



TO: Prospective Advanced Policy Analysis (APA) Client
FROM: Advanced Policy Analysis Faculty
SUBJECT: Client-Based Projects with Goldman School Students, Spring 2023

OVERVIEW

In their final semester of study, Goldman School Master of Public Policy (MPP) students are required to write a high-quality professional paper, known as the Advanced Policy Analysis or APA, in order to complete the Master of Public Policy degree. With faculty supervision and guidance, each student works as a consultant for a client to conduct a thorough analysis of a major policy problem a facing real-world organization, applying the interdisciplinary methods, approaches, and perspectives that comprise the GSPP MPP core curriculum.

A student's findings and policy recommendations are presented to the client as a professional-quality written report, and outlines the student's recommendations to solve the policy problem in light of relevant tradeoffs. The final product must meet both the academic standards of the School's faculty and the standards and needs of the client. While the analytic work and argumentation underlying the report must meet academic standards of the School's faculty, the written product should be engaging and persuasive to lay readers. In the past, these reports have led to significant changes in policy and organizational management practices. It is also the school's policy that final APA reports are made available to the public, with occasional exceptions when mutually agreed upon by individual clients, students, and faculty members.

MPP students start their APA projects in January and complete it by early May (approximately 15 weeks). Most of the student's time is spent outside of the classroom. However they also meet once a week with their faculty advisor and a small group of peers in a seminar which provides an opportunity for review, evaluation, and support of students' projects. The APA represents approximately 18 hours per week (for a total of 270 hours of work) of a student's workload during the spring semester. In some cases, students may spend approximately 27 hours per week (for a total of 405 hours), depending on the amount of time a student needs to complete the project.

Approximately 85 students will be doing APA projects in Spring 2023. We invite organizations to submit proposals between now and November 1, 2022 online. All proposals will be circulated among students for review. Students interested in a project will submit application materials requested by potential clients, as outlined on the proposal form.

Submit A Proposal: <https://goldman.school/apa-capsubmissions>

WHAT AN MPP STUDENT CONSULTANT CAN DO FOR YOU

- **Training:** MPP Students have rigorous training in microeconomics, statistics, political and legal analysis, management, policy analysis and decision-making, plus a variety of electives.
- **Work Experience:** Most students come with at least 4 years of policy-relevant work experience prior to graduate school. In addition, they have already completed a policy consulting group project and a summer policy internship where they have applied the core skills learned during their first year in the MPP program.
- **Policy Consulting:** Our students are consultants for your organization providing professional level analysis and recommendations. They are not interns, and should not be assigned tasks extraneous to their APA project.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES A GOOD PROJECT?

1. **Intellectually and analytically challenging.** Ideal projects involve some uncertainty regarding the projected effects of specific policy choices in which the alternative outcomes are very different and consequential. In addition, projects should not be based on a client's preferred solution. We enjoin our students to take a critical stance toward any policy analysis problem and, if necessary, to try to persuade the client of a different point of view. Students are consultants (rather than interns) and are expected to maintain a fair degree of professional and analytical autonomy. Projects involving little more than collecting survey data (or only analyzing data), developing program descriptions or information about possible funding sources, or providing analysis to support a pre-identified policy choice are not suitable.

2. **Centered on a decision faced by your organization.** APA projects should have an important “applied” component, rather than be primarily based on research with remote policy implications. Applied projects allow students to hone their policy analysis skills and their ability to confront difficult tradeoffs between two or more alternative courses of action.

The key to a good APA project formulation is that it should begin with a statement of a policy problem or a perceived problem facing the client, and clearly state the policy decision for which the client is seeking suggestions or recommendations. Policy decisions may be at the organization or agency level, at the legislative level, or elsewhere.

Essential to a successful project is the process of assessing possible solutions to a policy problem given a range of policy goals or criteria and weighing tradeoffs. However, the project may include analytical components in addition to recommendations on a policy decision, such as evaluation of an existing program, a review of best practices, a SWOT analysis, or analysis of data.

