical journey through the program includes the following:

**Summer Semester**
- **Professional skills bootcamp**, including writing, presentation, data analysis, and research workshops
- **Core courses** in economics, policy, quantitative analysis, and financial management
- **Global policy immersion** experience working with policymakers in France, Brazil, India, or China for 2.5 weeks

**Fall Semester**
- **Advanced courses** in Policy Implementation, and Policy Analysis & Evaluation
- **Elective coursework** in a policy specialization: Governance, Law & Ethics, Environmental Policy & Sustainability, Health Policy, International Security, Urban Policy, and Economic Development, among others. Students can also design their own specialization.

**Spring Semester**
- “Policy in Action” internship for 12 weeks
- **Advanced courses** in Organizational Management & Behavior and Systems Dynamics
- Additional **elective course** in policy track
- **Advanced topics and tools** in public policy. Possible courses include GIS, Law & Ethics, Public Service, and Cost-Benefit Analysis

In addition to a full course load and an action-learning internship, students will enjoy career planning and placement support and will benefit from learning with a cohort of passionate changemakers and future leaders.
Founded in 1764, Brown University is the seventh-oldest college in the United States and an Ivy League institution. Since 1984, Brown’s program in Public Policy has graduated over 1,000 students to professional careers in government, nonprofits and NGOs, and private sector positions.