**ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA) PROGRAM GUIDE**

*Traditional Program Edition*

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**ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

**A-STATE MPA PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT**

The Master of Public Administration at Arkansas State University exists to enhance individual, organizational, social and governmental capacity in the public and non-profit sectors by equipping pre-service and mid-career students with sound management skills and a public/non-profit philosophy to lead public institutions of the future with integrity, innovation, excellence, and professionalism.

**A-STATE MPA PROGRAM GOALS**

The MPA Program at ASU will equip the next generation of public leaders by:   
  
1. Enhancing student skills in leading and managing diverse people with dignity and respect.  
2. Developing students’ analytical, problem solving and decision-making skills.  
3. Equipping students with the interpersonal and communication skills needed to establish and maintain relationships in public/non-profit institutions.  
4. Assisting students in establishing a professional code of ethics that sustains quality leadership.  
5. Providing students with fundamental financial management skills as a basis for financial fluency in public institutions.  
6. Involving students in experiential learning to find solutions to public problems.

**PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

Your curriculum is governed by the A-State Graduate Bulletin under which you entered the program. That is your "contract" with the university. Your curriculum is also governed by this document, which details the operation of the MPA program and is periodically revised. You may choose to be governed by the MPA curriculum in any later Bulletin and its associated guidelines while you are still completing your degree.

It is your responsibility to comply with the various requirements of the Graduate School and the Department of Political Science. You should, therefore, be familiar with the Graduate Bulletin and these guidelines about the MPA degree, particularly the course rotation. Please be aware that this information packet is intended to supplement but not replace the *Arkansas State University Graduate School Bulletin*.

Checklist for success in your MPA Program:

-- Read the Arkansas State University Graduate Bulletin & Student Handbook

-- Consult with your advisor about the program as needed

-- Familiarize yourself with the MPA course rotation

-- Complete any required co-requisite courses during your first year

-- Submit the Intent to Graduate form & take your MPA Capstone in your last semester

**Your Faculty Advisor/The MPA Director**: The role of the advisor is to guide you, both in academic and procedural context, through the MPA degree. In most instances, the MPA Director will be your advisor. However, you may change advisors, providing, of course, that another faculty member agrees to assume the advising responsibilities.

**E-Mail: *Always check your A-State email!*** This is the only official way that university employees are allowed to communicate with you. ***Please*** provide your A-State student ID number when you write an email. Otherwise, someone has to go and look it up.

**Registering for Classes**: Toward the end of each semester, you can look up what courses will be offered the following semester. Also, the regular ongoing course rotation is in this MPA Guide. You will have an advising hold on your account each semester. Email or stop by during Dr. Reese’s office hours, or make an appointment by email. Once Dr. Reese has submitted the advising hold release request to the department’s Administrative Assistant; subsequent issues may be resolved via email to Vickie Gilmer [vgilmer@astate.edu](mailto:vgilmer@astate.edu)

The MPA program is designed so that you may take your courses in any order with the following exceptions (once your pre-requisites have been completed; see above). First, take Seminar in PA in either your first or second semester. Second, the internship may not be taken before you have completed 18 hours of coursework with a minimum 3.0 GPA. Third, the Capstone must be taken in your final semester. Finally, if more than one course is offered on the same night, you must take one of them.

**Degree Evaluation:** You can check your own degree progress at any time by going to Banner, Student Info, Degree Evaluation, check MPA, then Generate Evaluation.

**Co-Requisite Courses:** The student entering the MPA program is expected to have previously taken (1) an undergraduate course in U.S. Government, (2) a course in the Principles of Economics, and (3) a course in research methodology. If not, the student must complete the course(s) prior to or during the first year of study, and earn at least a “C” grade in each course. A higher level of course in the same subject area may substitute for any of the above co-requisites.

**NASPAA Accreditation:** The Master of Public Administration Program at Arkansas State University is fully accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). A-State is also fully accredited by North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

**Admissions & Re-Admissions:** Students with prior “F” or “D” grades at the graduate level in any graduate program will not be admitted to the A-State MPA program. In addition, students who earn failing (“F”) grades in the A-State MPA program are ineligible for readmission to the program. Exception is with Capstone; see #5 in that section.