3. **Possible to complete by early May 2023.** Projects should be relatively narrow and complex, rather than broad and simple. There are instances when the client requires the student to start the project sooner than January; we regard this as perfectly acceptable, as long as this is mutually agreed upon between the client and student.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Some examples of good APA project formulations inspired by past projects are:

- The Legislative Assembly of California has received a torrent of complaints about the quality of care at State run nursing homes for veterans. The project consists of assessing the current state of these facilities and proposing changes to improve the quality of services in state nursing homes for veterans.
- Educational loans for international development have a mixed record, while some loan programs are successful, others exhibit high default rates or inconsistent outcomes. As a funder of educational loan programs, how should [organization X] determine which programs to fund?
- California agriculture contributes heavily to carbon emissions, yet by reducing nitrogen fertilizer use and increasing carbon sequestration, farmers and ranchers could mitigate up to several million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. What are the policy options available to make this happen?
- The San Francisco Police Department has been expanding its workforce, yet in the last two years applications have declined. Why is this happening and what should the SFPD do to increase applications from a diverse applicant pool?
- California has set a target to fully decarbonize its electrical grid by 2045, yet renewable energies pose a challenge in that they are intermittent in nature. How should the regulatory framework be adjusted to mitigate this problem?

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Successful working relations between students and clients will vary greatly in detail. But at their core they all have a client who sets high expectations for quality of analysis and presentation. A client has five main responsibilities:

1. Meet with the student, in person if possible, prior to the start of the project to negotiate and define the project’s scope remembering that projects must meet the student’s academic requirements and interests, as well as the client’s needs;
2. Continue to consult with the student regularly throughout the Spring semester to ensure the project stays on course, as well as provide feedback and comments to interim drafts;
3. Provide internal data sources relevant to the project, and advise students about acquiring external data sources;
4. Arrange for student access to stakeholders who may serve as an information source related to the project;
5. Read and provide feedback on the final report.

Most clients do more than this. Interacting more frequently with the student (including commenting on interim written products) is key to a project’s success. This typically improves the final report and increases the likelihood it will meet the client’s needs. In addition, clients often provide students with professional development opportunities such as presenting and/or disseminating their work to key decision-makers, stakeholders, and other audiences as appropriate. Some clients will work with the student to submit the final report for publication.

Compensation. Most students are paid by their clients, typically in the range of \$7,000 – \$9,000 total. However, students are sometimes paid considerably higher than this range (and sometimes less than this range). The market is at work here as elsewhere, and projects offering higher compensation tend to attract more student interest and talent.

- If your organization cannot offer payment for the project: Reimbursement for project-related expenses including but not limited to travel, survey or transcription tools, attending conferences relevant to the project, as well as expenses such as phone calls and photocopying, is expected from the client.
- All payment details must be agreed upon in writing before the start of the project, and should be negotiated with the APA student consultant directly. All payments must be made directly to the student consultant.

APA PROJECT TIMELINE

August- November	Submit Proposals. https://goldman.school/apa-capsubmissions Clients begin to submit project proposals in August for students to review, with most students finalizing their client choices by early November. <i>We encourage clients to submit project proposals early during this timeframe. Relationships between students and clients, as well as the basic project scope, should be established by December 1st.</i>
January- May	Project work begins. Students begin projects during the week of January 13, 2022, although preliminary work on the project can be done by the student depending on the needs of the client and/or the project. This must be mutually agreed upon by the client and student.
Mid-April	Draft project due. Draft paper is due to the faculty advisor and client for review and feedback.
Early May	Final paper due. Final paper is due to the faculty advisor, client, and GSPP student services unit.

NEXT STEPS

If you are interested in sponsoring an APA project for Spring 2023, we invite you to submit a proposal at <https://goldman.school/apa-capsubmissions> between now and November 1, 2022. If you have questions or require consultation on your proposal to ensure it is well crafted, please contact Cecille Cabacungan, Managing Director of Career & Alumni Services (cecille@berkeley.edu).

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH GOLDMAN SCHOOL STUDENTS

If the APA project does not meet your organization's needs, you might also consider submitting one of the following:

- **Introductory Policy Analysis (IPA) – Small teams of 1st year MPP student consultants (for projects Spring 2023)**
 Contact: IPA Course Coordinator – Abraham Bedoy, 2nd Year MPP Student (abrahambedoy@berkeley.edu)
 You may also reach out directly to professors Mia Bird (miabird@berkeley.edu) and Meredith Sadin (msadin@berkeley.edu)
 Website: <http://gspp.berkeley.edu/career-services/client-based-projects/introduction-to-policy-analysis-ipa>
- **Capstone Analytic Project (CAP) – One MPA student consultant (for projects Spring 2023)**
 Contact: Annie Campbell Washington, Senior Assistant Dean for Academic Programs and Dean of Students (acw@berkeley.edu)
 Website: <http://gspp.berkeley.edu/career-services/client-based-projects/capstone-analytic-project-cap>
- **Summer Internships – 1st year MPP students (for internships Summer 2023)**
 Contact: Cecille Cabacungan, Managing Director of Career & Alumni Services (cecille@berkeley.edu)
 Website: <http://gsppjobs.net> (to post your summer internship opportunity directly)