Graduate Center for Public Policy and Administration

California State University, Long Beach

Student Learning Portfolio Handbook

Dear MPA Student:

In 2002, the faculty of the Graduate Center for Public Policy and Administration adopted a Student Learning Portfolio (SLP) as an MPA program requirement. This Handbook describes the SLP, how to complete it, and how it is evaluated.

We feel the SLP will help you gain the greatest possible benefit from the MPA Program. It will also help you showcase your professional talents for the greater public policy and administration community.

We are confident that your SLP will contribute to your success in the MPA Program. If you have any questions about the SLP, please contact any full-time faculty member. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

MPA Faculty

Table of Contents

The Student Learning Portfolio (SLP)

The Student Learning Portfolio (SLP) requirement serves two important purposes. First, it serves as an assessment document that collects important assessment artifacts that you will create during your time in this program. Second, it serves as tangible evidence of the skills and abilities that you have acquired in the Beach MPA Program.

Externally, whether you are searching for a first job or a promotion from your current position, a SLP is a valuable tool that details the capacities, skills, competencies, abilities, and accomplishments you have acquired or developed over your professional and educational career.

The expected student learning outcomes for the MPA program are organized around the five core competencies of the Network of Schools of Public Policy Administration and Affairs (NASPAA). These core competencies are:

> To lead and manage in the public interest

> To participate in, and contribute to, the policy process

> To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make evidence informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment

> To articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective

> To communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.

The SLP is comprised of materials that are representative of your acquisition of these core competencies. Hence, a SLP is:

- An organized record of what you have accomplished, both professionally and educationally, throughout the MPA program

- A learning opportunity designed to help you integrate and apply your formal education to professional experience and vice-versa

- A structured process that can help both you and your Instructor s assess your own learning, as well as your professional development, in an objective way

- A tool that can help you to present, or help a prospective employer to appreciate, your demonstrated capacity for learning and development

<div align="center">**Purpose of the SLP**</div>

The purpose of the SLP is to create a document that presents a layered approach to the assessment of student learning outcomes. First, the approach requires that students and faculty evaluate a student's skills and abilities in the core fundamental areas of public policy and administration. This is accomplished through the completion of an Initial Skills Self-Assessment in PPA 500 and a Final Skills Self-Assessment in PPA 697. The Skills Self-Assessments provide a frame of reference for students to compare their individual skill levels upon entry and departure from the MPA program.

<div align="center">**Sections of the SLP**</div>

Section I--Skills Self-Assessments

Students prepare an Initial Skills Self-Assessment in PPA 500. The form can be found on the GCPPA website (Appendix A). The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to examine their current knowledge and skills in each core content area: Budgeting and Finance, Human Resource Management, Organization Theory, Policy Analysis, and Research Methods. This assessment assignment will be submitted to the PPA 500 Instructor early in the first semester in the program.

Students complete a Final Skills Self-Assessment in PPA 697 and include copies of both the Initial and the Final Self-Assessments in Part One of the SLP. No approval forms are required.

Section II--Core Course Instructional Assignments

Each Core Course requires the completion of one or more designated SLP assignment(s). The Student completes a Pre-Instructional assignment within the first three weeks of the semester and completes a second Post-Instructional assignment later in the semester. Section II of the SLP consists of the Pre and Post-Instructional assignments from PPA 555, PPA 577, PPA 660, PPA 670, and PPA 696. No approval forms are required.

Section III--PPA 697

Students enrolled in PPA 697 will complete the five case studies covering the required core courses. As a guideline, students should aim to complete one case study about every two to three weeks, to meet the dropbox deadline of November 15th for Fall semester or April 15th for Spring semester. The five Case Studies will become Section III of the SLP. No approval forms required.

Students should submit the completed case studies to the relevant dropbox in the department's Beachboard organization site. These cases should also be included in Section III of the SLP.