**4+1 (Accelerated) Master’s Program:** Qualified undergraduate students may be eligible to enter the program in their junior and senior year of study.

**Alumni Relations:** Students who wish to remain connected to other A-State MPA students in the MPA program should join the A-State MPA Alumni group on Linked In. This site can help with finding both positions and employees. Dr. Reese started this group in 2015.

**Admission Deadlines**: Please complete your application by July 15 (for Fall) or Dec. 1 (for Spring).

**Course Transfer Policy:** You are allowed to transfer a maximum of nine semester credit hours (three courses) of equivalent graduate coursework previously taken in a NASPAA-accredited MPA program at another university, assuming you had a minimum 3.0 GPA at that university. Graduate credit from non-NASPAA-accredited MPA programs will not be accepted for transfer.

**Grade and Other Grievance Appeals**: If you feel that a final course grade has been unfairly given to you, or if you otherwise feel aggrieved by an action of a faculty member, the Department, the Graduate School or the University, you should first attempt to resolve the matter with the party concerned. If such is not possible, direct your grievance to the Chair of the Department of Political Science. See the A-State Student Handbook.

**PLAGIAIRISM & CHEATING POLICY**

The Arkansas State University MPA Program has **ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**. Students in our program are expected to uphold a high standard of personal behavior by submitting honest work that properly cites any sources used. Students in our program are expected to follow both university policy as well as national ASPA ethics policy (reprinted near the end of this document). Students must *always* be careful to uphold their professional reputations not only by not committing unethical behavior but also by avoiding even the *appearance* of unethical behavior. There are two basic components to academic dishonesty: cheating and plagiarism.

***Cheating*** is using any unauthorized resources when completing any component of coursework, including stealing or purchasing answers from current or prior students. Another example of cheating is using textbooks, course notes, the Internet, or fellow classmates when that use is prohibited by the instructor for a particular assignment.

***Plagiarism*** is the use, theft, purchase, or obtaining by any means another's work or ideas, and the unacknowledged or insufficiently documented submission and/or incorporation of that work as one's own. It involves quoting or paraphrasing someone else's work without providing the source or properly assigning credit. This is not merely an offense of academic dishonesty, which may result in failure of a course or dismissal from the university; it is also an illegal act subject to criminal prosecution.

***Self-Plagiarism*** is a particular type of plagiarism that involves a student using prior work he or she has done, without saying so. The basic rule is that if you use something you developed for another course or program, you need to ask the instructor if that is okay *and* cite your prior work just as you would do for any other source.

The most common problem we see in these areas is plagiarism from the Internet, including improperly or insufficiently documenting sources. And the most common “source” that is improperly documented is prior students’ answers to exams, searched for and sometimes paid for by current students. This is clearly both cheating and plagiarism. If we catch you, and most of us both use plagiarism-detection software *and* are extremely proficient at noticing words we have previously read, you will be dismissed from the program with no chance of re-entry. **Be honest. Do not lie.** **Do not take shortcuts. Do your own work.**

A student who cheats or plagiarizes all or part of any assignment will receive a zero for that assignment, at a *minimum*, and will most likely receive a failing grade for the course. Whether to assign a failing grade to a student is *entirely* within the course professor’s discretion, as noted in the A-State Student Handbook under “Academic Misconduct.” Failing a course for plagiarism, cheating, or any other reason will result in immediate dismissal from the program with no chance of re-entry.

**ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)**

**DEGREE PLAN (36 HOURS)**

**Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ID: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**CO-REQUISITE COURSES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **COURSE** | **SEMESTER** | **GRADE** |
| POSC 2103 Intro to U.S. Government |  |  |
| ECON 2333 Economic Issues & Concepts |  |  |
| POSC 3003 Introduction to Political Analysis\* |  |  |

**CORE COURSES (POSC) (21 HOURS)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **COURSE** | **SEMESTER** | **GRADE** |
| 6563 Seminar in Public Admin (Fall) |  |  |
| 6003 Techniques of Research (Fall) |  |  |
| 6593 Human Resource Admin (Fall) |  |  |
| 6553 Public Budgeting & Finance (Spring) |  |  |
| 6613 Admin Leadership (Fall) |  |  |
| 6623 Admin Ethics (Spring) |  |  |
| 6573 Grant Writing Admin (Fall) |  |  |

**TRACKS (9 HOURS)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PUBLIC MGT** |  |  | **OR** | **NON-PROFIT MGT** |  |  |
| **COURSE** | **SEM** | **GR** |  | **COURSE** | **SEM** | **GR** |
| 6543 Admin Behavior (Sp) |  |  |  | 6843 NP Mgmt (Sp) |  |  |
| 6423 Pub Financial Mgmt (F) |  |  |  | 6433 NP Fund/FM (Sp) |  |  |
| 6533 Policy Analysis (Sp) |  |  |  | 6443 NP Plan/Mkt (Fa) |  |  |

**INTERNSHIP + CAPSTONE (6 HOURS)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **COURSE** | **SEMESTER** | **GRADE** |
| 6603 Internship (All) OR 6473 Strat P (Sp) |  |  |
| 6653 MPA Capstone Experience (All) |  |  |

\*Or any undergraduate-level research methodology course

**TRADITIONAL MPA CORE COURSE ROTATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FALLs** | **SPRINGs** |
| 6563 Seminar in PA | 6553 Public Budgeting & Finance |
| 6003 Techniques of Research | 6623 Admin Ethics |
| 6593 Human Resource Mgmt | 6473 Strategic Planning (if no internship) **OR** 6603 Internship |
| 6613 Admin Leadership | 6543 Admin Behavior **OR**  6433 Nonprofit Fundrais & Fin Mgmt |
| 6423 Financial Management **OR** 6443 Nonprofit Planning | 6533 Policy Analysis **OR**  6643 Nonprofit Mgmt |
| 6573 Grant Writing |  |
| 6653 MPACapstone | 6653 MPA Capstone |

**Exemplary Sequence for Completing the MPA Program**

An MPA student carrying a ***full load of courses*** (9 credit hours per semester) will typically complete the following sequence of courses:

**Fall 2020**

POSC 6563 Seminar in Public Administration

POSC 6593 Seminar in Human Resource Management

POSC 6613 Admin Leadership

**Spring 2021**

POSC 6553 Public Budgeting & Finance

POSC 6543 Admin Behavior **OR** 6433 Nonprofit Fundraising & FM

POSC 6533 Policy Analysis **OR** 6643 Nonprofit Mgmt

**Fall 2021**

POSC 6423 Financial Mgmt **OR** 6443 Nonprofit Planning

POSC 6603 Techniques of Research

POSC 6573 Grant Writing

**Spring 2022**

POSC 6623 Admin Ethics

POSC 6473 Strategic Planning **OR** POSC 6603 Internship

POSC 6653 MPA Capstone Experience

An MPA student carrying a ***part time load of courses*** (6 credit hours per semester) will typically complete the following sequence of courses:

**Fall 2020**

POSC 6563 Seminar in Public Administration

POSC 6593 Seminar in Human Resources Management

**Spring 2021**

POSC 6553 Public Budgeting and Finance

POSC 6543 Administrative Behavior

**Fall 2021**

POSC 6423 Public Financial Mgmt **OR** POSC 6443 Nonprofit Planning

POSC 6613 Admin Leadership

**Spring 2022**

POSC 6533 Policy Analysis **OR** 6643Nonprofit Mgmt

POSC 6623 Admin Ethics

**Fall 2022**

POSC 6573 Grant Writing & Admin

POSC 6003 Techniques of Research

**Spring 2023**

POSC 6473 Strategic Planning

POSC 6653 MPA Capstone

**NOTEs: Internship and Capstone are offered every part-of-term as needed, although Capstone is only offered in Part 1 of each term. Also, try to schedule an internship in Spring or Summer if you can. PLEASE note that if you begin the program in a semester other than Fall *and/or* you periodically drop courses, this will *disproportionately* add to your completion time!**

***Special* *Note to International Students*: Please try to start the program in Fall if at all possible, due to USA VISA policies.**

**INTERNSHIP**

Please refer to the A-State MPA Internship Guide.

