Advanced Education for Public Affairs

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So You Want to Get an Advanced Degree?

• Questions to ask
  • Why?
  • What kind? (Soc Sci MA, MPP, MBA, JD, Professional Skills Master’s, MPA)
  • Where?
  • How? (online, part-time, full time)
Why?

• You have a plan for what you will get out of school and where it will take you (e.g. transition career, grow network, bolster skills, add credential)
• Grad school is where you apply yourself, not find yourself
Degree Types

• Soc Sci MA
  • Why? You want to be a researcher/academic

• MPP
  • You want to work in policy
Degree Types

• MBA
  • You want to be a manager of employees or work in the corporate world

• JD
  • You want to be a lawyer
Degree Types

• Professional Skills Master’s
  • Looking to gain skills/network/transition careers

• MPA
  • You want to be a public sector administrator or manager
Where?

• Location
• Reputation
• Network, network, network (and more network)
How?

• Full time
• Part-time
• Online
Full-time

• Pros
  • Complete dedication to the degree
  • Flexibility to accrue internship/fellowship experience
  • Can finish faster

• Cons
  • Time out of the workplace
  • Cost
Part-time

• Pros
  • Stay on the job while in school
  • Cost savings (can pay part of school while attending)
  • Tuition benefits (depending on employer)

• Cons
  • Time management
  • Burnout
  • Less time for peer networking
Online

- Pros
  - Flexible time and location
  - Often cheaper than in person programs

- Cons
  - Time management (need discipline)
  - Can be harder to peer network
Benefits

- Learning (and failing) in a controlled environment
- Approaching issues and concepts from a strategic rather than tactical perspective
- Network
Drawbacks

• Costs (time and money)
Conclusion

• Is an advanced degree necessary?
  • It depends on you, but they rarely have a negative impact on your career.
Questions and Discussion