

CALS Support Policy for Master of Professional Studies Programs June 17, 2015

Master of Professional Studies (MPS) degree programs in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) offer distinctive educational opportunities for students, are in demand by employers, and are consistent with the CALs vision of educating leaders for a resilient future. Given the importance of the MPS degree programs, it is crucial that the programs be organized in ways that provide students with a high quality and consistent educational experience. This outcome requires appropriate faculty leadership and involvement in curriculum development, teaching and advising.

Financial Support

In the interest of fostering such faculty involvement and leadership, CALs will provide financial support to MPS programs that provide students with a strong educational experience delivered through a cohort model of instruction and advising. The intent of this policy is to establish a critical mass of students who engage in mutual learning.¹ Program support is intended to provide incentives for the growth and stabilization of MPS programs; new sources of revenue to support MPS programs; and faculty/program incentives for participation in MPS programs. MPS programs that receive CALs financial support are responsible for managing and covering all direct program costs including but not limited to admissions, curriculum management and program support, mentoring and career advising. CALs will be responsible for all Registrar functions (e.g. recording of grades and degree completion). Program support will be reviewed annually. For continued receipt of funds, programs must meet the eligibility requirements, satisfy the intent of the expected program practices, and achieve the learning outcomes specified below.

Programs charging Masters Tier 2 tuition and that meet CALs guidelines will receive \$2.5K/student/semester. Programs charging Masters Tier 1 tuition and that meet CALs guidelines will receive returns each semester based on the following schedule.

Proportion of Gross Tuition Revenue Provided to Program	Number of Students				
	10-19	20-29	30-59	60-99	100+
30	X				
35		X			
40			X		
45				X	
50					X

¹ Programs with less than 10 incoming MPS students will not be eligible for this funding from CALs.

Program Eligibility

Based on the inputs from faculty, including the advice of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on CALS MPS programs, CALS requires MPS programs participating in this program to adopt a cohort model that systematically addresses curriculum development, recruitment, encouragement of *esprit de corps*, individual mentorship and career advising. CALS expects this approach will result in stronger programs matched with recruitment efforts and employment opportunities that will attract more, higher-caliber students. To qualify for such support, MPS programs must satisfy the following requirements:

- A minimum of 10 first-year students enrolled
- A curriculum that provides students with clear guidance on courses to complete and options for specialization
- An assigned faculty director with staff support
- Clearly specified assignment of advising duties
- Explicit expectations of advisor accountability
- A systematic advising program that provides direct advice about the following:
 - Course and other requirements for the completion of the degree
 - Project paper expectations
 - Funding sources to support research-related travel and other expenses
 - Career options

All students (i.e. first- and second-year) paying tuition are included in this calculation. Students who hold an assistantship that provides a tuition remission, who are on leave, or who register *in absentia* will not be counted in calculating the sum returned to the department.

The funding model will be reviewed annually to determine if appropriate support services are in place. Insufficient support services must be addressed by the program. Failure to do so will result in the withdrawal of financial support.

Expected Program Practices

The funds provided by CALS to the MPS program must result in a high degree of student satisfaction based on practices like the following:

- Communication with incoming students before arriving on campus regarding the completion of preparatory work that will allow them to take full advantage of their time at Cornell, and course pre-enrollment for their first semester on campus
- Orientation upon arrival that gets students off to a good start
- Assessment of ‘academic readiness’ and provision of training for students in need, especially those coming back to study after some years away from the academic setting
- Assessment of students’ professional needs
- Guidance for students about courses and project papers
- Support of students in identifying and preparing for their career paths

Learning Outcomes

CALS anticipates that these practices will result in a number of learning outcomes that could be assessed, like the following:

- Knowledge acquisition enabling students to solve real world problems
- Development of technical skills and capabilities through technical tools, subject matter, and laboratory and/or field studies to enhance student problem solving abilities
- Gaining a system perspective enabling students to think across disciplines (socioeconomic and biophysical)
- Better understanding of global and local perspectives and issues that impact society
- Acquisition of skills to monitor and evaluate projects
- Improved oral and written communication skills, including the ability to write project and funding proposals, and to effectively present project outputs using a variety of media
- Improved skills in critical research and assessment

MPS curricula should consider what types of courses would most effectively contribute to the learning outcomes listed above. The types of courses that are likely to contribute to the desired learning outcomes might include the following:

- An introductory course that covers basic principles and that leads to a draft project proposal outlining the student's project paper
- A leadership development course
- Specific courses to enhance needed student skills/tools to achieve project outputs
- An MPS or other university seminar series to bring students together to hear speakers on topics relevant to each MPS program
- A possible capstone course to enable group projects to develop final reports