

D.

PLANNING, ASSESSMENT & INTEGRATION

About Section D...

This section addresses the **first major component** of the MA in Applied Professional Studies (MAAPS) Program—
PROGRAM PLANNING, ASSESSMENT & INTEGRATION.

Subsections include...

- ▶ **Beginnings— Researching Professional Pathways (AP-504) then Professional Planning Proseminar (AP-501)**

- ▶ **Building, reviewing and approving the SELF-DESIGNED FOCUS AREA LEARNING PLAN**

- ▶ **Who reviews and approves the Learning Plan—**
 - Student's Academic Committee*
 - Graduate Student Program Review Committee (GSPRC)*
 - Ongoing & Final Approval*

- ▶ **Implementing the SELF-DESIGNED FOCUS AREA LEARNING PLAN**

- ▶ **Assessment—Principles & Practices**
 - Qualities of Assessment*
 - Principles Guiding Assessment*
 - Assessment Opportunities/Processes—including Assessment & Integration Sessions (AP-528, AP-548, AP-558 and AP-578)*

- ▶ **Graduation—Process & Review**

BEGINNINGS...

The MAAPS Program begins with AP-504 (Researching Professional Pathways).

AP-504 ♦ Researching Professional Pathways 4 credit hours

►Description: Researching Professional Pathways (AP 504) is a four-credit hour graduate course that provides participants with a sound foundation on which to build a professional future. Participants will hone and apply advanced skills in collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing literature and resources in their respective area(s) of practice as they conduct thorough career mapping and research into the current state and future of their professional field. The course provides opportunities for meaningful self, career, and values assessment and reflection on aspects of one's evolving professional identity. The combination of career field research and articulation of key aspects of professional identity culminated in the major deliverable in this course, the five-part Professional Portfolio: a planning document students will use in the creation of their MAAPS Learning Plan in AP 501 and one which they will expand and update throughout their graduate careers.

BUILDING THE SELF-DESIGNED FOCUS AREA LEARNING PLAN...

NOTE: Students enrolled in structured track programs may proceed to Section G-part 2.

The Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan serves as the framework and blueprint for supporting the student in targeting and eventually accomplishing their professional and educational goals through the MAAPS Program. It describes the student's graduate area of focus, background, goals and application setting. It also outlines the critical professional competencies to be developed and demonstrated through his/her graduate study—including their associated Learning Activities (means of development) and Learning Products (means of demonstration).

The audience for the Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan includes: the Student, their Professional Advisor and Faculty Mentor, and the Graduate Student Program Review Committee (GSPRC).

Components of The Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan:

Although each Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan has unique elements, all plans are to include the following components:

- Title Page
- Part I: Area of Focus or Track for Graduate Study
- Part II: Personal/Professional Context
- Part III: Professional Competencies (*sought outcomes, learning activities & products, etc.*)
 - AP-510 main theories/ideas *pertaining to the focus area*
 - AP-520 methods of research *pertaining to the focus area*
 - AP-530 specialized skills *pertaining to the focus area*
 - AP-540 communication modes *pertaining to the focus area*
 - AP-550 organizational/interpersonal dynamics *pertaining to the focus area*
 - AP-560 challenges from larger contexts *pertaining to the focus area*

AP-570 ethical issues *pertaining to the focus area*
AP-574 reflection in/on practice *pertaining to the focus area*
AP-585 a second competence in any of the above areas

-Part VI: Plans for Culmination (Capstone or Supplemental Competences)

–NOTE–
A detailed draft of the
Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan
(including directions for each section)
is provided in Section G.

APPROVING THE *SELF-DESIGNED FOCUS AREA LEARNING PLAN...*

Evolving from research done in the Investigating Professional Pathways class in quarter 1, Graduate Focus Area Learning Plans are created through the planning and consultation work done in Professional Planning Proseminar in quarter 2. Completed Learning Plans are officially reviewed/approved by the Academic Committee and GSPRC at the end of quarter 2.

AP-501 ♦ Professional Planning Proseminar

4 credit hours

Design: When students are admitted to the MAAPS Program, they are assigned an interim Faculty Mentor. During AP-501, the permanent Faculty Mentor and Professional Advisor are finalized to launch each student's Academic Committee.

Description: This seminar explores the aims of graduate education with particular emphasis on the program of study leading to the ***Master of Arts in Applied Professional Studies***—its purpose, scope, philosophy, key roles, and processes. Building on the work of AP-504, AP-501 centers around developing a working draft of the Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan for the Professional Focus Area portion of the Program. A parallel goal is to attain a fuller understanding of individual fields of professional study, and applying concepts, perspectives and skills of liberal learning in professional practice. Each student's Academic Committee (consisting of the Student, Faculty Mentor, and an established practitioner in the student's field called the Professional Advisor) collaborate in achieving these goals.

