

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

2009

The study of public administration focuses on the functioning of public agencies, the development of public policy, the management of public finances, and the principles of management and governance—all for the purpose of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations. For the last several years, the French government has pursued a campaign to modernize the public sector. A key tenet of the reform effort is the application to government services of management principles and concepts, but in a flexible way that acknowledges the special characteristics of public functions. The reform effort also includes a dialogue on the appropriate scope and role of government in a modern democracy and on the important distinction between citizens as passive recipients of government services, on the one hand, and discriminating consumers of services, on the other. The first group is largely deprived of choices; the second never stops making them.

Those in government today must also take into account powerful trends, the effect of which is likely to require profound social adjustments. For example, few public decisions can be considered purely domestic, given the extent of development of European and international law and the influence of globalization. Other constraints on government action include the need to manage risk, to be able to listen to constituents, to cooperate to get things done, and to anticipate the repercussions of public policies.

Fields : Economics and political science.

Also see the following profiles: International relations, Political science, Law, Management

Sectors of activity :

Civil service at the national or subnational level; management in a private firm; teaching of public administration.

French programs in public administration emphasize these aspects of government reform, as well as the measurement and assessment of performance (or benchmarking). Their goal is to induce students to think critically about the ongoing agenda of change in government and public administration. Central to such programs are the mastery of management methods adapted to government at the national, regional, and local levels; quality management; human resource management; and specialized knowledge related to specific fields, such as public health, education, the environment, or national security.

The public sector and civil service in France are larger than in some other countries. Public responsibilities are divided among a number of “corps” that tend to have very strong identities.

The national government is by far the largest employer of civil servants, a fact that reflects a long tradition of centralized power in France. Since 2002, however, a movement toward decentralization has devolved more duties and resources upon subnational governments, particularly at the regional level.

ORGANIZATION OF STUDIES IN FRANCE

Many French universities offer licence programs in public administration. But these are not the only avenue of preparation for a master’s program in the field. A licence in law, political science, economics and management, social sciences, or economic and social administration will do just as well.

The universities offer a wide range of 2-year master’s programs in public law, many of which permit specialization in administrative law or public administration.

Several examples of prominent institutions follow.

L’École nationale d’administration,

The renowned École nationale d’administration (ENA), operating in Strasbourg and Paris, has evolved into a “European school of governance.” <http://www.ena.fr/accueil.php>

Created in 1945 by Charles de Gaulle, ENA’s founding principles were to democratize the French civil service and to professionalize the training offered to top civil servants.

A multidisciplinary institution of wide academic scope, ENA has changed with the times to meet new challenges at the subnational, European, and international levels.

Each year ENA enrolls some 120 students in its undergraduate program, while welcoming 2,500 career public servants, including many at the top ranks, for continuing education. Adding to the diverse ranks of French students recruited through 3 separate examination processes are international students enrolled in ENA’s various international programs. More than 100 different nationalities rub elbows at the school each day.

Although special requirements may apply for certain programs (for details, check the ENA site or that of CEES, the Strasbourg Center for European Studies), the basic criteria for admission are to be a public servant or official (or, less commonly, a student destined for public service in his or her home country); to hold a postsecondary degree; to have an excellent command of written and oral French; and to pass one of ENA’s entrance examinations.

Admitted students pay no tuition, but they must pay their own living expenses. Scholarships and grants are available.

ENA’s programs for international students are presented in detail on the ENA site. Briefly, they are as follows:

- Extended international program (CIL): A general program requiring 18 months of study in Strasbourg. Candidates, who must be under 35 years of age, take courses with French undergraduate students.
 - Short international program (CIC): A 9-month general program in Strasbourg, with participants taking courses with in-service French civil servants. The program is designed especially for well-established officials, chiefly diplomats, who will work in France. Most candidates are at least 30 years old.
 - International public administration program (CIAP): Unfolding over 6.5 months in Strasbourg, the program is designed for established officials (candidates must be at least 25) in one of three areas: agencies and institutions, economics and public finance, and international relations.
 - Some 30 specialized short programs in public administration (CISAP): 2 or 4 weeks of intensive in-service training, with most programs offered in Paris. Some are delivered in English or Spanish.
 - Extended European studies program <http://www.cees-europe.fr/fr/etudes/cyclelong.php> : 7 months at the CEES. The program attracts a mixed audience of high-ranking civil servants, elected officials, and business executives from the member and candidate countries of the European Union. Program participants may elect to keep working while studying.
- CIL students have the opportunity to complement their basic academic training by pursuing a research master in public administration at ENA. Students who complete the CIC or CIAP program with a score of at least 14/20 on their final examination may apply to the same master's program.

