



CALL FOR APPLICATION
FIRST-LEVEL UNIVERSITY ONLINE MASTER PROGRAM in
“Electoral Policy and Administration”
THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025

We are now accepting applications for the first-level online Master's program in Electoral Policy and Administration for the 2024/2025 academic year.

This program is offered in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and in cooperation with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).

The Director of this Master program is Andreas de Guttry - Full Professor of International Law.

Art. 1 - START OF PROGRAM

The IX edition of the first-level University Master Program in “Electoral Policy and Administration” (MEPA), is hereby activated pursuant to art. 3 of the Statute of the Sant’Anna School of Advanced Studies.

The Master's Program will be conducted entirely online, with an optional residential phase in Pisa lasting up to two weeks (usually held in May and November) for those interested. The residential phase will be delivered in English and requires a minimum of 10 students to attend.

The Master's program is available in English, French, Portuguese, and Arabic.

Students can choose to enrol in the Master's Program or to register for a limited number of individual modules. All modules are available in English, French, Portuguese, and Arabic.

Art. 2 - Academic Credits (ECTS)

Upon successful completion of the Master Program, and subordinate to the evaluation of results and fulfilment and compliance with the Rules and Regulations of the Master in Electoral Policy and Administration, a maximum of 67 academic credits will be awarded according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS credits).

The allocation of ECTS credits is as follows:

- 47 ECTS credits will be awarded upon successful completion of the online compulsory and optional modules (as detailed in Article 12), and fulfilment and compliance with the Master Program Procedural Guidelines for Students.
- 15 ECTS credits will be awarded upon positive evaluation and public defence of the Master Thesis, which should be between 15,000 and 20,000 words. Candidates who choose to undertake an internship and successfully complete it will present a shorter Master Thesis of between 7,000 and 10,000 words.
- 5 extra ECTS credits may be obtained by attending the optional residential phase or by successfully completing additional optional modules.



To earn the First Level Master's Diploma, a minimum of 62 ECTS credits is required.

The MEPA syllabus comprises 12 compulsory modules and 12 optional modules. 2 to 4 ECTS credits will be awarded for each module upon completion of the said module (depending on the complexity of the module).

MEPA participants should complete all the assigned compulsory modules and choose a series of optional courses based on their preferences. The credits corresponding to all the selected optional modules should reach a maximum of 12 ECTS credits. ECTS credits are issued upon completing an individual module after a positive evaluation of the intermediate and final learning assessment tests and upon compliance with the obligations underlined in the Master Program Procedural Guidelines for Students.

Art. 3 - MEPA objectives

The Master in Electoral Policy and Administration is designed to provide current or prospective election professionals with comprehensive, advanced education on electoral processes through an exhaustive overview of all the electoral phases. The program is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to serve as election administrators, members of Election Management Bodies, or electoral observers.

The objectives of the Master Program are as follows:

- 1) Responding to the global demand for qualified electoral administrators by providing participants with the necessary expertise and skills to meet the challenges of contemporary electoral processes.
- 2) Contributing to reducing the gender gap in electoral administration by strengthening women's role in this sector, particularly in senior positions.

Through its rigorous and comprehensive curriculum, the MEPA program aims to cultivate a new generation of professionals capable of promoting and supporting transparent, inclusive, and credible electoral processes in their countries and worldwide.

Art. 4 - Teaching and internal structure

The Master Program employs an intercultural and cross-disciplinary approach, with lectures designed to analyse real-life situations and concrete examples. Teaching methodologies include various drills, simulations, and role-plays to provide participants with practical experience in electoral administration. The cross-disciplinary approach ensures that participants develop a well-rounded understanding of the issues involved in electoral administration, while practical simulations and role-plays provide hands-on experience in managing elections.

The educational syllabus for the Master Program comprises:

1. An online component lasting 9 months for a total of 470 hours (excluding individual study hours).
2. An optional internship of a minimum of 300 hours.
3. The drafting and public defence of the thesis lasting 3-5 months.
4. An optional residential component lasting a maximum of 2 weeks, to be held in autumn or spring at the premises of the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies. The residential component will only be organised if a minimum of 10 participants decides to attend, and will be delivered in English.

