

POLICIES & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Please take your time and carefully read the answers to these questions. It will help you to decide if this major is right for you. It will also help you understand the policies of the program. Also, you may want to keep a copy of these FAQs to refer to as you move along in the program, since some of these questions are sure to arise for you later!

Who are the PPEL program Advisors?

Where do I find out what classes I have to take for the major?

When can I declare the major?

How do I declare the PPEL major?

What is Advanced Standing?

When and how do I apply for Advanced Standing?

Is getting into Advanced Standing competitive? How are students selected?

Will you accept Advanced Standing applications in the Fall Semester in order to begin core PPEL courses in the spring?

Must I declare the major in order to take the foundation courses?

Must I declare the major in order to apply for Advanced Standing?

Can I take a core PPEL course if I am not a major?

Can I take a core PPEL course before I am accepted into Advanced Standing?

Can I start my Track before I am promoted to Advanced Standing?

Do I have to finish my General Education requirements before I can apply for Advanced Standing?

Can I minor in PPEL?

What if I don't get promoted to Advanced Standing?

Is a minor required with the PPEL major?

Can I double major in something else along with the PPEL major?

When do I pay the PPEL program fee?

Do I have to pay the PPEL fee if I am also in the Honors College?

Can I use my Honor's Thesis to count toward anything in the PPEL major requirements?

What is the process for doing an Honor's Thesis?

May I use a course toward my track if it doesn't appear in the list of pre-approved courses for that track?

Are there any internships available in the PPEL program?

May I use an independent study toward the track requirements?

May I study abroad in the PPEL program?

I can't enroll in POL 206. What do I do?

I can't enroll in a course I want to take for my track. What do I do?

Can any of my transfer courses count toward the PPEL major?

Can I take any of the foundation, core, or track courses at a different institution?

Are all of the Foundation courses offered every semester?

Are all of the Core PPEL courses offered every semester?

What is the Capstone course?

Can I GRO a Foundation, Core, or Track course?

Do most students who are in this program go on to graduate or law school?

What careers do PPEL graduates pursue?

Are the professors easily accessible?

1. Who are the PPEL program Advisors?

As a freshman, sophomore, or transfer student, your initial contact should be with the SBS College Advisor, Sarah Williams. Once promoted to Advanced Standing, your Faculty Advisor will be Dr. Laura Howard.

2. Where do I find out what classes I have to take for the major?

Visit the PPEL website: <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~ggaus/index.html>

3. When can I declare the major?

You may declare the PPEL major at any time, including at time of application to UA or at Freshman Orientation. You may also change your major to PPEL from a previously declared major. However, here are three things to consider:

1. Changing colleges will change who your college advisor is. **Sarah Williams** is your college advisor for PPEL.
2. Changing from a BS degree major to a BA degree major will change your General Education requirements slightly. Consult your college advisor for details.
3. Applications for Advanced Standing are accepted in the Spring Semester of each year, and each new cohort of Advanced Standing students begins the following Fall Semester. From that point forward, the program is designed to take another 4 semesters to complete.

4. How do I declare the PPEL major?

1. Please read all of the FAQs and study the PPEL website:
<http://www.u.arizona.edu/~ggaus/index.html>
2. **Contact the SBS College Advisor**

5. What is Advanced Standing?

Advanced Standing is achieved after successfully completing the Foundations courses, and after a competitive application and review process. Although promotion to Advanced Standing is not automatic, the odds that qualified applicants will be promoted are, historically, very good.

6. When and how do I apply for Advanced Standing?

Applications for Advanced Standing are accepted at the beginning of February. Detailed instructions will be sent by email.

A student must have *completed* at least two Foundation courses in a previous semester and the others must be in progress during Spring Semester, at the time of application to Advanced Standing.

Applicants will be notified of the selection outcome in time enough to make registration decisions for the following fall. Only those students promoted to Advanced Standing will be allowed to enroll for PPEL courses.

7. Is getting into Advanced Standing competitive? How are students selected and what can I do to prepare?

Historically, students who achieve the minimum 2.75 GPA in the Foundation courses and submit a good writing sample have an excellent chance of being promoted. Although, promotion is not guaranteed if the applicant pool exceeds the number of spaces available. In that case, students with higher GPAs will be in a better position. Other factors include: How many Foundation courses have been completed (with grades) at the time of application; the grade earned in ECON 200; and the quality of the writing assignment. Some students who have not completed all Foundation courses may be promoted ahead of those who have. A maximum of 30 students will be promoted per year.

8. Will you accept Advanced Standing applications in the Fall Semester in order to begin core PPEL courses in the spring?

Applications for Advanced Standing will be accepted only in the Spring Semester, and newly promoted students to Advanced Standing can only begin core PPEL courses in the fall.

9. Must I declare the major in order to take the Foundation courses?

No. These are courses are not specific to the PPEL major.

10. Must I declare the major in order to apply for Advanced Standing?

Yes. Only officially declared PPEL majors may submit Advanced Standing applications.

