

Master of Public Policy (MPP) / Master of Science in Data Science (MSDS)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**FOR A COMBINATION DEGREE PROGRAM AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE FRANK BATTEN SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY AND THE SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE**

This is a revision to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)¹ between the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy (Batten) and the School of Data Science (SDS), both schools of the University of Virginia, to continue a Combination Degree Program agreement, in which a student may obtain both the *Master of Public Policy* (MPP) and the *Master of Science in Data Science* (MSDS, residential format only) degrees in two years (24 months) instead of the three years (36 months) that would be required if each were completed separately.²

The MPP/MSDS Combination Degree Program (Program) is designed to accommodate the interests of students who desire to gain expertise and work in the fields of data science and public policy. Students will combine hands-on policy experience and a foundation in the concepts of leadership with computer programming, data wrangling, analytics, and data science skills to maximize career potential across sectors.

The MOU is executed between the Deans of the Batten School and the School of Data Science.

1. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM: A program committee administers the MPP/MSDS Combination Degree Program (Program) and is composed of one faculty member from the School of Data Science (SDS), as designated by the Dean of SDS; and Batten's Director of Academic Operations. Each school's registrar serves on the program committee as an ex-officio member.

2. ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM: To be eligible for admission to the Program, a student is required to secure separate admission to both the Batten MPP degree program and the School of Data Science's MSDS degree program. Applicants will be held to the same standards as any other applicant, and the fact that they are a candidate for the combination program will not be considered in the admissions process. Once admitted independently to each school's degree program, the interested applicant may apply to the Combination MPP/MSDS Program. Admission to the Program will be judged according to criteria developed by the program committee and will not be guaranteed by virtue of acceptance into both programs.

3. CURRICULUM: The Combination MPP/MSDS Program (Program) is designed to take two years to complete. Table 1 (Sample Plan of Study) reflects the sequence of enrollment and course schedule by School per term for students in the Program. In this arrangement, all core course requirements in the two degree programs remain the same.

The MPP is a two-year graduate degree program requiring 49 credits. The MSDS is a one-year graduate degree program requiring 33 credits. Under the combination MPP/MSDS program, Batten will count 15 credits from the MSDS to satisfy MPP elective requirements; and SDS will count 3 credits from the MPP to satisfy the MSDS capstone requirement.

¹ The original MOU is dated 2023 and went into effect for the Summer 2024 term.

² This revision to the 2023 MOU relates to MSDS requirements, specifically approved modifications to the MSDS curriculum to increase the total required credits from 32 to 33 credits; shift the start of the program from summer to fall; and remove the summer term requirement.

During the Program, students complete the core coursework for both degree programs and, as appropriate, may opt to complete electives from other graduate offerings at the University, and are enrolled as follows:

- Year 1, Fall and Spring: 30 credits, enrolled in the School of Data Science
- Year 2, Fall and Spring: 28 credits, enrolled in the Batten School
- Year 2, Summer: 6 credits, enrolled in the School of Data Science

At the conclusion of the second year, students who have satisfied the relevant degree requirements, which include a minimum of 30 credits in the School of Data Science and a minimum of 34 credits in the Batten School, will be awarded both the MPP and MSDS degrees. Students do not earn course credit for the public policy internship that is required by the Batten School during the second summer of the program.

The registrars from Batten and Data Science are responsible for coordinating with each other and UREG to implement the plan of study in SIS. The plan of study documented in Table 1 specifies the student's school of enrollment for each term. The Batten and Data Science registrar teams are responsible for ensuring the appropriate "dual degree service indicator" is listed on the student's record prior to term activation twice a year, which ensures the term activation sequence specified in Table 1 is followed. Any proposed changes to this plan must be approved in advance by Student Financial Services (SFS) and the Office of the University Registrar (UREG). Any change to the initially approved plan of study must be documented and provided to the SACSCOC liaison, who will record it as an amendment to this MOU.

4. CHANGE OF STATUS: Students are allowed to terminate their enrollment in the Combination Degree Program (Program) after the first year and enroll in either one of the individual degree programs post-termination. Both schools agree to provide credit for coursework students complete during their enrollment in the Program. Students will need to satisfy the graduation requirements stipulated by the degree program they elect to complete, which may include credits completed in the other program, as determined by the appropriate officials in the selected program.

Students put on probation or suspended for academic reasons from one program will be evaluated by the other program to verify their good standing for continued enrollment.

Students who are terminated from one of the degree programs (MPP or MSDS) because they are unable to meet the requirements of that degree program have the right to complete the other degree program but must satisfy the graduation requirements stipulated by the program in which they remain enrolled. These "change of status" rights will be communicated in writing to students upon initial enrollment into the combination degree program.