Major Elements of the SLP

Section	Contents	When Completed
Section I	**Skills Self-Assessment** • Initial Skills Self-Assessment Completed in PPA 500 • Final Skills Self-Assessment Completed in PPA 697	PPA 500 PPA 697
Section II	**Core Courses** Pre- and Post-Instructional Assignments for each of the following courses (Appendix B) 1. PPA 555 2. PPA 577 3. PPA 660 4. PPA 670 5. PPA 696	In each core course
Section III	**PPA 697** Five Completed Case Studies.	PPA 697
Title Page	Student Name and Campus ID#	PPA 697

Course Scheduling and the SLP

The importance of careful planning in completing your required courses cannot be overemphasized. You must plan your program of study carefully to ensure that you complete the SLP in a timely manner. To minimize the possibility of delays in graduating from the MPA Program, you must complete the following steps in the SLP process in this precise order:

1. Complete all required courses. You cannot be enrolled in any core courses in the semester in which you plan to complete the SLP/PPA 697.

2. Complete PPA 697 Directed Research--You must have completed all other required courses (see above) before taking PPA 697. PPA 697 is a 6 unit course. Students may take 3 units of PPA 697 each semester for two semesters, or they may take all 6 units in one semester. Students who enroll for 6 units of PPA 697 in a single semester and do not complete the course will be required to enroll in GS-700 (through CPIE) each semester until the course is completed. PPA 697 includes completion of the Case Studies AND the student learning SLP. Generally, the due date for all PPA 697 case studies is November 15th for Fall semesters and April 15th for Spring semesters. The due date for the SLP is generally December 1st for Fall semesters and May 1st for Spring semesters. Students must complete at least three cases in a semester to receive a grade of Report in Progress (RP). If a student fails to complete at least three cases in a semester, the student will receive a grade of "WU" which is calculated as an "F" for GPA purposes. If due dates are on a weekend, the due date will be the following business day.

3. Submit the complete SLP for final approval. You must have completed all the steps detailed above before submitting your complete SLP to your PPA 697 Instructor for final approval. The SLP must be submitted through OneDrive. OneDrive is available by logging into your my.csulb.edu account at: https://csulb.okta.com/. A video has been provided on the PPA Organization Beachboard site that details the steps in submitting the SLP through One Drive. A link to the video is provided below:
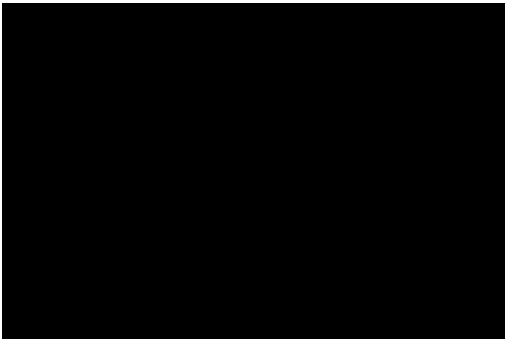
Please note that you may take your elective courses at any time, and in any order. Completion of elective courses does not affect the SLP process. Please consult the sample student program on the PPA web site and/or in the MPA Student Handbook. If you have any questions about scheduling, please contact any full-time faculty member.

Steps for Final SLP Review

The SLP should be submitted using One Drive. One Drive may be accessed using the link: https://csulb.okta.com/. After uploading the SLP documents to One Drive, the student should share the documents with the 697 instructor.

The PPA 697 Instructor reviews the SLP and provides notice of approval to the Department Administrative Coordinator for transmittal to Enrollment Services.

In order for the SLP to pass the final review, all of the following must be satisfactorily completed:

1. All required elements of the SLP must be present
2. All parts of the SLP must be of good quality

If the SLP is "Approved," the designation "Graduate Project Completed" will appear on your unofficial transcript.

If the SLP is "Not Approved," your PPA 697 Instructor will communicate to you, in writing, the reasons, as well as the specific corrective action(s) you must take. A copy of the written notification will also be sent to the Director of the Graduate Center for Public Policy and Administration, and to the Administrative Coordinator, for inclusion in your student file. You will not be cleared for graduation until the SLP is "Approved."

You must take corrective action as directed by the written notification and resubmit the revised SLP to the same PPA 697 Instructor. This process will continue until you have satisfactorily completed all corrective action required by your PPA 697 Instructor. You will have one year from the date of the original submission of the SLP to complete revisions. When your SLP has been "Approved" by your PPA 697 Instructor, this will be communicated to University officials for final review of degree requirements and approval of the degree.

If you fail to meet the one-year deadline specified above, a Review Panel of three full-time faculty members will be convened, before which you must orally defend the contents of your SLP.

General Presentation Guidelines

All items you include in your SLP must be of good presentation quality. Documents should be organized into folders (Parts One, Two, and Three).