

GUIDELINES FOR THE  
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)  
PROGRAM AT  
ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Prepared by:

The MPA Committee  
Department of Political Science

Spring 2008

***The purpose of the Master of Public Administration degree is to prepare individuals for positions of leadership in governmental and non-governmental public service organizations. Since the scope of public services is wide and highly diverse, we seek to serve a range of students by providing a generalist degree in a compact program taught by professionals contributing to the region and the discipline.***

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**Note:** Your curriculum is governed by the Graduate Bulletin under which you entered the program. That is your "contract" with the University. Your curriculum is also governed by these guidelines which detail the operation of the MPA program and which are 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. Please be aware that this information packet is intended to supplement but not replace the Bulletin.

## **American Society for Public Administration's Code of Ethics**

**Serve the Public Interest:** Serve the public, beyond serving oneself. ASPA members are committed to:

1. Exercise discretionary authority to promote the public interest.
2. Oppose all forms of discrimination and harassment, and promote affirmative action.
3. Recognize and support the public's right to know the public's business.
4. Involve citizens in policy decision-making.
5. Exercise compassion, benevolence, fairness and optimism.
6. Respond to the public in ways that are complete, clear, and easy to understand.
7. Assist citizens in their dealings with government.
8. Be prepared to make decisions that may not be popular.

**Respect the Constitution and the Law:** Respect, support, and study government constitutions and laws that define responsibilities of public agencies, employees, and all citizens. ASPA members are committed to:

1. Understand and apply legislation and regulations relevant to their professional role.
2. Work to improve and change laws and policies that are counterproductive or obsolete.
3. Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
4. Prevent all forms of mismanagement of public funds by establishing and maintaining strong fiscal and management controls, and by supporting audits and investigative activities.
5. Respect and protect privileged information.
6. Encourage and facilitate legitimate dissent activities in government and protect the whistleblowing rights of public employees.
7. Promote constitutional principles of equality, fairness, representativeness, responsiveness and due process in protecting citizens' rights.

**Demonstrate Personal Integrity:** Demonstrate the highest standards in all activities to inspire public confidence and trust in public service. ASPA members are committed to:

1. Maintain truthfulness and honesty and to not compromise them for advancement, honor, or personal gain.
2. Ensure that others receive credit for their work and contributions.
3. Zealously guard against conflict of interest or its appearance: e.g., nepotism, improper outside employment, misuse of public resources or the acceptance of gifts.
4. Respect superiors, subordinates, colleagues and the public.
5. Take responsibility for their own errors.
6. Conduct official acts without partisanship.

**Promote Ethical Organizations:** Strengthen organizational capabilities to apply ethics, efficiency and effectiveness in serving the public. ASPA members are committed to:

1. Enhance organizational capacity for open communication, creativity, and dedication.
2. Subordinate institutional loyalties to the public good.
3. Establish procedures that promote ethical behavior and hold individuals and organizations accountable for their conduct.
4. Provide organization members with an administrative means for dissent, assurance of due process and safeguards against reprisal.
5. Promote merit principles that protect against arbitrary and capricious actions.
6. Promote organizational accountability through appropriate controls and procedures.
7. Encourage organizations to adopt, distribute, and periodically review a code of ethics as a living document.

**Strive for Professional Excellence:** Strengthen individual capabilities and encourage the professional development of others. ASPA members are committed to:

1. Provide support and encouragement to upgrade competence.
2. Accept as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up to date on emerging issues and potential problems.
3. Encourage others, throughout their careers, to participate in professional activities and associations.
4. Allocate time to meet with students and provide a bridge between classroom studies and the realities of public service.



## **GENERAL MPA PROGRAM INFORMATION**

### **CHECKLIST for staying "On Top" of your MPA Program**

- \$ Read the Graduate Bulletin.
- \$ File all transcripts of any undergraduate and graduate work taken at other universities.
- \$ Consult with your advisor about your program.
- \$ Be aware that most MPA courses are offered during alternate semesters.
- \$ File the "Admission to Candidacy" form after completing twelve to eighteen hours of graduate work and satisfying any provisions to your admission.
- \$ File the "Intent to Graduate" form during the registration period of your last enrollment. (August graduates must file during the first Summer term registration.)
- \$ Prepare to take the MPA comprehensive examinations at the scheduled time during your last enrollment period.

