

Rutgers University – Newark

School of Public Affairs and Administration

Frequently Asked Questions

For Applicants and Students of the

**Global Executive Online Master's in
Public Administration (GEO-MPA)**

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About the GEO-MPA Program

1. What is the GEO-MPA program?

The **Global Executive Online Master of Public Administration** (pronounced *geo-MPA*) is Rutgers University's School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) executive online MPA program. This completely online program is designed specifically for experienced public and non-profit professionals, using a cohort model so students can grow their global network of colleagues.

2. Where are you based?

Rutgers University is the State University of New Jersey and is made up of three major campuses based in New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark. SPAA is one of the many highly touted and respected schools and departments within the University. SPAA is housed within Rutgers University's Newark campus.

3. Will I have to ever travel to Newark, New Jersey, USA?

No, and that is part of what makes this program so revolutionary. We recognize that today's professionals are often called to communicate, work, bank, and immerse themselves on-line, and as such, education should be no different. You can accomplish the ENTIRE program online.

4. How do I know I am right for your program?

The program has some very specific entrance requirements, which can be found within the Applications section of this document. Of those that meet those requirements, we seek to partner with engaging, goal-oriented, and service-minded individuals. We welcome experienced public and non-profit professionals with all academic and practical backgrounds. If you are still unsure if your experience fits the program, please just reach out at GEOMPA@andromeda.rutgers.edu.

5. Will my actual diploma be in any way different from a traditional, campus-based, MPA?

Not at all. You will not be treated any differently than any other SPAA student. After all, you are part of the SPAA family! With completion of the GEO-MPA program, you will earn a Master in Public Administration degree from Rutgers University- Newark, with all of the all the rights, honors, and privileges which throughout the world pertain to that degree.

6. Do I have to meet at certain times on-line for classes?

No class "meetings" are held online. This program is self-paced with general deadlines. You will sign in to do your work and accomplish the stated goals before the deadline – such as papers and postings on various discussion boards. This will allow for you to share in a "class" setting with students all across the globe throughout all time zones.

7. Can I walk during the commencement graduation?

Rutgers-Newark holds its commencement ceremony at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey, and we would love to have you! You can find more information on the University's Office of Commencement website at <http://commencement.rutgers.edu/>.

Application Processes and Requirements

1. *What undergraduate major is required or recommended?*

We do not give preference in admission based on undergraduate major for the GEO-MPA program. All undergraduate majors will be considered.

2. *What are the conditions required for admission to the program?*

The GEO-MPA applicants must satisfy the following requirements or conditions for admission to the program:

- ✓ At least seven years' experience at the managerial level in the public or non-profit sector
- ✓ Laptop, computer, tablet, or other device with:
 - at least 1MG upload/download speed;
 - built in webcam and microphone; and
 - an operating system which can support the use of Blackboard learning platform.
- ✓ 3.0 GPA (or acceptable GRE scores)

3. *How can I make sure my application is complete?*

Please find the application checklist below to ensure a complete application.

- ✓ Online application form
- ✓ Resume
 - Including a detailed history of at least seven years of managerial-level experience in the public or nonprofit sectors
- ✓ Fee of \$65 – payable to Rutgers University
- ✓ Official transcripts for colleges and universities attended
 - Bachelor's degree from a recognized institution of higher education is required. In most cases, transcripts must be evaluated by NACES agencies, such as World Education Services (WES). A list of NACES agencies can be found on their website: <http://naces.org/members.htm>.
- ✓ Three letters of recommendation
 - At least one recommendation letter from current employer
- ✓ Personal statement
 - Two to three pages explaining “Why you are pursuing a Master’s in Public Administration degree at Rutgers University- SPAA”
- ✓ GRE scores
 - May be waived if the student’s GPA from bachelor’s degree is 3.0 or higher
- ✓ All international students must submit TOEFL score of at least 90 (reported by the ETS, institutional code 2512) or IELTS score of at least 6.5 (reported by the British Council)

For additional information regarding admissions, please contact Gail Daniels, Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, at gaild@rutgers.edu or Tugba Aksoy, Senior Student Programs Manager, at aksoy@rutgers.edu.

4. *When is the application deadline? Can I apply after the deadline?*

The application deadline for the fall semester is July 1st; applications are only being accepted for the fall semester. Students who apply prior to the deadline will receive priority consideration for admission. Students who apply after the deadline may receive conditional consideration for admission based on space available.