General Overview: The Primary Knowledge-Base for this seminar is drawn from the fields of Adult and Higher Education, Educational Psychology, Sociology, and Adult Learning & Development. Its primary objective is to offer students opportunities to explore the philosophy and aims of the MAAPS Program, to assess their professional and academic priorities and to produce effective, working drafts of their Graduate Learning Plans. Specific emphases, as shaped in part by students' interests, may include:

- understanding the MAAPS Program (its philosophy, rationale and key processes).
- understanding the difference between graduate and undergraduate education.
- understanding the meaning of "applied professional studies."

- understanding the meaning of “liberal learning in reflective practice” as well as its domains (agency effectiveness, collaboration effectiveness, flexibility effectiveness and inquiry effectiveness).
- exploring the definition of a professional as a reflective practitioner.
- understanding the differences among MAAPS Focus Area tracks
- developing both one’s Graduate Focus Area and one’s ‘working understanding’ of the concept of Professional Competence.
- understanding the role of Assessment & Feedback in all components of the MAAPS Program—including self-assessment and the role/value of iterative drafts of work.
- understanding key roles (Student, Faculty Mentor, and Professional Advisor/Assessors).
- understanding key processes (learning and otherwise): self-managed learning, learning from experience (work as a learning laboratory), collaborative learning, goal-setting, critical incident method, reflection, time-management, use of APA citation format, etc.
- building a Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan.
- identifying a Professional Advisor.
- developing relationship with Faculty Mentor.

► **Assessment:** Assignment of final grade is contingent upon quality of completion of all seminar assignments in accordance with the seminar’s syllabus. *Note: Students who do not satisfactorily complete the PROFESSIONAL PLANNING PROSEMINAR Seminar (Grade of C or better) may be asked to delay enrolling (except for Continuing Activity Status) in the next quarter.*

(See Important Note & Restrictions inserted after Step #2 below.)

Step #1: Approval by Student's Academic Committee.

- A. Student and Faculty Mentor (and structured track champion when appropriate) assess the state of the evolving Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan and determine its **readiness** for a meeting with the student’s Academic Committee (comprised of the student, the Faculty Mentor and the Professional Advisor). For students in the structured tracks, a preliminary meeting with the track champion may also take place.
- B. Student schedules a meeting of the Academic Committee to formally review the plan.
- C. Student submits the current, most-evolved draft of the Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan to the Faculty Mentor and PA a minimum of one week in advance of the meeting.
- D. Sample agenda for the Academic Committee meeting follows:
 1. Faculty Mentor provides a brief Program overview—explaining the roles of each member of the Academic Committee and clarifying the objectives for the meeting.
 2. Student and PA review their decision to work together.
 3. Student leads a review of the Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan in accordance with the Guidebook requirements and from the list below, may select the questions most appropriate to their program from the following list of questions:
 - a. Is the Focus Area adequately defined, described, and core knowledge/skills of effective practitioners identified?
 - b. Are the professional goals clear, appropriate, and concisely articulated?
 - c. *Self-Designed Track* only: Are the Competence Statements clear, concise, stated as Learning Outcomes, and appropriate for graduate study?
 - d. *Self-Designed Track* only: Do the course selections and/or Learning Activities and their products fit the Focus Area/Professional Competence section and are they appropriate for graduate study?
 - e. *Self-Designed Track* only: Are the Learning Activities and their Products achievable, realistic, and appropriate within the context of plan and within

- professional practice?
- f. *Self-Designed Track* only: Who is the best qualified person to guide the Learning Activities and assess resulting Learning Products? [Note: All learning activities are eventually assessed by the student, the professional advisor or another approved outside assessor and the faculty mentor.]
 - g. What connections are evident between the Learning Activities themselves or between them and the anticipated Culmination option (capstone or supplemental competences)?
 - h. Is the Graduate Capstone Project (if chosen) appropriate given the goals of graduate study and does it respond to a significant issue in the field?
 - i. Is the timeline incorporated throughout the plan realistic?
 - j. What support is needed for implementation/completion of the plan?
 - k. Does the Faculty Mentor have sufficient information to present the plan to the Graduate Student Program Review Committee (GSPRC)?
4. Faculty Mentor leads a review of the expectations of the student-PA relationship (roles, norms, feedback, assessment timelines, meetings, etc.).
 5. Student agrees to make final changes to the plan (if any) by agreed-upon date.
 6. Each member of the Academic Committee endorses the plan. The student then submits the plan to the Graduate Student Program Review Committee (GSPRC) for final review and approval.

