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 COLUMBIA | SIPA
School of International and Public Affairs

Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA)

Virtual Information Session

Presented by
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Managing Director, EMPA
Program



— Agenda

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— SIPA's History and Legacy

Founded in 1946: SIPA was established to address global issues emerging after World War II, making it one of the world's leading schools of international affairs.

Global Reach: With students and alumni from over 150 countries, SIPA has a long tradition of training global leaders in public service, policy, and international affairs.

Interdisciplinary Focus: SIPA brings together experts in policy, economics, and management, preparing professionals for complex challenges in government, the private sector, and NGOs.

Legacy of Leadership: Alumni include heads of state, ministers, and executives in international organizations like the UN, World Bank, and major global NGOs.

— Program Overview: Why EMPA?

The EMPA is designed for experienced professionals to enhance their advanced management and analytical skills in public administration, policy, and leadership, and equip them for addressing complex global and organizational challenges.

Who the Program is Designed For:

For mid-career professionals working in government, non-profits, or the private sector, who seek to enhance their leadership and management skills while balancing work and study.

How it Differs from Other Programs:

The EMPA focuses specifically on public administration and leadership, integrating real-world policy analysis and management strategies. Unlike MBA or MPA programs, it caters to experienced professionals, emphasizing flexibility, evening classes, and practical application to public sector challenges.

— Program Highlights

Flexible Learning Schedule: offers part-time study options with evening and weekend classes, as well as some online components, allowing students to balance their careers with their education.

Real-World Case Studies: integrates practical, real-world case studies into the coursework, giving students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to current public sector challenges.

Networking Opportunities: leverages SIPA's global network of over 23,000 alumni, networking events, guest lectures, and faculty with extensive professional experience in the public and private sectors.

— Program Structure

Duration and Format:

- ▶ 54 credits (18 courses)
 - *with a 9 credit waiver for professional experience
- ▶ **2-3 years** on a part-time basis
- ▶ 3 semesters in the academic year
- ▶ designed with flexibility in mind, offering **evening**, **weekend** and **hybrid/virtual** classes to accommodate working professionals



Curriculum Overview

Core Curriculum: 7 foundational courses that develop critical skills for leadership roles in the public sector.

- ▶ Policy Analysis
- ▶ Quantitative Analysis
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ Financial Management
- ▶ Strategic Management

Concentrations: customized learning through at least 4 concentration courses in one of the following areas:

- ▶ Management and Innovation
- ▶ Environmental Policy & Sustainability Management
- ▶ International Economic Policy
- ▶ Global Policy Studies
- ▶ Urban and Social Policy

Electives: students must complete 4 electives, two of which may be transferred from a previously earned Master's. Two may also be taken through another related grad program at Columbia.

Capstone or Portfolio: The program culminates with a team-based *Capstone* or an individual *Portfolio Project*. Students address real-world challenges in public administration, policy, or nonprofit management, showcasing their work individually or in a capstone team with a real-world client in government, international orgs, or advocacy groups, providing practical experience and valuable professional connections.

Professional Work Experience: In lieu of an internship, EMPA students are granted 9 credits for professional and management work experience, decreasing the required course load.

— World Renowned Faculty

The EMPA program is led by distinguished faculty who are not only accomplished scholars but also practitioners with significant real-world experience in public policy, administration, and leadership.

Faculty Expertise and Real-World Experience:

EMPA faculty are recognized leaders in their respective fields, bringing practical insights from their work in government, international organizations, and the private sector. Their expertise spans areas such as:

- ▶ Public sector innovation and reform
- ▶ Environmental sustainability and climate policy
- ▶ Financial management and budgetary reform
- ▶ International development and diplomacy

Faculty members frequently serve as consultants to government agencies and international organizations like the United Nations and World Bank.

Faculty's Research Contributions and Industry Leadership:

Many faculty members are engaged in groundbreaking research that influences public policy at the highest levels. Their work addresses pressing global challenges such as climate change, urban governance, and economic inequality.



Student Life at SIPA

Support Services:

- ▶ Academic Advising
- ▶ Career Services
- ▶ Wellness resources and initiatives

Student Organizations and Clubs:

- ▶ Professional organizations focused on women in leadership, sustainability, and global affairs.
- ▶ Student-run initiatives focused on diversity and inclusion, offering leadership and engagement opportunities.

Events, Workshops, Seminars, Networking & Social Life:

- ▶ Policy seminars, speaker series, and executive workshops featuring leaders in public administration, government, and global affairs.
- ▶ Networking events that offer opportunities to connect with peers, alumni, and industry leaders.
- ▶ Social events organized by the student community to foster engagement and build relationships outside the classroom.

Work/Life/Studies Balance:

As part-time, mid-career professionals, EMPA students often juggle demanding careers and personal responsibilities. The program's flexible scheduling—including evening and weekend classes—is designed to support a manageable balance between work, life, and studies, allowing students to pursue their degrees without putting their careers on hold.

Student Feedback & Student-Led Initiatives:

EMPA students contribute to student feedback channels that influence program changes and improvements. Many are involved in student-led initiatives, advocating for curriculum enhancements, hosting panel discussions, and fostering mentorship within the community.

