



**THE
NELSON
MANDELA
SCHOOL**
of Public Governance



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA · UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Lead Strategic Change Across Africa

Master of Development Policy & Practice

MDPP

Strategic | Ethical | Practice-Driven

Applications Close: 30 September 2026

About the Programme

The Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town develops ethical, strategically capable public leaders equipped to navigate Africa's most complex governance and development challenges.

Established to strengthen leadership capacity across the continent, the School convenes experienced professionals from government, civil society, multilateral institutions, and the private sector.

Through rigorous teaching, applied research, and leadership development, the School equips professionals to operate effectively within political economy realities, institutional constraints, and shifting global dynamics.

This is leadership education grounded in African contexts and global standards.



Programme Structure & Delivery

The MDPP is the School's flagship degree, designed for mid-career professionals seeking advanced strategic capability in public leadership and development practice.

What the Programme Develops

- Strategic policy design and reform capability
- Public sector implementation and regulatory expertise
- Ethical leadership and public accountability
- Organisational diagnosis and institutional reform
- Applied research addressing real-world development challenges

Programme Structure

- Six substantive courses
- Two preparatory courses in applied / evidence-based research
- Independent applied research paper
- Delivered part-time through intensive block sessions in Cape Town

Each semester includes a two-week in-person block session. Teaching is concentrated within these periods, supported by guided independent study and assessments between blocks. Attendance at all block sessions is compulsory.

Duration

- Two years (four semesters)
- Two block sessions per year (two weeks each)
- Total of four weeks of in-person instruction annually

This is a practice-driven Master's degree that bridges academic rigour with real-world governance execution.

Admission Criteria

The MDPP is designed for experienced professionals ready to lead at greater scale and impact:

- Public sector leaders and policy advisors
- Senior municipal and government officials
- NGO and development practitioners
- Professionals working in governance, regulation, or public accountability

Minimum Requirements

- Honours degree or equivalent four-year qualification
- Minimum five years' professional experience
- Demonstrated commitment to public service or development

Assessment

- Assessments are coursework-based

Application Process

All applications are submitted online via the UCT postgraduate application portal.

You Will Need

- Current CV (including referee details)
- Certified academic transcripts
- Letter of motivation

Applications for the 2027 Intake Close: 30 September 2026