European Master in Governance and Administration

MEGA (Master Européen de Gouvernance et d'Administration) is a Franco-German program of continuing education for civil servants. It has trained 4 cohorts of students since its founding in 2005. The MEGA degree is recognized under the French, German, and harmonized European systems. It is conferred jointly by the universities of Potsdam and Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.

For more information:

*MEGA Web site : <http://www.mega-master.eu>

*MEGA alumni site : <http://www.mega-alumni.eu>

The program is open to young officials from France, Germany, and other member and candidate countries of the European Union. Instruction is in French and German.

Institutes for political studies (IEP) <http://www.mpa.sciences-po.fr/>

France's IEPs offer a wide range of programs in public-sector management, particularly at the master level. Except for the IEP in Paris, known as Sciences Po, the IEPs are affiliated with universities.

Sciences Po (<http://www.sciences-po.fr/portail/>) offers several master's programs in public affairs and public-sector management:

- Professional master with a concentration in public affairs
- Research master with a concentration in economic governance

Science Po's 2-year Master of Public Affairs (MPA) is delivered in English in partnership with Columbia University (USA) and the London School of Economics and Political Science. The only program of its type in France, the Science Po MPA is designed for established professionals and recent graduates. All applicants must have excellent academic records.

<http://www.mpa.sciences-po.fr/>

Grandes écoles

Several grandes écoles have created specialized master programs (Mastères spécialisés) in public-sector management:

- **École nationale des Ponts et Chaussées**, <http://enpc.fr> : Program in public action.
- **ESSEC**, <http://essec.fr> : Management of cities and local governments, in partnership with ISCAE (Morocco). The program is offered in Casablanca.

Websites

- Web portal of the French civil service
<http://www.service-public.fr/>
- Ministry of the Budget and Public Sector (government modernization portal),
<http://modernisation.gouv.fr/>
- Institut de la Gestion Publique et du Développement Économique (institute of public management and economic development),
<http://www.institut.minefi.gouv.fr/>
- Sites devoted to public law in France,
<http://www.affaires-publiques.org/>
<http://www.opuscitatum.com/>
- Source for French government documents,
<http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/>
- The Vie Publique portal (part of the government's effort to develop the information society),
<http://www.vie-publique.fr/>
- Legifrance, devoted to the dissemination of legislation,
<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/>
- École Nationale d'Administration,
<http://www.ena.fr/>
- IEP de Rennes,
<http://www.sciencespo-rennes.fr/>
- IEP d'Aix-en-Provence
<http://www.iep.u-3mrs.fr/>
- IEP de Bordeaux
<http://www.sciencespobordeaux.fr/>
- IEP de Grenoble
<http://www-sciences-po.upmf-grenoble.fr/>
- IEP de Lille
<http://iep.univ-lille2.fr/>
- IEP de Lyon
<http://iep.univ-lyon2.fr/>
- IEP de Strasbourg
<http://www-iep.u-strasbg.fr/>
- IEP de Toulouse
<http://www.sciencespo-toulouse.fr/>

Keywords

administration – audit – accountant – adviser – civil servant – cooperation – culture – development – diagnostic – European studies – economics – evaluation – finances – fiscal risk – geography – governance – humanitarian action – international cooperation – international exchanges – local government – law – legal – logistics – management – organization – political science – politics – policy – project management – public health – public safety – public sector – public service(s) – social – sociology – tax inspector

This profile is not intended as an exhaustive representation of French education and training in the field of public administration. It is designed to provide basic guidance for interested students. The keywords at the end of the summary may be useful in further Internet searches