5. *Do all of the application materials need to be submitted before the deadline?*

We strongly recommend that all required documents be submitted prior to the deadline for full consideration.

6. *How can I submit my application?*

All applications must be completed online at <http://gradstudy.rutgers.edu>. The Rutgers University-Newark Office of Admissions requires the following original official documents:

- ✓ Official transcripts
- ✓ TOEFL through ETS or IELTS from the British Council

7. *How do I select a location when applying to the GEO-MPA program?*

Please select a location based on the country or region in which you reside. This designation of location is only for records-keeping purposes, and students from all countries and regions will be taking courses together.

8. *Who should I ask to write my letters of recommendation?*

Ideally, at least one of your recommendation letters should come from professors who know you well in an academic subject. One of your recommendation letters should also be written by your supervisor, in which he/she details your history of managerial-level experience in the organization. Recommendation letters from family members and friends will not be accepted.

9. *Can I transfer credits for courses completed at another university?*

No. With admittance to the GEO-MPA program, students have reduced credit hour requirements due to their years of experience in the public or non-profit sector. Thus, students may not transfer any other credits.

10. *What are your minimum requirements for the GPA or the GRE exam? Can the GRE requirement be waived?*

GRE scores can be waived if the applicant's undergraduate GPA is 3.0 or higher. For those who do not have a 3.0 GPA, we usually accept students with GRE combined scores above 290 for the verbal and quantitative reasoning sections, and 3.5 or higher in the analytical writing section.

11. *What are your minimum requirements for the TOEFL and IELTS exams?*

The minimum TOEFL-iBT score is 90. The minimum IELTS score is 6.5 in each of the subsections.

12. *Should I retake my GRE? If I take a GRE more than once, which score do you use?*

The Admissions Committee carefully reviews all items a candidate submits in support of the application. If the candidate is strong in other areas, but submits test scores that fall below the minimum requirements, the Admissions Committee may recommend that the candidate retake the test. Candidates who retake the test will be reconsidered for the original term of entry or for up to one year from the term of the original application. You may retake the GRE without penalty. The highest score will be considered in the admission process.

13. Will you accept GRE score that is more than 5 years old?

No, all GRE scores must be within the past five years from the date of applying for the program.

14. Can the TOEFL or IETLS requirement be waived?

In general, the TOEFL or IETLS is required of all international applicants. However, if you have completed an undergraduate or graduate degree in the U.S., the TOEFL or IETLS is waived.

Admission and Acceptance

1. Once I submit the application, how long before I know if I am accepted?

Students normally receive admission decision within 30 days after the deadline. They are encouraged to contact Tugba Aksoy, Senior Student Programs Manager, at aksoy@rutgers.edu if they do not hear from the school 40 days or longer after the deadline.

2. I have been admitted! What's next?

You will receive an admissions packet within several days after you are formally admitted. The packet contains your formal certificate of admission along with information for admitted students. In most cases, you will also receive additional information separately from the graduate school and program to which you have been admitted.

You can accept or decline your offer of admission online from your status site. If you do not see the option to accept or decline your offer on the status site, then you should contact the program to find out how to inform us of your decision.

- Submit your admission response online
- Obtain your NetID from <https://netid.rutgers.edu/displayNetIdLookupForm.htm>
- Contact MPA advisors for advising and course registration

3. Can I defer my offer of admission?

No, admitted students must submit a new application for the following fall semester.

4. Does the school require newly admitted GEO-MPA students to attend orientation?

Yes, SPAA requires all newly admitted students to attend orientations. GEO-MPA students will be able to access an online orientation specific to the program. This online orientation can be accessed from the SPAA website.

Tuition and Fees

1. Are GEO-MPA students eligible to receive academic scholarships or financial aid from Rutgers University or the School of Public Affairs and Administration?

While there are no GEO-MPA scholarships at this time, financial aid is available through Rutgers University and the School of Public Affairs and Administration. You can visit the Office of Financial Aid at <https://financialaid.rutgers.edu/>.

2. How can I learn more about tuition and fees?

You can find more information on tuition and fees at <http://admissions.rutgers.edu/costs/tuitionandfees.aspx#2>.