### **The MPA Director and Your Faculty Advisor**

Every MPA student must have an advisor who is a member of the Political Science faculty. The name of the advisor will be indicated on your notice of admission. 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 also be your advisor. However, you have the right to change advisors, providing, of course, that another faculty member agrees to assume the advising responsibility.

### **Foundation Courses**

The student entering the MPA program is expected to have previously taken an undergraduate course in U.S. Government and a course in the Principles of Economics. In the absence of such a background, a student will be accepted into the MPA program but is required to complete the indicated deficiencies before applying to the Graduate School for formal admission to candidacy (see the Graduate Bulletin).

Deficiencies in foundation courses are assessed by the MPA Committee at the time of the student's admission and are duly indicated on the student's admission notice.

### **NASPAA Accreditation**

The Master of Public Administration Program at Arkansas State University is recognized by, and a member of, the National Association for Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). ASU is also fully accredited by North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

## MPA PROGRAM COURSEWORK

### Core Curriculum

Core requirements (21 credit hours plus 6 hours of internship/ thesis/ additional coursework for a total of 27 credit hours):

POSC 6003	Techniques of Political & Public Administration Research
POSC 6533	Policy Analysis and Evaluation
POSC 6543	Administrative Behavior
POSC 6553	Public Budgeting and Finance
POSC 6563	Seminar in Public Administration
POSC 6583	Computer Applications in Public Administration
POSC 6593	Seminar in Human Resources Management
POSC 6603-6	Internship in Public Administration (or Thesis or 6 hours in Political Science).

### Research Core

In order to develop research skills the MPA program has developed a tracking system through the courses Seminar in Public Administration (POSC 6563), Policy Analysis and Evaluation (POSC 6533) and Techniques of Political & Public Administration Research (POSC 6003), as well as Computer Applications in Public Administration (POSC 6583). While the track will not be formally required, students are advised to take the following sequence of courses in order: Seminar in PA (Fall First Year); Policy Analysis and Evaluation (Spring First Year); and Techniques (Fall Second Year).

### MPA CORE COURSE ROTATION

<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>Spring Semester</b>	<b>Summer I/II</b>
<b>Computer Applications</b>	<b>Administrative Behavior</b>	Administrative Law
<b>Techniques of PA Research</b>	<b>Public Budgeting &amp; Finance</b>	
<b>Seminar in Public Admin</b>	<b>Policy Analysis</b>	
<b>Human Resource Mgt.</b>		
Env. Policy/Law & Administration		Decision Making
Managing Local Government		Urban Politics

**Bold** denotes core courses.

### Restricted Electives in Public Administration and American Politics

Six hours from to be selected from POSC courses listed below:

POSC 6113	Intergovernmental Relations
POSC 6123	Urban Politics
POSC 6133	Seminar in Political Parties and Political Behavior
POSC 6143	Seminar in American Government and Politics
POSC 6153	The Supreme Court, Politics and the Law
POSC 6173	Environmental Policy Processes
POSC 6413	Seminar in Political Theory/Ethics and Public Policy
POSC 6503	Managing Local Government
POSC 6513	Administrative Law

POSC 6523	Decision Making
POSC 6573	Grant Writing

### Unrestricted Electives

Nine hours of electives from Political Science, or from any field for which the student meets course prerequisites, to be selected with the approval of the advisor. The primary purpose of this group of electives is to permit a MPA student to study areas of government and non-profit policy and its administration that is of special professional interest. A coherent package of courses and an internship can be arranged to gain a better understanding of various public management subfields.

### Internship

All pre-service students are required to complete an internship. The minimum internship is 300 hours (3 credit hours) although internships may extend to 600 hours (6 credit hours) of service in a significant professional work background. It is expected the student will be involved in a major written project (>20 pages) in addition to usual day-to-day duties. It is further expected students will embark upon their internship upon completion of their first year of core courses (18 credit hours in the core curriculum).

Students classified as in-service (having one year full-time or more of management experience) are exempt from this requirement, and may take an additional 3-6 hours of coursework or thesis. Here pre-service is defined as not having substantial professional experience (the equivalent of one year full-time) in the areas of management and/or administration. Please see page 13 for details on internship.

### Area of Specialization

Currently, ASU-MPA offers one area of specialization, the ***Certificate in Criminal Justice***. The main theme of the ***Certificate in Criminal Justice*** is to tie theory directly to the skills needed by officers in the field, whether corrections, probation or law enforcement. Courses taken by students are drawn from public administration/political science and criminology/sociology programs. A total of five courses (15 credit hours) will be taken for the certificate, with two courses taken from each of the departments and one core course provided by the Department of Criminology, Sociology and Geography.