Step #2: Approval by GSPRC (*Graduate Student Program Review Committee*).

- A. Student makes any final changes to the Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan (changes as agreed-upon by his/her Academic Committee) and inserts endorsement dates on the title page of the plan. [Note: GSPRC is prohibited from reviewing a plan that is not officially documented on the plan's title page as endorsed by the student's Academic Committee.]
- B. Student submits copy of the finalized Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan to their Faculty Mentor which it is to be reviewed by GSPRC.
- C. Faculty Mentor forwards the Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan, as approved by the student's Academic Committee, to members of the GSPRC at least **one week prior** to the GSPRC meeting.
- D. During the GSPRC meeting, the Faculty Mentor presents the Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan as endorsed by the student's Academic Committee.
- E. GSPRC considers each section of the Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan and, in particular, assesses each Competence Page (Part III) in accordance with the following directives:
 - The item/page is APPROVED.** Once approved, the particular Competence Page (from Part III of the plan) serves as an official learning contract regarding what is to be accomplished, i.e., a specific agreement among the student and relevant parties (the Program, Faculty Mentor and Professional Advisor or Outside Assessor). The student may register for the Competence, engage its approved Learning Activity/ies and, upon completion of the approved Learning Product, initiate the assessment process. (See Learning Product Assessment process in MAAPS Guidebook, Section F.) [If the student wishes to change the Competence Page at a later point, they must revise the page and submit it to his/her Professional Advisor and Faculty Mentor for approval of the updated item.]
 - The item/page needs FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.** When ready to proceed, the student

is to revise the particular Competence Page and resubmit it to his/her Professional Advisor and Faculty Mentor for re-review and approval of the item.

☑ **The item/page is INSUFFICIENT.** The student is to re-do the particular Competence Page and resubmit it—through the Faculty Mentor—for GSPRC’s re-review.

- F. Within no more than one week of the GSPRC meeting, the Faculty Mentor provides the student with written input regarding GSPRC’s action (commentary, decision, changes, etc.) and forwards a copy to GSPRC members.
- G. Faculty Mentor and student are responsible to ensure that the *Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan* is fulfilled in accordance with GSPRC’s official action.

▶ **IMPORTANT NOTES & RESTRICTIONS** ◀

-The prior two steps [Step #1—Approval by Student’s Academic Committee and Step #2—Approval by GSPRC] are to occur before the end of a student’s 2nd quarter of enrollment. Students who are facing extenuating circumstances may extend the GSPRC review up to the end of the 4th quarter. Failure to secure GSPRC approval by the end of the 4th quarter may result in a Registration Hold and/or Special Review Status.

-In order to avoid “incomplete” or “research-in-progress” grades and/or costly erroneous registrations, students are not to register for professional competencies or related coursework (where applicable) in the focus area until after their Graduate Focus Area Learning Plans have been officially approved by GSPRC. Faculty Mentors are at liberty to authorize ONE EXCEPTION to this directive, i.e., to authorize the student to register for one designated competence prior to GSPRC approval—designated based on the Faculty Mentor’s judgment of the strength and appropriateness of the specific competence involved.

Step #3: Ongoing & Final Approval

The Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan is considered to be a working document and, as such, is subject to modification and refinement (in consultation with the Faculty Mentor and Professional Advisor) to accommodate new learning opportunities and goals as students proceed through their programs of study. To ensure the quality, currency and acceptability of the plan, it is initially approved through the LPR process (AP-501). Thereafter, it is periodically reviewed throughout the Program in conversations with the Professional Advisor and advising sessions with the Faculty Mentor. If/when changes in the plan are deemed substantial enough to warrant GSPRC’s re-review, a revised plan is resubmitted to GSPRC. At the point of Graduation Review, the final Graduate Focus Area title is re-reviewed (and altered, if necessary) to align to the demonstrated/assessed competencies. Final title and Competence Statements are officially entered at this point.

IMPLEMENTING THE SELF DESIGNED FOCUS AREA LEARNING PLAN...

Students are advised to regularly consult, review, and as appropriate, revise their Graduate Focus Area Learning Plans. Regular attention to the approved plan and the corresponding portion of the Guidebook will help focus, hone, integrate and maintain relevance of study in each part. For example:

-ongoing attention to **Part I (Description/Explanation of the Focus Area)** will help give the Focus Area direction and enable you to continually hone your Focus Area’s definition. (See Guidebook, Section F.);

-ongoing attention to **Part II (Personal/Professional Context)** will help ground your study in who you are, where you have come from, where you are heading and where/how you’re

applying your learning in practice;

-ongoing attention to **Part III (Professional Competencies)** will help keep you alert to the relevance of these sought outcomes, planned activities and anticipated products or the need to adjust them accordingly. (See Guidebook, Section F.);

-ongoing attention to **Part VI (Plans for Culmination)** will help you to continue to hone your plans in this regard and build toward them.