3. How can my tuition and fees be paid? Can it be paid from an overseas bank?

You can review your term bill online by logging in your student account at <https://finservices.rutgers.edu/otb/>.

You have payment options:

- *Pay Online By Electronic Check*

You may pay by e-check, which is an electronic withdrawal from your checking or savings bank account. No additional fee is charged for the e-check, unless the electronic payment is returned as unpaid from your bank to the university. Returned e-checks are assessed a \$10.00 return check service fee and \$50.00 late fee.

- *Pay Online By Credit Card*

MasterCard, Visa, American Express and Discover Card may be used to pay tuition and fees online. A service fee will be assessed to your credit card for this convenience. The University Cashier's Offices no longer accept in-person credit card payments.

NOTE: Any payments made online will be reflected on your account within three to five business days.

- *Pay in Person or by Mail*

A printable term bill has been provided for your record keeping and payment. You may PRINT YOUR TERM BILL and mail your payment to:

Rutgers University Student Accounting Services
PO Box 2021
New Brunswick, NJ 08903-2021

Payment from an overseas bank is receivable. Please adhere instructions on the student account page and acquire information and professional help from your banker and the Cashier's Office.

4. I can't get my term bill online. What should I do?

Your term bill will only be available after you successfully register for courses.

Registration

1. How can I register for courses? When do I register for courses?

You can register for courses online using Rutgers WebReg at <https://sims.rutgers.edu/webreg/>. This service is available to all students at the University.

Log in to WebReg using your RUID and your Personal Access Code (PAC). PAC is comprised of the first four digits of your birthday. For example, if your birthday is September 5th, your PAC code is 0905.

WebReg is available at the following times:

- Monday-Friday: 6:30am – 11:59pm EST
- Saturday-Sunday: 6:30am – 6:30pm EST

The dates for registration each semester are found on the Academic Calendar, which is provided by the Office of the Registrar at <http://registrar.newark.rutgers.edu/office-registrar-academic-calendar>.

2. Can I drop or withdraw from a course if necessary? How do I do so?

Given that the GEO-MPA program is cohort-based and all courses are structured for program completion in two years, students are highly discouraged from dropping or withdrawing from a course. If students feel that they must drop or withdraw from a course, they should contact their academic advisor and the GEO-MPA Program Coordinator in order to discuss their concerns.

3. Who is my academic advisor? How do I contact him/her?

Academic advising for GEO-MPA students is handled by

Ms. Tugba Aksoy
Senior Student Programs Manager
Email: aksoy@rutgers.edu
Phone: 973-353-5093

Or

Ms. Gail Daniels
Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs
Email: gaild@newark.rutgers.edu
Phone: 973-353-1122

Additionally, the GEO-MPA Program Coordinator, who handles larger programmatic issues, is

Dr. Rachel Emas
Assistant Teaching Professor and GEO-MPA Program Coordinator
Email: rachel.emas@rutgers.edu

Phone: 973-353-3980

4. *How can I access the academic calendar online?*

The Academic Calendar for Rutgers University-Newark can be accessed at <http://registrar.newark.rutgers.edu/office-registrar-academic-calendar>.

5. *Do I need a visa to complete the GEO-MPA program?*

No; since all courses are completed entirely online, there is no visa requirement for the program.

6. *Are there requirements for health insurance, vaccinations, or immunizations for students in the GEO-MPA program?*

No; since all courses are completed entirely online and require no travel outside of your home country, there are no requirements for health insurance, vaccinations, or immunizations for the GEO-MPA program.

7. *Does the program require any travel or on-site residencies for completion?*

No travel is required for the program because all GEO-MPA courses are delivered entirely online. However, students may choose to attend or participate in a variety of conferences, forums, workshops, and events of which the School is a sponsor or co-sponsor. These events may include, but are not limited to, the Annual Conference of American Society for Public Administration, Annual Sino-U.S. International Conference for Public Administration, Annual Trans-Atlantic Dialogue, and Annual Conference of Minority Public Administrators. Additional information on events like these can be found at <https://spaa.newark.rutgers.edu/conferences>.

Curriculum and Courses

1. *How many credits or courses are required for the GEO-MPA program?*

GEO-MPA students will be awarded 12 credits for professional service experience to complete the 42 credit-hour Master's in Public Administration degree. Thus, the program requires the completion of 30 credits. The GEO-MPA program requires 10 courses, each of which is worth three credits.

