

Enrolling in Electives for MSSP Students

Electives can be a remarkable way to enhance and enrich your academic experience. Many students use electives as an opportunity to explore and gain further expertise in a specific area of policy that is of interest to them. Others use electives to gain further skills in an area that can supplement their short- and long-term career goals in social policy. You should work with your academic advisor to explore your academic interests and potential opportunities.

How to Request Permission for Non-SP2 Elective Courses

Students must request academic advisor permission for any non-SP2 elective courses.

1. Once you have chosen an elective course you would like to take, please email your academic advisor the following information:
 - o Name/Penn ID
 - o Course Number, Course Name, and Course Description
 - o Why have you selected this course and how will it benefit, inform, and increase your policy knowledge and/or skills towards your short- and long-term career goals?
 - o *Please note not all requests will be approved.*
2. Once you are given permission, your academic advisor will make note of the approval in your student file.
3. If the elective course requires submission of a permit on Path@Penn, follow [this guide](#) to submit a permit.

Guidelines for Selecting Elective Courses

- All elective courses **must** be taken at the 5000-level or above.
- Students can take elective courses at SP2, including additional MSSP coursework or coursework in the Masters of Social Work program (Course Code: [SWRK](#)) and the Masters of Science in Non-Profit Leadership program (Course Code: [NPLD](#)). SP2 also offers school-wide courses available to all SP2 students regardless of program (Course Code: [SSPP](#)). *All courses offered at SP2 are approved elective courses.*
- Prior to registration, you must request permission from your academic advisor to enroll in an elective course outside of SP2 (see process detailed above).
- Courses outside of the MSSP program may require the department or the instructor's permission to join. *NOTE: your academic advisor's approval to take a course does not mean you have permission from the host department to take the course.*
- Courses outside of SP2 may follow a specific registration process. It is recommended that you carefully read the section details and registration restrictions and/or contact the department directly for directions on how to register.
- Should you be unable to enroll in an elective course right away, it is recommended that students choose an SP2 course as a back-up option until your permission request is approved and processed by the external department. If your permit request from another department is not approved by the first day of classes, we recommend choosing another course.
- Do not wait until the add/drop deadline to choose elective courses. Your academic advisor requires at least 3 business days to review and approve your elective coursework. Additionally,

students should aim to have their schedule finalized by two weeks prior to the start of the term and their elective course options finalized no later than the first day of classes.

- Not all courses are offered every semester. Search in [Path@Penn](#) to see which courses are offered each term.

Exploring your Elective Options

Consider the following as you explore elective options:

- What were your motivations for pursuing a M.S. in Social Policy?
- What are your short- and long-term career goals?
- What skills and knowledge base do you hope to graduate with?
- Is there a specific area of social policy you would like to specialize in (i.e. health, housing, education, immigration, climate change, etc.)?
- How can elective coursework add to your core MSSP or MSSP+DA curriculum?

Browse the [University Catalog](#) and use [Path@Penn](#)'s search function to search for courses by keyword, subject area, and/or times of day, and to research which courses are offered during which term. Below is a list of relevant departments and course codes that we recommend students explore:

Africana Studies (AFRC)	Health Care Management (HCMG)
Anthropology (ANTH)	Health Policy Research (HPR)
Business & Public Policy (BEPP)	Healthcare Innovation (HCIN)
City Planning (CPLN)	International Studies (INTS)
Communications (COMM)	Law/Master in Law (LAW/LAWM)
Computer and Information Technology (CIT)	Urban Spatial Analytics (MUSA)
Computer and Information Science (CIS)	Nursing (NURS)
Criminology (CRIM)	Organizational Dynamics (DYNM)
Education (EDUC)	Political Science (PSCI)
Environmental Studies (ENVS)	Public Health (PUBH)
Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSWS)	Sociology (SOCL)
Government Administration (GAFL)	Urban Studies (URBS)