5. TUITION AND FEES: Students will be officially enrolled in the School of Data Science for three terms (Fall Year 1, Spring Year 1, Summer Year 2) and the Batten School for two semesters (Fall and Spring of Year 2). Students enrolled in the Program will pay for three terms (Fall, Spring, and Summer) of tuition to the School of Data Science and one academic year of tuition (Fall, Spring) to the Batten School consistent with the approved tuition and fee rates at the time of enrollment.

6. FINANCIAL AID: Financial aid is not guaranteed and is subject to individual school and University availability and eligibility criteria. Students may apply for federal financial aid for each program based on individual eligibility. Student Financial Services will administer financial aid during the student's enrollment in the Program, and collaborate as needed with each school to ensure appropriate institutional alignment. Scholarship funding provided by either Batten or Data Science will only be applied to the tuition and fees a student incurs when enrolled in the school that awarded the scholarship.

7. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: The student will be eligible to participate in the extracurricular activities of both schools. Because of the time-intensive nature of the Program, however, students are strongly encouraged to seek the advice of the Program Committee before taking on significant extracurricular commitments.

8. GRADING STANDARDS: The student is required to meet the grading standards of both schools independently to remain in good academic standing. Each school retains the right to suspend a student or to require a student to withdraw from its degree program if the student fails to maintain good academic standing as defined by its policies. Any issues that arise in translation of different grading scales resulting from the combination degree program will be addressed and resolved by the Program Committee. Grades will be recorded on the student's transcript under the system in effect at the school in which the course is taken.

9. FACULTY ADVISORS: The leadership of each program will appoint a faculty member from each program to advise students in the combination degree program.

10. REGIONAL ACCREDITATION: SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE: Initial implementation and/or subsequent changes to the combination degree program agreement may be contingent upon notification to or approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Changes to the agreement proposed by the schools must be discussed in advance with the SACSCOC liaison, who will evaluate their impact on accreditation requirements.

11. EFFECTIVE TERM: The requested effective term for the revision of the combination degree program is Fall 2025. UREG will collaborate with the registrar contacts at both schools to manage the necessary administrative requirements in the Student Information System and the University Record in advance of the effective term. Once formally approved by the Executive Vice President and Provost, schools may begin to communicate with current and prospective students about the revised terms of this combination degree program offering.

12. EXPECTATIONS OF REVIEW: The schools will assess the combination degree program every five (5) years and re-affirm, modify, or formally end the combination degree program agreement as appropriate. Additional reviews may occur, for example in the case of curricular or operational changes, and may lead to modifications to this MOU.

Approved:



Phil Bourne
Dean, School of Data Science

22-JAN-2026

Date

Signed by:



Ian Solomon
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Ian Solomon
Dean, Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy

1/23/2026

Date

Signed by:



Brie Gertler
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Brie Gertler
Interim Executive Vice President and Provost
University of Virginia

January 23, 2026

Date

[The following are not included as part of the MOU, but are required documentation to secure approval of the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost.]

Table 1. Sample Plan of Study

| First Year Fall | Enrolled in Data Science | Credits |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|
| DS 6001 | Data Engineering I: Data Pipeline Architecture | 3 |
| DS 5030 | Understanding Uncertainty | 3 |
| DS 5012 | Computation for Data Science | 3 |
| DS 6021 | Machine Learning I: Introduction to Predictive Modeling | 3 |
| LPPL 7410 | Psychology for Leadership | 3 |
| | | 15 |
| First Year Spring | Enrolled in Data Science | |
| DS 6002 | Ethics of Big Data | 3 |
| DS 6030 | Machine Learning II: Data Mining and Statistical Learning | 3 |
| DS 6050 | Machine Learning III: Deep Learning | 3 |
| DS XXXX | School of Data Science Elective* | 3 |
| LPPL 6050 | Leadership in the Public Arena | 3 |
| | | 15 |
| First Year Summer | Enrolled in Data Science | |
| | Data Science/MPP Internship | 0 |
| | | 0 |
| Second Year Fall | Enrolled in Batten School | |
| DS 5110 | Data Engineering II: Big Data Systems | 3 |
| LPPP 6001 | Foundational Skills Workshop | 1 |
| LPPA 6100 | Economics of Public Policy I | 3 |
| LPPA 6150 | Research Methods & Data Analysis I | 3 |
| LPPP 6350 | Politics of Public Policy | 3 |
| LPPL 7025 | Values-Based Leadership | 3 |
| | | 16 |
| Second Year Spring | Enrolled in Batten School | |
| DS XXXX | School of Data Science Elective* | 3 |
| LPPA 7110 | Economics of Public Policy II | 3 |
| LPPA 7160 | Research Methods & Data Analysis II | 3 |
| LPPP 6250 | Policy Analysis | 3 |
| | | 12 |
| Second Year Summer | Enrolled in Data Science | |
| LPPP 7700 | Applied Policy Project I | 3 |
| LPPP 7750 | Applied Policy Project II | 3 |
| | | 6 |

*MSDS students select their elective courses in consultation with the Program Director. A variety of electives are available, including but not limited to those listed in the [Graduate Record](#). Students are required to take a minimum of 6 total credit hours of elective courses. Elective courses must be at the 5000 level or higher to count toward the MSDS program unless otherwise preapproved.