**MPA CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE (COMPREHENSIVE EXAM)**

University policies with respect to the comprehensive examination are given in the Graduate Bulletin. The MPA Capstone Experience conforms to those general guidelines. The MPA Capstone is designed to assess your overall grasp of the public administration subject matter that you have studied by challenging you with a set of applied problems in the field.

Capstone must be taken in the ***last semester*** of the program. Students applying to take the capstone must have a 3.0 GPA and must have completed any co-requisites.

The MPA Committee has established the following procedure for the comprehensive examination of MPA candidates:

1. In the semester prior to the end of the student’s program, he/she must contact the MPA Director, or the Online MPA Program Advisor, providing his/her student ID number, in order to obtain clearance to register for the Capstone.

2. Around this same time, the candidate must submit an Intent to Graduate via the A-State Registrar’s website.

3. The comprehensive examination will be in writing and consist of weekly reflective assignments from different areas within the degree, chosen by the MPA Committee, and resulting in documents that may be used for an e-portfolio.

4. Answers to questions on a given topic will be graded by a faculty member selected by the MPA Committee for their expertise in that substantive area. Each reader will assign a grade of using the associated rubric on Blackboard.

5. The student must achieve an ***overall*** grade of High Pass (“A”), Pass, (“B”, or Low Pass (“C”). If the candidate fails any assignments due to plagiarism, the student will fail the Capstone and be dropped from candidacy for the degree. Students who fail the MPA comprehensive examination for reasons other than plagiarism must repeat the course after sitting out 14 weeks in penalty. All students who fail Capstone for the second time are permanently dropped from candidacy for the degree.

**THESIS**

The MPA thesis is expected to consist of a systematic study that contributes to the knowledge base of some aspect of public administration. Generally, the best MPA theses are those that analyze empirical data gathered to investigate a concrete issue, problem or hypothesis. Such theses are usually the most easily managed by the student and have the greatest potential for subsequent publication. The thesis is ***not*** ***recommended*** for MPA students unless they are planning on pursuing a Ph.D.

The MPA thesis will normally contain the following elements: (a) a survey of previous research literature on the subject; (b) a statement of research methods being employed; (c) data analysis and reporting of results; and (d) the drawing of implications and conclusions.

Thesis students are exempt from taking the MPA Capstone Experience.

**American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)**

**Code of Ethics**

**The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) advances the science, art, and practice of public administration.   The Society affirms its responsibility to develop the spirit of responsible professionalism within its membership and to increase awareness and commitment to ethical principles and standards among all those who work in public service in all sectors. To this end, we, the members of the Society, commit ourselves to uphold the following principles:**

**1.** **Advance the Public Interest**. Promote the interests of the public and put service to the public above service to oneself.

**2. Uphold the Constitution and the Law.**Respect and support government constitutions and laws, while seeking to improve laws and policies to promote the public good.

**3. Promote democratic participation.**Inform the public and encourage active engagement in governance.  Be open, transparent and responsive, and respect and assist all persons in their dealings with public organizations.

**4. Strengthen social equity.**Treat all persons with fairness, justice, and equality and respect individual differences, rights, and freedoms. Promote affirmative action and other initiatives to reduce unfairness, injustice, and inequality in society.**5. Fully Inform and Advise.**Provide accurate, honest, comprehensive, and timely information and advice to elected and appointed officials, governing board members, and staff members in your organization.   
 **6. Demonstrate personal integrity.**Adhere to the highest standards of conduct to inspire public confidence and trust in public service.

**7. Promote Ethical Organizations:**Strive to attain the highest standards of ethics, stewardship, and public service in organizations that serve the public.