11. Can I take a Core PPEL course if I am not a major?

Only officially declared PPEL majors can enroll in courses with a PPEL prefix.

12. Can I take a Core PPEL course before I am accepted into Advanced Standing?

Students must be promoted to Advanced Standing to take Core courses with the PPEL prefix.

13. Can I start my Track before I am promoted to Advanced Standing?

Perhaps, however, we prefer that you do not. The purpose of the upper division Track emphasis is to build off of what you are learning in the core PPEL courses. So, we want you to do the Track concurrently with the Core. All questions about Track courses should be addressed to your [Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor](#).

14. Do I have to finish my General Education requirements before I can apply for Advanced Standing?

No. Gen Eds are a graduation requirement for the BA degree, but they are apart from the requirements for the major. Always check with your [SBS college advisor](#) about Gen Ed requirements.

15. Can I minor in PPEL?

There is no minor in this program.

16. What do I do if I don't get promoted to Advanced Standing?

Missing promotion to Advanced Standing need not be devastating. You have other exciting options that can make use of the Foundation courses you have taken, and which focus on some of the very subjects that brought you to the PPEL program. For example, you might consider the Philosophy Ethics major, which allows you to choose among a large menu of ethics courses. Also, the traditional track in philosophy includes some courses in social and political philosophy very similar to the topics taught in some of the PPEL core courses. Alternatively, you may want to look into the Political Science major in the School of Government. An *Interdisciplinary Degree* may also be an avenue to investigate. Whatever you decide to do, having taken the foundation courses from the PPEL program, you will be enriched and well-prepared going forward.

17. Is a minor required with the PPEL major?

No. The PPEL major is larger than most (45 units), so a minor is not required. However, you may declare one or more minors if you choose.

18. Can I double major in something else along with the PPEL major?

Yes. It is quite possible to do so, as long as the course schedule for the second major does not interfere with the schedule of PPEL core courses. Visit with your [Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor](#) and your advisor for the second major.

19. When do I pay the PPEL program fee?

You will be assessed the program fee each semester you are a declared major, beginning with the semester in which you become a junior. *The fee is automatically posted in the system when your status changes to Junior.* It doesn't matter whether or not you've been promoted to Advanced Standing. Check with your SBS College Advisor before bringing in transfer credits, as this may prematurely change your status to "Junior," which will cause an automatic posting of the fee.

20. Do I have to pay the PPEL fee if I am also in the Honors College?

Yes.

21. Can I use my Honor's Thesis to count toward anything in the PPEL major requirements?

Yes. You may use up to 6 units of your thesis toward the 12 units required for [the Track](#).

22. What is the process for doing an Honor's Thesis?

You should check with your Honor's College advisor to make sure you are satisfying your honors thesis requirements. The Honor's College requires submission of a thesis prospectus by a certain deadline. But for the PPEL Track requirement, the process is as follows:

1. Visit the [Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor](#) for approval of your topic. It should be thematic with the other courses in your Track.
2. Before visiting a professor to ask him or her to direct your thesis, think more about your topic. It is always best to have something somewhat specific in mind before you talk to a professor, even if it is not completely developed.
3. Approach the professor with your idea and ask if he or she would be willing to direct your thesis. If so, this typically means that you will work with that professor for all 6 units of the thesis over the course of two semesters.
4. Fill out the [Independent Study Form](#), and get the professor's signature.
5. Take the form back to the Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor, who will enroll you for the units.

23. May I use a course toward my Track if it doesn't appear in the list of pre-approved courses for that Track (listed on [the PPEL website](#))?

Possibly. You may request a substitution from the [Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor](#). You will want to explain how the course fits into your Track theme. All four of your Track courses should be thematic.

24. Are there any internships available in the PPEL program?

If an internship is granted for credit, it will go toward the Track requirement. If you find one you would like to do, you may submit a written proposal to the [Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor](#). In the proposal, explain how the work that you will do in the internship will be related to the PPEL program topics and your track, specifically. The AS Faculty Advisor will review the proposal, and if approved, you will be assigned readings and a term paper to be completed along with the internship. (The internship alone will not be sufficient to earn credits in the PPEL program.) A maximum of 3 units is allowed for an internship. Only one internship per Track. An internship can only be done after promotion to Advanced Standing. If the internship requires a leave of absence from a semester, it may not be approved. If it is approved, it will result in a one year delay in graduation.

The AS Faculty Advisor will notify PPEL majors of any internship opportunities that may arise, but students interested in doing an internship must seek it out on their own. Here is some more information on internships from the School of Government: <http://sgpp.arizona.edu/node/685>

25. May I use an independent study toward the Track requirements?

Possibly. First, submit a written proposal by email to the AS Faculty Advisor, which gives a sketch of the work you would like to do, the professor you would like to be your supervisor, and how the work relates to the PPEL program topics and your Track, specifically. If your proposal is approved, you must then approach the professor with whom you want to do the work. Take these steps:

1. Think about your topic in more detail. It is always best to have something specific in mind before you talk to a professor, even if it is not completely developed.
2. Approach the professor with your idea and ask if he or she would be willing to supervise you.
3. Fill out the [Independent Study Form](#), and get the professor's signature.
4. Take the form to the advisor or administrator in the department where that professor works. If you will be working with a philosophy department professor, take the completed form to the Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor, who will enroll you for the units.