Examples of electives:

- CS 6160: Theory of Computation
- CS 6444: Parallel Computing
- CS 6501: Special Topics in Computer Science
- CS 6750: Database Systems
- ECON 8720: Time Series Econometrics
- ECON 7720: Econometrics II
- EVSC 7070: Advanced Use of Geographical Information Systems
- GCOM 7240: Advanced Quantitative Analysis
- PHS 5705: Recent Advances in Public Health Genomics
- PHS 7310: Clinical Trials Methodology
- PSYC 5720: Fundamentals of Item Response Theory
- PSYC 7760: Introduction to Applied Multivariate Methods
- SARC 5400: Data Visualization
- STAT 6250: Longitudinal Data Analysis
- STAT 6260: Categorical Data Analysis
- SYS 6023: Cognitive Systems Engineering
- SYS 6050: Risk Analysis
- SYS 6582: Selected Topics in Systems Engineering
- SYS 7001: System and Decision Sciences

Availability of electives varies by year, and courses must be approved by the School of Data Science.

Language for Inclusion in the Graduate Record

The Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy and the School of Data Science offer a combination (formerly termed “dual”) degree program through which a student may earn both a Master of Public Policy (MPP) and Master of Science in Data Science, Residential (MSDS). The 24-month program is designed to accommodate the interests of students who desire to gain expertise and work in the fields of data science and public policy. Students combine hands-on policy experience and a foundation in the concepts of leadership with computer programming, data wrangling, analytics, and data science skills to maximize career potential across sectors.

Admission to the Program

To be eligible for admission to the MPP/MSDS Program, a student is required to secure separate admission to both the Batten MPP degree program and the School of Data Science’s Residential MSDS degree program. Applicants will be held to the same standards as any other applicant, and the fact that they are a candidate for the combination degree program will not be considered in the admissions process. Once admitted independently to each school’s degree program, the interested applicant may apply to the Combination MPP/MSDS Program. Admission to the Program will be judged according to criteria developed by the program committee and will not be guaranteed by virtue of acceptance into both programs.

Curriculum

The combination MPP/MSDS program is designed to take two years to complete. All core course requirements in the two degree programs remain the same. Students follow a Plan of Study under which they complete the core coursework for both degree programs and, as appropriate, may opt to complete electives from other graduate offerings at the University, and are enrolled as follows:

- Year One – Fall, Spring and Summer: 30 credits, enrolled in School of Data Science
- Year Two – Fall and Spring: 28 credits, enrolled in Batten School
- Year Two – Summer: 6 credits, enrolled in School of Data Science

At the conclusion of the second year, students who have satisfied the relevant degree requirements, which include a minimum of 30 credits in the School Data Science and a minimum of 34 credits in the Batten School, will be awarded both the MPP and MSDS degrees. Students do not earn course credit for the public policy internship that is required by the Batten School during the first summer of the program.

Change of Status

Students may terminate their enrollment in the combination MPP/MSDS degree program after the first year and enroll in either one of the individual degree programs post-termination. Both schools agree to provide credit for the coursework the student took during their enrollment in the MPP/MSDS Program. Students will need to satisfy the graduation requirements stipulated by the program they elect to complete, which may include credits completed in the other program, as determined by the appropriate officials in the selected program.

Tuition and Fees

Students enrolled in the combination MPP/MSDS degree program will pay the tuition and fees of the School of Data Science in the first year and the second year summer; and will pay the tuition and fees of the Batten School in the second year fall and spring.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is not guaranteed and is subject to individual school and University availability and eligibility criteria. Students may apply for federal financial aid for each program based on individual eligibility.

Administration of the Program

A program committee administers the MPP/MSDS Combination Degree Program (Program) and is composed of one faculty member from the School of Data Science (SDS), as designated by the Dean of SDS; and Batten's Director of Academic Operations. Each school's registrar serves on the program committee as an ex-officio member.

Additional Information

Batten School of Leadership & Public Policy Advisor: Heather Downs, Director of Academic Operations
School of Data Science Faculty Advisor: Prince Afriyie, Associate Professor & MSDS Program Director