Art. 5 – Places available and admission requirements

There is no limit to the number of students that can enrol in the Master Program or the individual modules.

Candidates who meet the following requirements are eligible to apply for admission:

- a) Have obtained at least a three-year Bachelor's Degree, a Masters' Degree (as per Ministerial Decree No. 270/2004), a four-year Masters' Degree (as per Ministerial Decree No. 509/1999), a five-year Degree under the old university system, or an equivalent academic qualification from an Italian or foreign university by the expiry date of this call for applications.
- b) Have gained some working, volunteering, or educational experience in electoral policy and



administration or related areas.

Those who wish to attend the English version of the Master must have a good knowledge of English (at least

a B2 level based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Similarly, those who enrol in other linguistic versions must also have a good knowledge of the language, at least at a B2 level.

Undergraduate students who have completed all progress examinations before the start of the Master Program and expect to obtain their academic qualification during the academic year preceding the onset of the program may also apply for admission. The Sant'Anna School reserves the right to exclude a candidate at any time with a motivated decision if the prescribed requirements have not been met.

Art. 6 - Entry ECTS

Upon specific request from interested candidates, the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies can recognise up to a maximum of 12 university ECTS credits based on the comparability and adequacy of activities already undertaken with the knowledge, skills, and competencies offered by the MEPA Program. Candidates can request the recognition of ECTS by providing the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies with a Diploma Supplement. No other certificates or course information will be considered. Credits already obtained, attending, and passing MEPA modules will be recognised without limitations.

Art. 7 - Application procedures Application procedure for the entire Master Program

Candidates interested in being admitted to the Full Master Program should follow the steps outlined below:

1. Visit the website <https://www.santannapisa.it/it/formazione/master-electoral-policy-and-administration-and-individual-modules>.
2. Download the file called "MEPA Master Application" and fill it out electronically;
3. Follow the instructions provided in the tutorial video (available on the website) and register online;
4. Upload the Master application form during the online application procedure;
5. Candidates must include all requested information and upload the following mandatory documents under penalty of exclusion:
 - A copy of their passport or identification card;
 - A copy of all degrees mentioned in their application (e.g., BA, MA, PhD, etc.);
 - Official transcripts of the bachelor's degree (an official document from the university specifying the grades of all exams and the final grade obtained)
 - Filled-out application form.
 - A copy of the last payslip (if the candidate applying for a scholarship is working).

Incomplete applications will not be admitted.

Application procedure for the Individual modules.

Candidates interested in attending individual modules should follow the steps outlined below:

1. Visit the website <https://www.santannapisa.it/it/formazione/master-electoral-policy-and-administration-and-individual-modules>
2. Download the file called "Individual Modules Application" and fill it out electronically;
3. Send the file to mepa@santannapisa.it

Incomplete applications will not be admitted.

Falsification of documents and fraudulent statements are punished according to the Italian Criminal Code and the special applicable laws (Art. 75 and Art. 76 of Presidential Decree (D.P.R. No. 445/2000)). The Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies may monitor the truthfulness of the statements provided and the



documents submitted at any time during the procedure, even after the program has already started, and may request that original documents be submitted. In the case of false statements, the Institution may decide, at any time, to exclude candidates from the selection procedure or the Master Program based on a motivated decision issued by the Rector, without prejudice to the resulting criminal liability.

Art. 8 - Application deadline

The application procedure for the Master's program is open year-round. However, the program has two annual intakes: one in October (12 October 2024) and one in April (12 April 2025). To be considered for the Autumn intake, candidates must apply before the 21st of September 2024. For the Spring intake, candidates must apply no later than the 22nd of March 2025. Late applications will be considered for the next round. Admitted candidates will be contacted shortly after the relevant deadline.

The application procedure for individual modules is open year-round. Students can apply anytime and start attending the modules soon after payment of the tuition fees. The MEPA Program encourages interested candidates to apply as soon as possible to ensure they have ample time to complete the application process and prepare for the program.

