

## Are you an MPA offer-holder? Read about Year Two's curriculum



We spoke to **Michelle Batten**, the **MPA Programme Manager** to help us find a way through the MPA curriculum courses. Read on to find out more about the second year of the MPA...

### Let's move on to the second year. How is the second year curriculum different from the first year?

In the second year of the programme the only compulsory course for all students is the **MPA Capstone Project**. After that the choices begin! All students will need to choose a policy stream (with the exception of those joining Year 2 directly as part of the **MPA Dual Degree**). Each policy stream has its own required course(s) which need to be taken. Some students may have already fulfilled these requirements with the fourth unit of their first year but if not, there is space in the Year 2 academic calendar to meet the requirements of any one of the six policy streams. Courses from other policy streams can be taken as option courses so a student's course choices from Year 1 do not dictate or restrict their choice of policy stream.

### Is writing a dissertation a compulsory part of the MPA?

No, it's not compulsory but second year students can choose to write a dissertation if they wish to. It is 10,000 words and counts as 1 full unit.

Many students prefer to write a policy paper, which is a long piece of writing (6,000 words) but specifically focuses on analysing a policy using the tools they learned in the first year, and making recommendations. Again, this is not compulsory.

Either way, students who choose to write **a dissertation or a policy paper** produce an independent piece of work on a topic of their own choice which requires them to plan their own time for this project.

There is **plenty of support** available if you do choose to complete a dissertation or a policy paper via **dedicated teaching sessions** which focus on key skills.



## **If the MPA Capstone Project is compulsory, and I have to choose my policy stream, what forms the rest of the second year curriculum?**

The remainder of the second year is made up of option courses. You can find details of individual courses from the [LSE Graduate Course Guides](#). You can also search the [availability of the courses](#) for forthcoming years. After the Capstone and any policy stream requirements that you still need to fulfil, it's entirely your decision how to construct your second year curriculum to get to the required total of four course units.

Explore some [examples of potential student curriculums](#)

## **How can I find out more about the courses I might want to study?**

One of the many advantages of a two-year programme is the chance to search potential option courses for Year 2 during your first year. The second year MPA students are a fantastic resource that students on one-year programmes don't have. Additionally, the LSE office hour system enables **any** student to consult with any academic member of staff and can be a useful way to find out more about a course.

## **Am I certain to get a place on the courses I want to do?**

You are guaranteed a place on all MPA policy stream courses, but more broadly across LSE some courses have pre-requisites or limited spaces and some may clash with the timetable of your required courses. However, there are a lot of courses to potentially study. By keeping an open mind, you may find something amazing that you had not previously considered – after all there is a lot more to a course than its title.

Above all, remember that course registration doesn't happen until after you arrive at the LSE and you will be given further information before you need to do anything. There are several choices to make but most of these happen in Year 2 by which time you will have been at LSE for a year and had plenty of time to figure out how things work, to think about what you want to do and plenty of opportunities to ask questions.

The LSE MPA students are a very diverse community, and this is reflected in their curriculum choices – each student's curriculum is unique to them, their interests and their career aspirations.

---

You can also read [Michelle's advice on Year One of the MPA's curriculum](#) and look at the [MPA Curriculum webpages](#) for further information.

---

May 11th, 2016 | [MPA blog posts](#), [MPA Programme](#) | [0 Comments](#)

---

## Related Posts

---

---