► **IMPLEMENTING Professional Competencies:**

See Guidebook, Section F.

► **CHANGING Professional Competencies:**

See Guidebook, Section F.

ASSESSMENT—Principles & Practices

The School of Continuing and Professional Studies in general and the MAAPS Program in particular maintains assessment as a critical component in the learning process. As such, assessment is grounded in the following qualities and principles:

► **Qualities of Assessment:**

Clarity (communicating expectations; articulating criteria for demonstrating competence and how level of learning is measured; providing accessible feedback);

Integrity (applying criteria for demonstrating learning and indicators of quality; applying the expectations and standards of the college and the University in an honest and constructive manner; providing feedback that informs the subsequent learning agenda);

Flexibility (recognizing learning through multiple forms of evidence; using multiple forms of assessment to measure learning outcomes; drawing on alternate sources of expertise when appropriate); and,

Empathy (providing feedback in sufficient detail to honor students' efforts; communicating commentary in a constructive manner/tone; establishing a cooperative and trusting relationship between instructor and learner to promote assessment).

► **Principles Guiding Assessment:**

- (1) Assessment should 'feedback' information to learner to guide future learning.
- (2) Assessment should be based on multiple forms of evidence of learning.
- (3) Assessment strategies and activities should draw on the affective, cognitive, and conative domains of learning.
- (4) Assessment should be referenced to specified learning outcomes.
- (5) Assessment practices should support the overall development of students as well as measure progress toward specific learning outcomes.
- (6) Self-assessment should be included with the documentation of learning.
- (7) Assessment decisions should include the judgments of relevant experts.
- (8) Assessment processes should be designed to insure the assimilation of multiple sources of assessment data.
- (9) Assessment processes should informally recognize and affirm learning outside of competence areas specified by the curriculum.

► **MAAPS Program Assessment:**

In accordance with these qualities and principles (above) and in keeping with the focus on Professional Competence and self-managed learning, the MAAPS Program incorporates the process of assessment into all program components. In so doing, the Program holds that assessment (derived from the Latin phrase *ad+sedere*—meaning: to sit down beside or together) connotes much more than the traditional educational notion of testing or measuring student performance. Rather, assessment focuses on the learning that has occurred across a multitude of settings (e.g., classroom, workplace, home, community, etc.) and on the meaning derived by students that they can apply within their current and/or future performance.

Consequently, assessment in the MAAPS Program is formative and summative, formal and informal, and involves reflections and input from a variety of individuals—faculty, practitioners, colleagues and, most importantly, students themselves. Specifically, the MAAPS Program employs assessment processes in the following areas:

► **Professional Planning Proseminar and Investigating Professional Pathways:**

Through the Investigating Professional Pathways and the Professional Planning Proseminar process, students are guided in assessing themselves with respect to the Liberal Learning and Professional Competence areas. In so doing, they are better equipped to appropriately plan and engage their programs of study.

► **Assessment & Integration Sessions:**

While students and their Faculty Mentors meet regularly as they wish, they are required to meet (for purposes of ongoing assessment and integration) at points during students' programs of study. Prior to each designated session (individual or group), the Faculty Mentor informs students regarding the agenda for the particular session, its assignment, and the criteria for assessment (Pass/Fail) by which the session will be evaluated. See table/grid on next page for an overview of these four sessions and their possible foci:

AP-528, -548, -558, -578 ♦ Assessment & Integration Sessions <i>0.5 credit hours each; one 4.0hr session each (with break)</i>	
AP-528 A&I Session (I) <i>0.5crhr—3rd quarter</i> <i>(one 4.0hr session)</i>	<p><u>Sample topics for ongoing exploration within Assessment & Integration sessions include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -deepening application and integration of <u>self-assessment</u>; -deepening application and integration of <u>reflective practice</u>; -deepening application and integration of graduate-level <u>analysis & synthesis</u>; -bridging <u>cognitive, emotional, somatic and behavioral aspects of learning</u>; -maximizing the relationship with the <u>Professional Advisor</u>; -maximizing the relationship with the <u>Faculty Mentor</u>; -maximizing relationships with <u>Colleagues</u> (in the program and beyond); -enhancing <u>learning beyond hurdle-jumping</u> (“getting a degree,” “taking a course,” “finishing a competence,” “filling out a form,” etc.). -reviewing <u>program components</u> (making changes;
AP-548 A&I Session (II) <i>0.5crhr—4th quarter</i> <i>(one 4.0hr session)</i>	
AP-558 A&I Session (III) <i>0.5crhr—6th quarter</i> <i>(one 4.0hr session)</i>	

<p>AP-578 A&I Session (IV) <i>0.5crhr—7th quarter</i> <i>(one 4.0hr session)</i></p>	<p>culmination options; graduation review; s; etc.) -etc. [NOTE: Students may invite Professional Advisors to join and participate in any A&I session. Check with Faculty Mentor for details.]</p>
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➤ **Assessment of Liberal Learning:**

See Guidebook, Section, E.