2. *How long does it take to complete the program?*

The GEO-MPA program is designed to be completed in two years.

3. *Can I still work full-time while completing the GEO-MPA program?*

The GEO-MPA program is designed so that students can continue working full-time while taking online classes part-time. Part-time coursework at the graduate level requires two courses each in the fall and spring semesters and one course in the summer semester.

4. *Which courses are required for the program?*

The GEO-MPA program requires the completion of the following courses:

- Introduction to Public Administration
- Public Budgeting Systems
- Administrative Ethics
- Managing Public Organizations
- Applied Statistics
- The Public Policy Process
- Technology and Public Administration
- Economics for Public Administration
- Applied Research Design
- Capstone

5. *When do I take each course?*

The schedule of required courses for GEO-MPA students is as follows:

Fall 1	Intro to Public Administration Public Budgeting Systems
Spring 1	Administrative Ethics Managing Public Organizations
Summer 1	Applied Statistics
Fall 2	The Public Policy Process Technology and Public Administration
Spring 2	Economics for Public Administration Applied Research Design
Summer 2	Capstone

6. *May I take elective courses instead of the required courses? Can I decide when to take each of the courses in the program?*

No; the GEO-MPA program is highly structured and each course is scheduled to be taken in a specific semester so as to help students develop, progress, and build upon knowledge gained in previous courses. The GEO-MPA program is also cohort-based. This means that only students in the GEO-MPA program can register for the specific courses in which you will be enrolled, and all GEO-MPA students who enter the program in a given semester will take every course with each other for the two years in the program.

7. *What online learning platform do the courses utilize?*

The GEO-MPA program will utilize the Blackboard learning platform. This platform can be accessed at <https://blackboard.rutgers.edu/webapps/login/>.

Grades

1. *What is the grading system used?*

Grade	Definition	Numerical Equivalent
A	Outstanding	4.0
B+	Very Good	3.5
B	Good	3.0
C+	Intermediate	2.5
C	Satisfactory	2.0
F	Failing	0.0

2. *What is an incomplete grade?*

Incomplete grades (IN) may be assigned at the discretion of an instructor who believes that an extension of time is warranted for a student whose work is incomplete at the end of the semester as a result of extraordinary circumstances. The student must have satisfactorily completed at least 60% of the coursework to be eligible to receive a grade of incomplete. An instructor assigning an incomplete grade should submit an Incomplete Form, which outlines a deadline by which the student is required to submit missing or incomplete work in order to receive a letter grade. The incomplete grade will automatically convert to the grade indicated on the form (usually an F) if the agreed upon deadline and requirements are not met.

3. *How long do I have to fix an incomplete grade?*

Work must be completed and a change of grade submitted no later than the end of the same semester in the following academic year (fall courses must be completed by the end of the following fall semester, for example). After that date, the IN grade will automatically convert to the grade indicated on the Incomplete Form. A one-time, one semester extension may be requested in writing from the MPA Director, and subject to approval by the MPA Executive Committee. If a graduate student has 6 or more credits of incomplete coursework, future course registration will be denied unless waived in specific cases by the MPA Director. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that an Incomplete Form is completed before the grading period closes for the semester in which they are enrolled.

4. *How can I appeal my grade?*

Student complaints about grades are handled within the School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA). The process is as follows:

- The student discusses the grade concern with the instructor of the course within 10 business days of receipt of the questionable grade. The student should include factual information and limit the discussion to measurable elements of the course.
- If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the discussion, he or she may appeal the decision to the MPA Director. This appeal must be in writing and present the facts of the student's complaint and any evidence that supports the complainant's claim.
- The MPA director will discuss the complaint with the student and the instructor and propose a solution.

- If the student is not satisfied with the outcome at this step, he or she may appeal the decision to the dean of the School of Public Affairs and Administration. All records of the previous steps will be provided to the dean of SPAA. The dean will collect whatever additional evidence he or she considers appropriate and make a decision.
- Decisions of the dean of the school are final. There are no appeals beyond the dean.

5. *What are the principles of academic integrity at Rutgers University?*

Principles of academic integrity require that every Rutgers University student:

- Properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others;
- Properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work;
- Make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of unsanctioned materials or unsanctioned collaboration;
- Obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately, without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions;
- Treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress; and
- Uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing.