Art. 9 - Selection procedure for the Master

A special committee appointed by the Rector of the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies selects candidates for the entire Master Program. The Committee evaluates each candidate's educational qualifications and may conduct telephone or Skype interviews if deemed necessary.

The Committee assesses each applicant's qualifications and assigns a score of up to 100 points based on the following criteria:

- Academic curriculum (average of grades received in exams, marks of the graduation exam if applicable, consistency of the curriculum and coherence of the final thesis with the contents of the Master Program) - up to 24 points;
- Motivational letter - up to 35 points;
- Relevant training in the sector - up to 16 points;
- Relevant professional experience/voluntary activities in related fields - up to 16 points;
- Language skills (except English for those attending the English version; Arabic for those attending the Arabic version; Portuguese for those attending the Portuguese version, and French for those attending the French version) - up to 7 points;
- Relevant publications - up to 2 points.

The selection committee reserves the right to request additional documents/information.

Candidates who score 60 points or higher out of 100 will be admitted to the Master Program. Only admitted candidates will be notified via email, due to the high number of applications. Undergraduates referred to in Article 4 will be admitted "subject to reserve requirements" until they obtain their degree within the specified time frames.

For the Individual modules

There is no selection procedure for applicants interested in attending individual modules.

Art. 10 - Tuition fee and Scholarship

Tuition fees, referral program and scholarships for the entire Master



The Master Program tuition fee is 10,000.00 euros and can be paid in three instalments. The first instalment of 3,500.00 euros is due upon enrolment. The second instalment of 3,500.00 euros and the third instalment of 3,000.00 euros must be paid at the latest, 8 months after enrolment (II Instalment) and before the thesis discussion (III Instalment). The tuition fee includes academic and tutorial costs, didactic materials, access to university services, and administrative expenses. However, it does not cover travel expenses, visas, accommodation in Pisa for the optional residential phase, or other related costs.

Pursuant to Art. 9, paragraph 2 of Legislative Decree No. 68/2012, the Institution grants total exemption regarding payment of the enrolment fee in the case of students with disabilities, acknowledged to be equal to or greater than sixty-six percent, in accordance with Art. 3, paragraph 1 of Law No. 104/1992, and applies a 1.5% reduction for every percentage point of disability in the case of students who have been acknowledged a disability of less than sixty-six percent. A student who asks for said exemption or reduction must attach an appropriate certificate to the online application.

Candidates admitted to the Master Program who fail to pay the tuition fees within the prescribed deadlines will not be able to request certificates of enrolment or attendance. Moreover, the exams of the respective candidates will not be corrected, and they will not be able to complete the Master's Program until they have fulfilled their financial obligations. We kindly remind candidates that payment deadlines are crucial for the smooth running of the Master Program and to ensure that all students have equal opportunities. If students are experiencing financial difficulties, they can contact the Master Program Director to discuss potential solutions or to request financial aid if they meet the criteria for partial fee reductions or scholarships.

To promote diversity within the program, the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies and its partners may offer partial fee reductions based on merit, distinctive competencies, and academic excellence to talented students who require financial aid. In each selection round, the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies and its partners may offer fee reductions of up to 30% to Master candidates from Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Female candidates will have precedence in the case of "ex aequo". Admitted candidates who require financial reductions may contact the program director within one week of receiving their acceptance email. Fee reductions are subject to the availability of funds.

The MEPA program is also committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive community by facilitating a structured referral policy for prospective students. This policy allows current MEPA students to refer new applicants, enhancing the program's academic community through their personal and professional networks. Each current student may refer up to three prospective applicants, and when the referred applicants successfully enrol, they are each entitled to a 10% reduction in total tuition fees. Each current student is limited to referring three new applicants. Additionally, the program offers a mutual referral option for new applicants, underlining a key condition: an individual can either be referred by a current student or participate in a mutual referral with another new applicant, but not both. New applicants have the opportunity to refer one another mutually. If both parties enrol in the program, each will receive a 10% reduction in their total tuition fees. For more detailed information on participating in the referral program and the conditions for receiving the 10% tuition fee reduction, interested parties are advised to contact the admissions office directly. The Jeff and Carolyn Fischer Scholarship is also an annual scholarship award granted to one student per intake, which covers part of the tuition costs of the Master program. The award is \$5,000 and is given to a student who has been admitted to the MEPA program and is professionally engaged or intends to be engaged in some aspect of electoral conflict prevention and electoral security. Applicants must submit a cover letter in English to Professor Jeff Fischer, explaining their engagement in electoral security, career



path, and future professional plans. The scholarship applications are reviewed and awarded by Professor Fischer based on the applicant's background, professional intentions concerning electoral security, and future plans.