➤ **Assessment of Focus Area—Basic Competencies & Culmination Options:**

See Guidebook, Section F.

➤ **Ongoing Self-Assessment:**

Within professional practice, one’s commitment and ability to accurately monitor and assess oneself is both an essential value and skill. Throughout the MAAPS Program, this value and skill is engaged at the following major junctures:

- Admissions*: During the admissions process, applicants are asked to assess their strengths and challenges as learners in various settings. Subsequently, during the individualized planning process, students analyze their interests, goals and skills in relation to their evolving understanding of professional practice and graduate study.
- Liberal Learning Seminars*: These seminars provide students with ongoing opportunities to self-assess regarding their “effectiveness” (See Section E.) and, through the particular focus per seminar, to target areas for continuous improvement.
- Focus Area Competencies*: As students consider how they will address each of the nine competencies that structure the Focus Area content, they ask themselves what the most advantageous way to address each competency would be for themselves as evolving professionals.

Students in the self-designed Focus Area track use the Learning Product Assessment Form to review the process and results of their individually-designed Learning Activities in relation to the Program’s criteria for graduate-level learning (listed on the form).

Those students who choose to end their programs with a Graduate Capstone Project will be asked to evaluate their project in terms of the value it offers to the professional practice in the field.

- Assessment & Integration Sessions*: These sessions provide an explicit focus on self-assessment regarding all aspects of the graduate program.
- Graduation Review*: Students are asked to review their development as master practitioners in relation to their own internal professional standards, those of the MAAPS Program, and those of their respective fields.

GRADUATION—Process & Review

As students near the completion of their programs of study (two or three quarters in advance), they are advised to consult “**Graduate Information & Steps**” for key requirements and dates pertinent to graduation preparation and readiness. (See Index—*Graduation Information & Steps*.)

Regarding the **MAAPS Graduation Review** in particular, the following applies:

- (1) **Meeting**: Student schedules and convenes a meeting with at least the Faculty Mentor and,

hopefully, both the Faculty Mentor and the Professional Advisor (PA)---***no later than two weeks prior to the end of the quarter in which they wish to graduate.*** The purpose of this meeting is fundamentally *celebration-with-an-agenda!*

- (2): Student prepares an electronic version of his/her Focus Area competencies and submits it to the Faculty Mentor. (See in Guidebook, Section I.) Whereas the DePaul University Transcript (prepared by the University's Student Records Office) only indicates quarters, credit hours and grades, the student's Focus Area is fully written out. Prepared by the student with faculty mentor guidance, the more comprehensive description of the graduate's work in the Focus Area they completed in the MAAPS Program includes a focus area description and specific competencies demonstrated, etc.
- (3) **Review:** Student and Faculty Mentor (as well as PA, if present) review student's record to ensure satisfactory degree completion—*52 credit hours (as described in the MAAPS Guidebook) or approved equivalents; minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.*
- (4) **Reflection:** Student and Faculty Mentor (as well as PA, if present) discuss:
 - the state of the student's knowledge-base, understanding, and competence relative to the aims of the MAAPS Program (Liberal Learning and Professional Competence) and any changes in such since his/her study began;
 - the student's experience in the MAAPS Program (e.g., significant challenges and learnings gleaned from the manner in which the student handled the challenges; suggestions for program, etc.); and,
 - the student's anticipated "next steps" (personal/professional development for the next five years including areas ready for further learning; initial plans regarding methods for addressing these areas; etc.).
- (5) **Clearance for Degree Conferral:** Subsequent to the **MAAPS Graduation Review** (and prior to the University's deadline for degree conferral input per quarter), the Faculty Mentor makes any final changes/corrections to Degree Progress Report and/or the and forwards notice and copy to the Graduate Programs Office--clearing the student for degree conferral.
- (6) **Transcript Copies:** Graduates (alumni) wishing to secure copies of their DePaul University Transcript should contact the University's Student Records Office (<http://sr.depaul.edu>).