Adherence to these principles is necessary in order to insure that:

- Everyone is given proper credit for his or her ideas, words, results, and other scholarly accomplishments;
- All student work is fairly evaluated and no student has an inappropriate advantage over others;
- The academic and ethical development of all students is fostered;
- The reputation of the University for integrity in its teaching, research, and scholarship is maintained and enhanced; and
- Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld.

The complete Academic Integrity Policy can be found at

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy>.

Program Management and Rutgers Resources

1. Who is my GEO-MPA Coordinator, and what do they do?

In their support of program students, the GEO-MPA Coordinator's responsibilities include:

- mentorship and guidance to students throughout the program; and
- communication with students throughout the program.

The GEO-MPA Coordinator is Dr. Rachel Emas.

2. Do the professors offer online office hours? How does that work?

In each course during the GEO-MPA program, professors will provide a syllabus which details the arrangement of online office hours. Office hours will be specific to each course and each professor.

3. How do I access course materials from the Rutgers Library?

Materials from the Rutgers Library can be accessed at <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/> by logging in with your NetID and password.

4. If I am having technological problems in a course, whom should I contact?

If technological issues arise that are specific to a course, first contact the professor of that course. If the technological problems are more general and not course-specific, the Rutgers University Office of Information Technology is a valuable resource; their site is <https://oit.rutgers.edu/>.

5. If I am having difficulties with a course, whom should I contact?

If you face difficulties in a course, first contact the professor of that class. Please communicate with the professor and work together to solve the problems. If the problems cannot be resolved, you could contact your Regional Adviser for guidance. If, after working with these two individuals, the difficulties remain, you may contact the GEO-MPA Program Coordinator and the MPA Director to address the issue.

6. If I need help with my writing, whom should I contact?

The School of Public Affairs and Administration Writing and Career Development Center provides focused help to students preparing for leadership roles in the public and nonprofit sectors. The center's staff assists students in conceptualizing and organizing professional and academic materials. The primary focus of the Center includes resumes, cover letters and personal statements, as well as assisting with the nuts-and-bolts of writing them. The Center's services include coaching session and referrals to editors when more intensive help is needed.

- Coaching Sessions
 - The coaching sessions, which are scheduled by appointment, are one-on-one. They are designed to fit the needs of each student. The objective of these 45-60 minute meetings is to provide students with the necessary tools to fully express their ideas to the best of their ability. While grammar and syntax are essential elements of all

well-constructed written materials, sessions will concentrate on developing structure, organization and contextual relationships to effectively communicate their ideas. In these sessions, students should be prepared to discuss their work in detail.

- Editing Services
 - Students whose work may require intensive edits will be referred to an independent editor. They will have access to these services for a small nominal fee.

Appointments for coaching sessions and editorial services can be arranged by contacting the Center via email at writenow@andromeda.rutgers.edu or phone at +1-973-353-2571. For more information, you can access the Center's site at <https://spaa.newark.rutgers.edu/writing-career-development-center>.

SPAA Contact Information

Name	Title	Email Address
Tugba Aksoy	Senior Student Programs Manager	aksoy@rutgers.edu
Gail Daniels	Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs	gaild@newark.rutgers.edu
Rachel Emas	Coordinator of GEO-MPA Program	rachel.emas@rutgers.edu
Stephanie Newbold	Director of MPA Programs	stephanie.newbold@rutgers.edu
Melissa Rivera	Associate Dean for Finance, Technology, and Administration	melar@rutgers.edu
Annie Virkus	Associate Dean for Academic and Student Services	annie.virkus@rutgers.edu

Additional Resources

Office	Website
Admission's Office	http://admissions.newark.rutgers.edu/
Cashier's Office	http://studentabc.rutgers.edu/cashier-offices
Office of Financial Aid	https://financialaid.rutgers.edu/
Office of International Student Services	http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/oiss
Registrar's Office	https://sims.rutgers.edu/webreg/
Rutgers Library	http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/
Rutgers University- Newark	http://www.newark.rutgers.edu/
School of Public Affairs and Administration	https://spaa.newark.rutgers.edu
SPAA Writing and Career Development Center	https://spaa.newark.rutgers.edu/writing-career-development-center