Tuition fees and reductions for individual modules

The fee for each MEPA module is determined by the number of credits assigned to it, which ranges from 2 to 4 depending on the complexity of the module. The fees are 700.00 euros for 2-credit modules, 850.00 euros for 3-credit modules, and 950.00 euros for 4-credit modules. Students who enrol in multiple modules receive a 10% discount on the fees for the second and third modules and a 15% discount on the fees for the fourth, fifth, and sixth modules. The order of the modules for calculating the reduction will consider the least expensive modules first and the most expensive modules last to benefit the student. Special fee reductions may be available if an institute or organisation enrolls a certain number of employees/participants simultaneously in the Master Program or individual modules.

Art. 11 - Acceptance procedure and method of payment

Applicants who are admitted to the Master Program must confirm their acceptance within one year of receiving the communication of admission. To start the program, admitted candidates must also submit:

- A copy of the payment of the first instalment of the tuition fee (3.500,00 Euro) – which must be made according to the instructions provided in the letter of admission to the MEPA.

If a successful candidate decides to waive attendance to the Master Program before it starts, they forfeit their right to be refunded the amount paid as the 1st instalment or as a deposit. Students admitted to individual modules must pay the fee for each module no later than one year after receiving the notification of admission and at least 15 days before the respective module begins. Non-payment of tuition fees by the deadline will result in the suspension of the student's enrolment status. Consequently, the student will not be able to receive certificates of enrolment or attendance, and their exams will not be processed until the outstanding fees have been paid in full.

Art.12 - Didactic Phase

The didactic phase will consist of twenty-four modules, including twelve compulsory modules and twelve optional modules, as listed below:

1 – Elections and Voting as Instruments of Governance (2 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module

2 – Electoral Legal and Regulatory Frameworks (3 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module

3 – Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) (3 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module

4 – Electoral Systems and Managing Representation (3 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module

5 – Understanding and Managing Boundary Delimitation (3 ECTS credits) – Optional Module

6 – Political Parties, Campaigns, and Political Finance (3 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module

7 – Electoral Planning and Budgeting (3 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module

8 – Electoral Logistics (4 ECTS credits) – Optional Module

9 – Voter Registration and Identification Systems (3 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module

10 – Electoral Operations (3 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module

11 – Gender and Elections (2 ECTS credits) – Optional Module

12 – Marginalized Electorates and Special Voting Programs (2 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module

13 – Managing Elections in Public Emergency Situations (3 ECTS credits) – Optional Module

14 – Election Integrity in the Digital Age (3 ECTS credits) – Optional Module

15 – Civic and Voter Education (2 ECTS credits) – Optional Module

16 – Media and Elections (2 ECTS credits) – Optional Module

17 – Electoral Integrity and Malpractice (4 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module



- 18 – Managing Electoral Security, Electoral Violence, and Preventing Election-related conflicts (2 ECTS credits) – Optional Module
- 19 – Elections in Fragile / Post Conflict contexts (3 ECTS credits) – Optional Module
- 20 – Electoral Justice Systems (3 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module
- 21 – Electoral Observation, Evaluation, and Validation (3 ECTS credits) – Optional Module
- 22 – Policy Advice and Electoral Reform (3 ECTS credits) – Compulsory Module
- 23 – Direct Democracy (2 ECTS credits) – Optional Module
- 24 – Leadership in Electoral Administration (2 ECTS credits) – Optional Module

Art. 13 – Rights and obligations

The Master Program Procedural Guidelines for Students, the Ethical Code, and the general rules established by the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies regulate students' rights and obligations and interactions between students, staff, and the school's facilities. Any violation of these regulations may result in disciplinary action, which will be determined based on the gravity of the violation.