EMPA Graduate Career Paths

Graduates of the EMPA program pursue successful careers in a variety of sectors, including:

- ▶ **Government:** Local, state, and federal government agencies, as well as international governmental bodies.
- ▶ **Nonprofits:** Leadership roles in NGOs, advocacy organizations, and social enterprises.
- ▶ **International Organizations:** The United Nations, World Bank, IMF, and other multilateral institutions.
- ▶ **Private Sector:** Consulting firms, public-private partnerships, and corporate social responsibility roles

Employment Data:

EMPA graduates typically secure leadership roles with competitive salaries. Alumni working in government and nonprofit sectors hold positions such as policy analysts, program directors, and senior advisors. Those in the private sector or international organizations often hold roles in management, consulting, or finance.



— EMPA Alumni

- ▶ EMPA alumni include heads of state, senior government officials, and executives at major global organizations.
- ▶ Examples include individuals who have led policy reforms, spearheaded international development projects, and managed high-profile public sector transformations.

Networking and Alumni Relations:

EMPA students benefit from SIPA's extensive alumni network, which includes over 23,000 alumni in more than 150 countries.

- ▶ Networking events, mentorship programs, and career services offer ongoing support for professional growth.
- ▶ Alumni frequently engage with the school through guest lectures, recruiting, and collaboration on public policy initiatives



Admissions Process

Application Requirements:

The EMPA program seeks candidates with strong academic and professional backgrounds, including:

- ▶ A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- ▶ At least five years of relevant full-time work experience in public, private, or nonprofit sectors.
- ▶ Demonstrated leadership potential and commitment to public service.

Key Deadlines:

- ▶ **Fall Term:** March 31 early decision & scholarship deadline; June 1 final deadline
- ▶ **Spring Term:** November 15 final & scholarship deadline
- ▶ **Summer Term:** March 15 early decision & scholarship deadline; April 15 final deadline

Required Documents:

- ▶ **Transcripts** from all post-secondary institutions.
- ▶ A current **resume** detailing work experience.
- ▶ A **personal statement** outlining career goals and how the EMPA program will help achieve them.
- ▶ Two **letters of recommendation** (professional or academic)

Video Component:

As part of the admissions process, applicants are required to submit a video essay after submitting the application fee. This component allows candidates to introduce themselves and demonstrate their communication skills and motivation for pursuing the EMPA.

Decision Process:

The admissions committee conducts a **holistic review** of each application, considering academic achievements, professional experience, leadership potential, and personal qualities. Decisions are released on a rolling basis within 2-3 weeks after submission.

International Students

Academic Qualifications:

International applicants must have a **bachelor's degree** or equivalent from a recognized institution. Transcripts must be submitted with certified English translations if they are in another language.

English Language Proficiency:

Applicants whose native language is not English must submit **TOEFL** (minimum score: 100) or **IELTS** (minimum score: 7.0). Some applicants may qualify for a waiver if they worked in English.

Visa and Enrollment Requirements:

International students admitted under an **F-1 visa** must be enrolled in a **full-time** course load (12 credits per semester) throughout their studies.

Optional Practical Training (OPT):

After completing the program, F-1 students may be eligible for **OPT**, which allows them to work in the U.S. for up to 12 months in their field of study, gaining practical experience in public administration, policy, or related sectors.

Financial Documentation:

Proof of sufficient funds to cover tuition and living expenses is required for the visa application process.

Support Services:

Columbia offers resources through the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) and through SIPA such as orientation, cultural adjustment support, and tailored career services for international students, helping them transition and succeed in the program.

— Financial Aid & Scholarships

- ▶ **Tuition Overview:** Tuition for the program is charged per credit, with students completing 45 credits. Current tuition rates and fees are available on the SIPA website.
- ▶ **Limited Scholarships Opportunities:** A limited number of scholarships are available for EMPA students. These awards are merit-based and competitive. Students are considered automatically with their admission application and should apply early, as funding is limited.
- ▶ **Financial Aid and Loan Options:** U.S. citizens and permanent residents are eligible to apply for federal student loans through FAFSA. The SIPA Office of Financial Aid provides personalized advising to help students navigate their options.
- ▶ **Resources for Government Employees:** Government employees may be eligible for public service loan forgiveness programs, which can help reduce the financial burden.
- ▶ **Outside Financing:** Many EMPA students also explore outside scholarships and grants from foundations, employers, or nonprofit organizations. Columbia encourages students to seek external funding.

— Next Steps

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Class Visits & Connections:

- ▶ Visit a class to experience the EMPA program firsthand.
- ▶ Connect with student or alumni ambassadors to learn about their experiences.
- ▶ Schedule a one-on-one advising session to discuss your career goals and how the EMPA can support them.

Follow-Up:

We encourage you to reach out to us at empa@columbia.edu with any questions! Our team is here to support you every step of the way.



— Q&A

Thank you!

A Word from our Faculty

“Our students are not only advancing their skills, but they are learning to lead in a complex and interconnected world. The Executive MPA program equips them to navigate and influence the future of public policy globally.”

Arvid Lukauskas

Professor and Director at SIPA

“The EMPA program is designed to help professionals grow into strong leaders by providing real-world applications of public policy and administration.”

Joann Baney

Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs

“Through a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical case studies, the EMPA program prepares students to solve critical global challenges.”

Yumiko Shimabukuro

Lecturer in International and Public Affairs