The one "core course" that all students must take is:

SOC 6233	Criminal Justice Systems
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*Choose two criminology/sociology courses:*

SOC 6523	Seminar in Criminal Behavior
SOC 6403	Seminar in Juvenile Delinquency
SOC 6513	Seminar in Community and Institutional Corrections
SOC 6133	Police and Society

*Choose two public administration/political science courses:*

POSC 6113	Intergovernmental Relations
POSC 6123	Urban Politics
POSC 6153	The Supreme Court, Politics and the Law
POSC 6503	Managing Local Government
POSC 6513	Administrative Law
POSC 6523	Decision Making
POSC 6573	Grant Writing

Upon completion of the coursework, the student must present an updated version of a paper from one of the five courses taken and defend it orally in front of a committee composed of the Director of the MPA Program, the Director of the Criminology Program and the professor from the class for which the paper

was written. The committee will pass or fail the paper on a consensus opinion. If the paper is failed, the student must make corrections to the paper on the basis of committee comments and retake the oral examination within one semester.

### Sequence for Completing the MPA Program

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

#### Fall 20XX

POSC 6563	Seminar in Public Administration
POSC 6593	Seminar in Human Resource Management
POSC 6003	Techniques of Political & Public Administration Research

#### Spring 20XX

POSC 6533	Policy Analysis and Evaluation
POSC 6553	Public Budgeting and Finance
POSC 6543	Administrative Behavior

#### Summer 20XX

POSC 6###	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective
POSC 6###	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective

#### Fall 20XX

POSC 6583	Computer Applications in Public Administration
XXXX ####	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective
XXXX ####	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective

#### Spring 20XX

POSC 6603	Internship in Public Administration
POSC 6603	Internship in Public Administration
XXXX ####	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective

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

#### Fall 20XX

POSC 6563	Seminar in Public Administration
POSC 6003	Techniques of Political & Public Administration Research

#### Spring 20XX

POSC 6553	Public Budgeting and Finance
POSC 6543	Administrative Behavior

#### Summer 20XX

POSC 6###	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective
POSC 6###	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective

#### Fall 20XX

POSC 6583	Computer Applications in Public Administration
POSC 6593	Seminar in Human Resource Management

#### Spring 20XX

POSC 6533	Policy Analysis and Evaluation
POSC 6###	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective

#### Summer 20XX

POSC 6###	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective
POSC 6###	Restricted/Unrestricted Elective

#### Fall 20XX

POSC 6603	Internship in Public Administration
POSC 6603	Internship in Public Administration

## **Course Transfers**

You are allowed to transfer not more than nine semester credit hours (normally, three courses) of non-core graduate coursework previously taken at another university. To effect such a transfer, you must direct your transcript to the Graduate School and submit a letter to the Graduate Dean, via the MPA Director, documenting the course taken (preferably by presenting a syllabus) and specifying the course against which you expect the transfer credit to apply. Your request will be considered by the MPA Committee and you will be notified of its decision.

Transfer credit may be obtained only for appropriate courses taken at the graduate level for which you received no less than a grade of "B". Moreover, graduate work cannot be transferred unless a graduate course average of 3.0 was maintained at the university from which the transfer emanates.

## **Independent Study**

You may take no more than three hours (one course) of independent study. A student may take independent study for one of two reasons:

- (1) You may take an independent study if you can demonstrate that the topic of independent study is relevant to your MPA program and that there is no course at ASU which you can take which covers this topic; or
- (2) You may take independent study of an elective or an area of concentration course if you can demonstrate that waiting to take this course during its regularly scheduled semester will prevent you from obtaining the degree in a timely manner. (For example: The elective course you need is scheduled for the Spring semester. Except for that course, you will have completed all course work in time for the December degree award date. Consequently, if you do not take the subject course during the Fall semester as independent study, you will have to wait an extra semester to graduate. Under such conditions, independent study of a regularly offered course will be allowed, subject to instructor approval.) Please note that normal University regulations pertaining to maximum course loads applies to independent study.

It is expected that the students will attempt to plan their courses of study so as to avoid having to use this option.

Independent study must be sponsored by a member of the faculty. Appropriate forms will be made available to you for endorsement by the faculty sponsor. If you are eligible to take a regularly offered course as independent study (see "2" above), it is expected that the sponsor of such independent study will be a faculty member who normally teaches the regularly offered course.

