Master of Science: Recreation and Parks Management (online)

The online Master of Science in Recreation and Parks Management (RPM) is a program designed to provide professionals who have three years combined administrative and supervisory experience with the skills and techniques required of upper-level managers in public, nonprofit and commercial agencies in the parks and recreation field. Individuals with degrees in allied fields who are currently working in the parks and recreation field are encouraged to apply and will find the program professionally challenging and personally fulfilling.

The Recreation and Parks Management curriculum is delivered entirely online and has several innovative features that are designed to provide students with a quality education. The program is designed to train the next generation of leaders in the parks and recreation field, and it caters to those working in the field who are interested in advancing themselves professionally. The program utilizes a combination of upper-level practitioners and RPM faculty to provide a variety of perspectives and high-quality instruction. A new cohort begins every fall.

Online Learning Approach

Since 1995, the graduate program has continued to meet the demands of recreation and park professionals. In 2010, the program transitioned to a totally online format and is currently serving students worldwide. There are 10 required courses that make up the 30-credit program. If a student completes all requirements, the program will take 2 years to complete. The program is designed to accommodate professionals working in the field who desire to remain employed while completing their program. Since most students are working professionals, they are part-time students and will be expected to complete two classes each semester (spring, summer and fall). A new cohort will begin every fall. Classes are not offered in winter term.

Deadline for application for the fall cohort is June 1. Applications will be accepted after the deadline pending availability in the cohort. The application must be fully complete to be considered. All applications received after the deadline will be placed on a waiting list for the pending cohort for which they originally applied. Once a cohort is full, applicants will be placed on a list for the following year’s cohort.

Final (Capstone) Project

The program offers students the opportunity to select from one of five templates to complete their final Master’s Project: Business Plan, Case Study, Traditional Thesis, Strategic Plan and Program or Facility Design and Development. Students are encouraged to select a project that will focus on providing professional advancement within their current agency and the profession as a whole. Each of these projects enables students to build upon and integrate their experiences into the curriculum. Also, these various approaches focus on planning, problem solving, decision making and understanding organizational structures that are characteristic of upper-level management positions for which the program is preparing students. Students are expected to identify their thesis project and committee in their fourth semester of the program.

Entrance Requirements

Completion of the baccalaureate degree at a regionally accredited institution of higher education with an undergraduate cumulative grade point average of a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

Provisional Admission

Provisional status can be granted to students with less than a 3.0 GPA on a case-by-case basis. Students having completed 15 or more graduate credits may use their graduate GPA in lieu of the undergraduate GPA. In addition to the general admission requirements, students are required to meet the criteria listed below. If any deficiency courses are required, they will be assigned by the coordinator upon entry into the program.

A. Professional Experience

The program is designed for professionals with experience in the parks and recreation field. Generally, there are three avenues of entry into the program.

1. Students should have the equivalent of three years’ experience in the recreation and parks field.
2. Students with a minimum of three years’ professional experience in allied fields who are interested in making a career shift may also apply. A field experience, mentorship and/or deficiency courses may be required of these students.
3. Although the program is designed for professionals working in the field, a limited number of recent graduates from baccalaureate programs may be admitted based on the combination of professional experiences, volunteerism and extra-curricular involvement of the applicant and on the composition of the students currently in the program.

B. Recommendations

Three letters of recommendation are required reflecting the student’s professional and academic background. Personal letters of recommendation will not be considered.

C. Career Goals

The applicant needs to include a statement of career goals and how the master’s degree program relates to these goals.

D. Resumé

The applicant is required to submit a current resume or professional vita.
E. Official Transcript(s)
Students should submit an official sealed copy of all prior transcripts that contributed to the completion of the bachelor's degree as well as any graduate-level coursework previously taken.

F. Completed FSU Graduate Program Application
Students will need to complete the Graduate Program Application available through www.frostburg.edu/grad.

H. Online Orientation
Students are required to participate in an online orientation that takes place throughout the month of August prior to the start of the new cohort.

Program Curriculum
The program consists of 10 courses requiring 30 credit hours. The program is divided into four blocks: foundations, resource management, administration and research. A fifth block, supplemental courses, includes deficiency courses (e.g., Field Experience) and courses that are not required toward the completion of the degree but enhance the student's program (e.g., Mentorship Program).

Foundations (3 credits)
RECR 611 Concepts and Foundations of Leisure Planning & Management of Natural Resources (3 credits)
RECR 641 Managing Open Space Resources

Administration (15 credits)
RECR 651 Organizational Behavior and Leadership in RPM
RECR 652 Fiscal Management in RPM
RECR 653 Communications and Organizational Decision Making in RPM
RECR 654 Developing Promotional Information Systems in RPM
RECR 655 Current Management Issues in RPM

Research (9 credits)
RECR 681 Research Methods and Evaluation in RPM
RECR 683 Thesis/Project Preparation and Grant Writing in RPM
RECR 700 Research Project or Thesis (3 credits)

Supplemental Courses
RECR 593 Field Experience in RPM (3-6 credits)
RECR 694 Mentorship Program in RPM (3-6 credits)
RECR 699 Individual Research in RPM (3-6 credits)

Minimum credit hours: 30

Transfer/Proficiency Credit:
If you have successfully completed (grade of B or better) graduate courses at another accredited institution, you may apply for transfer credit for up to 9 credits in this program. If, upon faculty assessment, the courses are deemed essentially comparable to courses in this program, you will be awarded credit toward completion of your degree. All courses considered for transfer credit must meet the graduate transfer credit policy requirement, including the six-year limit. No proficiency credits (credit by exam) are permitted in the Recreation and Parks Management Master’s Program.