



## INDIANA UNIVERSITY

PAUL H. O'NEILL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

# Prior Experience: MPA Professional Experience Information *Students who started the program in summer 2022 or later*

## What is Professional Experience?

The O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University - Bloomington may grant credit to students who have had relevant Professional Experience above the undergraduate level gained **prior** to the start of their graduate program at O'Neill. Credit for Professional Experience will (1) satisfy the experiential requirement of the MPA program, eliminating the need to complete an internship (although students are still welcome to pursue such opportunities), and (2) possibly reduce degree program credit requirements.

Professional Experience credit earned will result in a reduction of the total number of credit hours required for the MPA degree. Credit reductions are only applied to general elective credits for the degree. Being awarded a credit reduction does not guarantee that a student can use the full benefit, depending on their degree program and plan for completing the degree. Please plan carefully with an advisor.

Once the decision is shared with O'Neill's Graduate Records Office, the student's online Academic Advising Report will be updated, and the student will be notified via their IU email.

## Am I eligible?

Students are eligible to apply:

1. Once they have been unconditionally admitted to the O'Neill-BL MPA residential or online degree program.
2. Before they have completed 24 hours of coursework.
3. If they have relevant, full-time work experience gained **after completing an undergraduate degree and prior to the start of O'Neill graduate studies**.
  - Relevant experience is **above the entry level**, involved some independent managerial, analytic, or scientific responsibility and complements the student's academic program and future public service career. Note that the work must be relevant to a public affairs degree; not all accumulated work experience will necessarily count toward prior professional experience.
  - Work can have been paid or unpaid, and work in any sector (public, nonprofit, or business) and any part of the world is eligible for consideration.

Experience that is unrelated to a public service career, or has not involved managerial responsibilities, generally does not qualify for professional experience. The work is generally assumed to have been paid, full-time work, but students may make the case for highly relevant volunteer and part-time work.

Students pursuing outside dual degree programs (e.g., MPA-JD, MPA-MA, etc.) in which the total credit requirements have already been reduced are not eligible for Prior Experience credit reductions.



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### How much can I apply for?

Prior Experience credit reductions (which includes Professional, Military, and Volunteer Experience, or any combination of these) will not exceed 9 hours.

Suggested application guidelines based on years of professional experience (which should include only experience gained after graduating from undergrad and before beginning your master's program):

- Waiver of experiential requirement: work experience should **roughly equal or surpass that of a summer internship**.
- 3-credit hour reduction: **2-4 years** of full-time technical, administrative, or policy-level work experience with a government, nonprofit, or private agency.
- 6-credit hour reduction: **4-6 years** of relevant full-time managerial and/or policymaking experience in any sector, such as program leadership, budgetary oversight, organizational or staff development, fundraising, analysis, planning, or human resources supervision.
- 9-credit hour reduction: **over 6 years** of relevant full-time managerial and/or policymaking experience. At this point, at least one higher-level, multi-year assignment is expected, including responsibility for supervision of staff, budget preparation, or organizational control of public or nonprofit agencies.

Approval for a credit reduction does not guarantee that the full credit reduction can be used. You should carefully plan the balance of your program with an advisor in order to utilize the full benefit you qualify for.

### How do I apply?

- Applications must be received before completing 24-credit hours.
- If you have held more than one position, select the most relevant one as your primary position. Descriptions of additional professional positions you would like to be considered should also be submitted.
- Fully complete the Professional Experience Application, found on the next pages, and include a current, complete resume. A complete resume includes (1) all prior jobs and job titles with clear dates of employment (month and year) (2) all prior degrees and graduation dates, (3) the month and year in which you matriculated into the O'Neill MPA program, (4) relevant volunteer assignments such as board service, and (5) distinguishes full-time jobs from part-time jobs.
- Please provide the specific number of credit hours you are requesting for reduction, not a range.
- Return the completed application to the O'Neill Graduate Records Office in room A328 or via email to [oneillrc@iu.edu](mailto:oneillrc@iu.edu).



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**Prior Experience:**  
**MPA Professional Experience Application**  
***Students who started the program in summer 2022 or later***

Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ IU Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ Concentration: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Term\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours completed towards MPA Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Only work experience prior to this date will be considered towards Professional Experience. Once your master's program begins, no additional experience will be counted towards a credit reduction. Only experience gained after graduating with a bachelor's degree and before beginning an O'Neill master's degree will be considered.*

Total combined years of experience among all positions submitted for consideration: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Experience Request is for (*please check one*):

\_\_\_\_\_ I. Satisfaction of experiential requirement only

\_\_\_\_\_ II. Satisfaction of experiential requirement and (please select **3**, **6**, or **9**) \_\_\_\_\_ credit hours.



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**On a separate sheet or document, please address the points below for each position you'd like to be considered. Only positions for which these questions have been answered will be considered as part of your application. Clarity and vision are more important than the length of your remarks.**

1. Title of position:
2. Name and address of organization:
3. Name and title of immediate supervisor:
4. Dates of employment (include month and year):
5. Full- or part-time:  
-If part-time, approximately how many hours per week?
6. Briefly describe the nature of the job and the kinds of decisions you were required to make. Provide specific information about your level of authority, the budget over which you had direct influence, if any, and the number of individuals you supervised, if any.
7. How has the work complemented your course of study and/or public service career plans?
8. Did you work with elected or appointed officials, or other public serving agencies, organizations, or individuals? Did you influence the policy decisions made by any of these officials? Explain.

**Please attach a current, complete resume. Your resume should include the month and year you earned your bachelor's degree.** You may submit additional supporting information, if you wish.

**Return the completed application to the O'Neill Graduate Records Office at [oneillrc@iu.edu](mailto:oneillrc@iu.edu).**

Please allow at least 2 weeks for processing. The MPA Faculty Program Director will review your application, and you'll be notified of the decision via your IU email.

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1315 E. Tenth Street Bloomington, IN 47405-1701 fax (812) 855-7802