**8. Advance Professional Excellence:**Strengthen personal capabilities to act competently and ethically and encourage the professional development of others.

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN P.A.**

***These are organizations of which you can become a member. They are also organizations with good and interesting information on public administration as a career.***

**American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)**

Membership includes students, academics, and practitioners from local, state, and federal agencies. ASPA has one national meeting per year, and there are also regular regional and local chapter meetings. The most significant regional ASPA meeting is the Southeastern Conference on Public Administration, or SECoPA, held in various cities in the southeastern U.S. in the fall. ASPA publishes *Public Administration Review* (PAR), perhaps the most important journal in public administration. Members also receive *Public Administration Times*, a monthly newspaper that provides information on current events in public administration as well as job openings. In addition, members can join different sections of ASPA, such as the Public Budgeting & Finance Section (PBF) or the Section on Public Personnel Administration & Labor Relations (SPALR). Also, members can join local chapters of ASPA. ASPA has an inexpensive membership for students. For more information see <http://www.aspanet.org/>

**Pi Alpha Alpha (PAA)– The Public Administration Honor Association**

Arkansas State University has a local chapter of Pi Alpha Alpha, the National Honorary Society for Public Affairs and Administration. Pi Alpha Alpha is prestigious for our students, as well as for our public administration program and the university. Eligibility requirements for MPA students are: minimum 18 hours completed and minimum 3.85 GPA.

***Q. How can I become a member of Pi Alpha Alpha (PAA)*?**

A. Dr. Reese requests a list of eligible students (from the A-State Registrar) who fit these criteria at the beginning of Fall and Spring terms. She then emails eligible students. You may also order honor cords to wear at graduation at the same time if you wish. If you get an email invite, respond by the due date! More info on the international honor society is here: <http://pialphaalpha.org/>

**International City/County Management Association (ICMA)**

ICMA is a professional and educational organization representing appointed managers and administrators in local government throughout the world. Members receive bi-weekly newsletters and the monthly publication of *Public Management* magazine. For more information see <http://www.icma.org/main/>

**International Personnel Management Association (IPMA)**

IPMA is the recognized association for public personnel professionals. Members receive a monthly newsletter which includes position openings, a quarterly journal, and a membership directory. For more information see <http://www.ipma-hr.org/>

**Government Finance Officers Association of the U.S. and Canada (GFOA)**

Membership includes professionals in such areas as governmental accounting, debt, and cash management, revenue sharing, and data processing. The GFAO holds an annual conference and several regional and local seminars in topical areas. The journal, *Governmental Finance*, is published by GFAO and members receive a bimonthly newsletter with articles on financial topics and job advertisements. For more information see <http://www.gfoa.org/>

**SOME SUGGESTED PODCASTS/ BLOGS**

[**https://aspanational.wordpress.com/**](https://aspanational.wordpress.com/)

[**https://www.brookings.edu/podcasts/**](https://www.brookings.edu/podcasts/)

[**http://leagueofwomeningovernment.org/**](http://leagueofwomeningovernment.org/)

[**http://fiscalhealthandwellness.blogspot.com/**](http://fiscalhealthandwellness.blogspot.com/)

[**https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/?noredirect=on&utm\_term=.ccbe2bbe7a93**](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ccbe2bbe7a93)

[**http://www.govtech.com/govgirl/**](http://www.govtech.com/govgirl/)

[**https://www.n-r-c.com/news-and-knowledge/the-civil-review/**](https://www.n-r-c.com/news-and-knowledge/the-civil-review/)

**EX-OFFICIO A-STATE MPA ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Albert Banuelos | *Assistant Director of Eligibility Operations, County of San Diego* | [afbanuelos@aol.com](mailto:afbanuelos@aol.com) |
| Sue Neal | *Research Consultant, Maddies Fund; Executive Director, Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve in Michigan* | [sneal@astate.edu](mailto:sneal@astate.edu) |
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**A-STATE MPA ADVISORY BOARD**

|  |  |  |
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5.5.2021 CcR

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