26. May I study abroad in the PPEL program?

Possibly. If the study abroad is in the summer, and if a study abroad course is granted credit by the University, and if it is approved by the [Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor](#), the units will go toward the Track requirement. A maximum of three units earned in a study abroad course is allowed. Only one study abroad course is allowed toward the track. A study abroad course is not allowed if a student has already earned internship credit toward the track.

It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the study abroad course will be accepted by the University first. The PPEL program cannot accept credits that the UA has not accepted and posted as transfer credits. Check with the study abroad office if you have any questions.

Once you have the details about the course, including the course description and syllabus, submit a proposal with that information to the AS Faculty Advisor, along with a brief explanation of how this course relates to the PPEL program topics and your track, specifically. Bring the enrollment form supplied by the study abroad office.

Be advised that leaving the PPEL core program in the Fall or Spring semester will delay your graduation by one year, and in some instances may not be approved.

27. I can't enroll in POL 206. What do I do?

To enroll in POL 206, email your [SBS college advisor](#).

28. I can't enroll in a course I want to take for my track. What do I do?

First, check to make sure there isn't a pre-requisite for the course. If there is, you will need to satisfy that first.

If the course is closed because it is full, you will just need to play the game: Contact the instructor; show up the first day and ask to be added, etc.

If you cannot get in because the course is restricted to the majors in that department, there may be specific enrollment instructions that vary by department. Contact the [Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor](#) for assistance.

29. Can any of my transfer courses count toward the PPEL major?

There are some courses taught at other universities and community colleges that automatically transfer to UA as ECON 200, PHIL 205, POL 203 and POL 206. These are the only foundation courses with transfer credit substitutions. There are NO transfer courses that can substitute for any of the core courses. Rarely, an upper division transfer course may be approved as a Track course. You will need to provide a complete syllabus of the course to apply for approval from the Advanced Standing Faculty Advisor.

30. Can I take any of the Foundation, Core, or Track courses at a different institution?

Only the few listed above, in the previous question. Meet with your [SBS College advisor](#), if you plan to take Foundation courses at another institution.

31. Are all of the Foundation courses offered every semester?

You will always find at least one course from each of the three Foundation areas offered every Fall and Spring Semester. Many of them are also offered online in Winter Semester and Summer Sessions.

32. Are all of the Core PPEL courses offered every semester?

No. The schedule of Core courses is designed for each cohort of newly promoted AS students to take in sequence: Junior year, Fall Semester: PPEL 301, PPEL 310; Junior year, Spring Semester: PPEL 320, PPEL 326; Senior year, Fall Semester: PPEL 330, plus Track courses; Senior year, Spring Semester, PPEL 350, plus Track courses, plus PPEL 496 Senior Capstone. (Students may elect to take the Capstone in the Fall Semester of their Senior year.) Once promoted to Advanced Standing, we guarantee that you will have courses available to complete the program in four semesters.

33. What is the Capstone course?

This is similar to a graduate seminar on a topic in philosophy, politics, economics, or law chosen by the faculty member, but the aim of all the seminars will be to bring the student's PPEL skills to bear on a problem or issue.

34. Can I GRO or repeat a foundation, core, or track course?

Foundation or Track courses may be retaken under the Grade Replacement Option (GRO) or the 'course repeat' option according to the UA policy: <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/gro/>
Core PPEL courses are subject to the following program policy: A core PPEL course in which the grade received is "E" MUST be repeated the next time the course is offered. A core PPEL course in which the grade received is "D" or "C" MAY be repeated the next time it is offered IF there is a seat available. (There is no guarantee that a core PPEL course can be repeated to improve a grade of "D" or "C".)

35. Do most students who are in this program go on to graduate or law school?

Many students do. This major is excellent preparation for law school. We have had other students pursue graduate work in economics and philosophy, as well. Because of the stellar faculty, students do very well in post graduate pursuits.

36. What careers do PPEL graduates pursue?

The interest among our majors is diverse. Some are interested in private/government liaison work; others have an eye toward employment in non-profit organizations, for example, as a director in fundraising. Many are interested in the politics of government, either as candidates themselves or as support staff for national candidates. Some have aspirations to serve in government security agencies; some students will go on to do work in international relations and foreign research. Some are interested in the politics of lobbying, such as for environmental groups.

37. Are the professors easily accessible?

Very much so. Our faculty for this program is its strongest asset. Class sizes are small, giving you close contact with fellow students and the professors. One of the big benefits for students is that all of the PPEL core faculty are senior faculty, and thus are a good source for letters of recommendation.

SBS College PPEL Advisor:

Sarah Williams

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[WiseAdvising appointments](#)

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