Art. 14 – Final thesis and conclusion of the MEPA Program

Upon successful completion of the assigned compulsory and optional modules, students are required to submit a Master thesis on a topic covered during the Master Program or a topic of relevance to the Master courses. The thesis will be assessed by a committee appointed by the Rector of the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, and the student is expected to present and discuss the thesis publicly. For students attending the Master in Arabic and Portuguese, a copy of the thesis must be submitted in English, and they are encouraged to discuss the thesis in English if their language skills allow it. For students attending the Master in French, the thesis draft may be submitted in French only, and the discussion can take place in French or English.

The thesis discussion can take place in person during the optional residential phase or via online platforms such as Skype, WebEx, or Zoom.

The thesis must be registered in digital format in the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies' online theses archive in compliance with the timing specified in the Master Program Procedural Guidelines for Students.

Art. 15 - Prohibition of plagiarism

All works submitted as part of the requirements for any examination of the Master program must be expressed in the students' own words and incorporate their ideas and critical thinking. Plagiarism, which is the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as a student's own, must be avoided and will be duly punished. Particular care should be taken in coursework, essays, and theses. The Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies reserves the right to use plagiarism detection software. Any violation of academic integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the program.

Art. 16 - Educational Qualification issued

Educational qualifications issued for the completion of the Master

At the end of the Master Program, the Institution issues a first-level University Master's Diploma pursuant to art. 3 of Ministerial Decree No. 270/2004, as subsequently amended, to students who:

- attended the entire training syllabus regularly;
- passed the final exams for all the compulsory and selected optional modules, in accordance with



- the requirements envisaged in the Disciplinary Regulations;
- successfully discussed the Master thesis;
 - and are up to date with the payment of the enrolment fees.

Educational qualifications issued for the attendance of individual modules

Students admitted to individual modules, who have regularly settled the tuition costs and have passed all the required examinations, will receive a Certificate of Completion and the respective ECTS credits.

Art. 17 – Technical Requirements (Hardware and Software)

To access the desktop/laptop version of the MEPA e-learning platform, the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies and its partners recommend that students have the following minimum hardware and software requirements:

- Platform: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or superior; MacOS 9 or MacOS X; Linux
- Hardware: 64 MB of RAM, 1 GB of free disk space
- Software:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader
 - Adobe Flash Player
 - Microsoft Office (Windows or Apple version) or Open Office
- Browser:
 - Google Chrome 30.0
 - Safari 6
 - Internet Explorer 9 (IE 10 required for drag and drop of files from outside the browser into Moodle)
 - Firefox 25.0
- Note that JavaScript, Cookies and Popups must be enabled
- Modem: 56 K

For the mobile version, students are requested to install the Moodle Mobile app, and the platform can be accessed both with Android and iOS.

For technical problems related to the MEPA platform, students can contact UNITAR's technical helpdesk at mepa@unitar.org.

If the student decides to discuss his/her final thesis via online programs, a webcam and a microphone are required. The student will also be asked to download video conferencing software such as "Skype", WebEx or Zoom.

Art. 18 – Responsible person for the competitive entrance examination procedure, personal data processing and prevention of corruption measures

Under the art. 5 of the Act n. 241/90 and ff.mm., the person in charge of the competition procedure is Lucia Viegli, Head of the U.O. Higher Education - Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies - Via Maffi 27, 56127 Pisa - tel. 050/882645 - e-mail: altaformazione@santannapisa.it.

Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies (hereinafter the "School"), represented by the Rector, as Data Controller, under the article 13 of the EU General Data Protection Regulation n. 679/2016 and under the Italian Legislative Decree 30 June 2003 ("Privacy Code regarding the protection of personal data") with regard to the processing of personal data, and on his behalf, Giovanna Bottai, Head of the Post – Graduate Education Area will process your data.

Please read the privacy statement available at <https://www.santannapisa.it/it/alta-formazione-info>. The Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies operates in compliance with the legislation on the prevention of corruption (L.190 / 2012).