

Contact: Rachel Boon

REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA: MASTER OF ARTS IN ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa for a Master of Arts in Organizational Management in the Wilson College of Business.

The Council of Provosts and Board office support approval of this program.

Description of proposed program. The Master of Arts in Organizational Management allows students to earn a master's degree by combining two certificates in the Wilson College of Business MBA program with another non-MBA graduate certificate. The MBA certificates each contain four courses but share one common course, for a total of seven courses between the two MBA certificates. The third (non-MBA) certificate will typically contain three or more graduate courses in an individualized program of study. The minimum number of credit hours to earn this degree is 30, while the maximum credit hours will depend on the number of credit hours required by the third certificate.

Specifically, learners will complete the MBA Business Fundamentals Certificate and their choice of either the MBA Managerial Analytics Certificate or the MBA Strategic Leadership and Innovation Certificate. Learners would combine these two MBA graduate certificates with a third non-MBA certificate at UNI. This combination of certificates will allow students to gain business skills to support the development of business knowledge and relevant business skills to pair with their specific area of interest. A few examples of other certificates at UNI from which students could choose include entrepreneurship, financial analysis, geographic information science, and strategic communication. Program advisors will work with learners to draft a plan of study and this Master of Arts program would be offered as a non-thesis degree.

Academic objectives. Through the two MBA certificates, students will achieve the learning objectives below; additional learning objectives will depend on the third (individually-selected) certificate:

Learning Objective 1: Professional Knowledge and Skills Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of current business practices and management techniques necessary to effectively manage and lead the organization's day-to-day operations, scan the business environment, and strategically plan for the future.

Learning Objective 2: Critical Thinking Skills Graduates will demonstrate the critical thinking skills to address complex business issues, gather information, identify and evaluate a range of options, and make ethical, thoughtful choices among the alternatives.

Learning Objective 3: Problem Solving Skills Graduates will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate quantitative and qualitative tools and concepts throughout the problem-solving process showing an appreciation for the interrelationships among the various business functions.

Learning Objective 4: Teamwork Skills Graduates will demonstrate the ability to effectively participate as team members, facilitate group processes, and manage team projects.

Learning Objective 5: Communication Skills Graduates will demonstrate the professional communication skills necessary for effective management.

Need for program. The Graduate College, through Strategic Planning and ad hoc committees, identified a strong need for additional interdisciplinary programs at UNI. Learners continue to evolve and evidence indicates that learners want additional options to meet their specific needs. The MA in Organizational Management provides learners with a foundation from traditional MBA classes while allowing them to customize their curriculum to their professional needs through flexibility in the third graduate certificate.

This degree option is an important addition to the traditional MBA offered at UNI. MBA applications nationwide were down 6.5% in fall 2022 according to the [Graduate Management Admission Council's 2022 Application Trends Survey](#) resulting in 60% of MBA programs reporting application declines. As students demand more flexible options, the MA in Organizational Management provides a complementary and more flexible option to the MBA for students that desire to couple interdisciplinary coursework with foundational business classes.

The MA in Organizational Management is also a nice complement to the recently approved Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) degree at UNI. By offering a degree option with slightly more structure (i.e., two certificates must be from the MBA program) while maintaining some flexibility in choice, the degree will provide recipients with more uniformity in learning outcomes and a degree name that signals the recipients' business foundation. The term "organizational management" will help provide clarity to employers that this degree has a strong business foundation (two certificates) as opposed to being a fully interdisciplinary program with a wider range of disciplines represented.

Finally, many undergraduate learners are entering the university with a large number of college credits. Undergraduate learners with senior standing (90 credits or more) and a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 are allowed to register for up to 12 credit hours of graduate coursework. Seniors could complete all or a majority of their non-MBA certificate while completing their undergraduate degree. This provides a valuable option as more learners continue to enter the university with college credits earned during high school.

Relationship to existing programs at the institution. UNI offers graduate programs in five areas: arts and humanities, behavioral and health sciences, business, government and non-profit, education, and science and technology. As stated above, the MA in Organizational Management complements but does not duplicate the MAIS degree. There is also a distinction from the MBA by adding a third area of choice that may be outside the Wilson College of Business.

Relationship to existing programs at other colleges and universities. Although both Tippie College of Business and Ivy College of Business offer MBA degrees and other business-related master's degrees, neither offers a Master's in Organizational Management with stackable certificates. A graduate certificate earned at the University of Iowa or Iowa State University would be allowed to transfer in as the third certificate which means that learners would take seven Wilson College of Business MBA courses to earn the two MBA certificates and the MA in Organizational Management.

Resources to establish a high-quality program. The Wilson College of Business currently has the personnel, facilities and equipment to move forward with this new master's degree option. The courses that make up the MBA certificates are already being offered. Similarly, the third certificate would be an existing graduate-level certificate and therefore made up of courses already offered at UNI.

Student demand. The number of graduate degrees in general (not only MBA degrees) conferred by degree-granting post-secondary institutions has gone up over the past two decades; master's

degrees increased 43% between 2003-2004 and 2016-2017 and are projected to continue to go up by another 4% by 2028-2029 (NCES, 2023). Offering an MA in Organizational Management that allows MBA certificates coupled with courses from other areas of interest to learners provides flexibility and credentialing that should meet the professional needs of learners.

Workforce need/demand. According to employment projections from the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(2023\)](#), “The U.S. economy is projected to add almost 4.7 million jobs from 2022 to 2032.” In addition, Iowa employers reported the need for employees with strong written communication, critical thinking, and oral communication skills (Iowa Workforce Needs Assessment). An MA in Organizational Management, which combines business courses with another discipline, has the potential to prepare an educated workforce with the skills needed to be successful as well as provide advancement opportunities to those that hold the degree. More specifically, the curriculum flexibility provided by the MA in Organizational Management may provide students in career paths with more specialized curricular needs to customize their graduate studies to align with their fields, while ensuring the foundational business knowledge through the MBA certificates. This curricular option provides the balance between flexibility in curriculum choice (to accommodate student interest and market demand) while ensuring sufficient consistency in students’ foundational knowledge.

Funding and Cost. The resources are already in place through the current offerings of the MBA program at the Wilson College of Business, and the course offerings for existing graduate-level certificates throughout the UNI campus.

Projected student enrollment.

Graduate	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Majors	5	10	15	20	25

Accreditation. As a master’s degree offered by the Wilson College of Business, the MA in Organizational Management will be part of Wilson College’s AACSB accreditation.

Date of implementation. Fall 2025.

Letter of Support



March 20, 2024

To the Board of Regents:

The Council of Provosts discussed the University of Northern Iowa proposal for a Master of Arts in Organizational Management and reviewed associated documentation. The university has the resources and expertise for this program already in place through the Wilson College of Business and other certificate programs across academic units. There is evidence of student demand for flexible graduate programs that meet student interests and meet the communication and leadership needs of Iowa employers. The plan indicates due diligence with the other Regent universities regarding related programs and that it will capitalize existing programs at the University of Northern Iowa. Based on the evidence and documentation, this program is likely to benefit the University of Northern Iowa and the state of Iowa.

The Council of Provosts is supportive of the program and wishes the University of Northern Iowa the best in its implementation.

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