## **MPA Program/Political Science Department's plagiarism policy**

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.

It is easy to avoid plagiarism. Writers simply need to acknowledge the sources they use in writing their own work. Some instances of plagiarism are inadvertent, arising from inexperience and a misunderstanding of what a writer does and does not need to cite, but ignorance is not an excuse that

carries a lot of weight. Here is a *rough* guide to what writers do and do not need to cite in their own work:

*Materials that **do not** need to be acknowledged:*

- Information that is common knowledge. For example, a writer would not need to credit a source for the statement that Little Rock is the capital of Arkansas. The writer would, though, need to cite a source if he/she discussed information outside of common knowledge (e.g., Little Rock's population, circumstances regarding the city's founding, etc.).
- Information that is widely available in a variety of sources. A writer who mentions the fact that President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963 would not need to cite a source for that information, even if the writer had to check to insure that the date was correct. If a borderline case arises, consult your teacher.

Information based on the writer's own field research. If you use information gathered from your own surveys, observations, and interviews, you only need to say so in your work.

*Materials that **do** need to be acknowledged:*

- Direct quotations.
- Summaries and paraphrases of someone else's words. Note that whereas a summary is a recapitulation or a succinct covering of a text's main points, a paraphrase is a rewording, perhaps a simplification, of a text. Borrowing from either requires that the user credit the source.
- Facts not widely known and statements that are arguable. For example, the assertion that the U.S. is becoming increasingly socialistic is arguable, while the statement that Augustus attempted to reduce the size of the Senate, but gave it up in bafflement is (presumably) a fact beyond common knowledge. Writers should be careful in judging whether the borrowed information is fact or opinion and use the information fittingly in their own work.
- Data such as statistics, tables, and other graphs not derived from your own work.

## **Grade and Other Grievance Appeals**

If you feel that a grade has been unfairly given to you or if you otherwise feel aggrieved by a particular practice or policy of a faculty member, the Department, the Graduate School or the University you should first attempt to resolve the matter with the party concerned and if such is not possible, direct your grievance to the Chair of the Department of Political Science. The Chair will seek a disposition of your grievance and if such is not resolved, will inform you of the appeals process.

## **THE MPA COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

University policies with respect to the comprehensive examination are given in the Graduate Bulletin. Comprehensive examination policy of the MPA program conforms to those general guidelines.

The MPA comprehensive examination is designed to test your overall grasp of the public administration subject matter which you have studied. The emphasis of the examination is on the core subject matter in the MPA program. It is an examination which normally takes 3-4 hours to complete.

MPA students take their comprehensives during the term in which they have registered for their last remaining credit hours in the program. Students may not take their comprehensives unless they have on file with the Graduate School an "Application for Admission to Candidacy" form and have satisfied any undergraduate deficiencies. A 3.0 GPA is a prerequisite for Admission to Candidacy and for taking the comprehensive exams.

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

1. At the beginning of the fall and spring semester during which the examination is to be taken, normally immediately after the student has finished the 21 credit hour core curriculum, the candidate must inform the MPA Director that they will be taking the comprehensive examination.
2. The comprehensive examination will be in writing and consist of two questions submitted by the MPA committee. The questions will be taken from the core courses, with one question from the "Research Core" of Seminar in Public Administration (POSC 6563), Policy Analysis and Evaluation (POSC 6533), Techniques of Political & Public Administration Research (POSC 6003), and Computer Applications in Public Administration (POSC 6583). The second question will be taken from the "Management Core" of Administrative Behavior (POSC 6543), Seminar in Human Resources Management (POSC 6593) and Public Budgeting and Finance (POSC 6553).
3. Answers to a given question will be graded by a quorum of committee members who will read and grade each question. Each reader will assign a grade of: High Pass = 4.0; Pass = 3.0; Low Pass = 2.0; Fail = 1.0; Low Fail = 0.0. To pass the comprehensive examination, students must achieve an average of 2.67.
4. The comprehensive examination is normally given two weeks before the date these examinations are due in the graduate school (usually the first two weeks of October in the Fall semester and the first two weeks of March in the Spring semester), as announced in the academic calendar and published in the university Graduate Bulletin. Saturday is usually the day of the week during which this test is given.
5. If the candidate fails one question, an oral examination will be arranged to take place within a week. The oral examiner will be the faculty member who was not satisfied with the written response and the Director of the MPA Program. If student fails the oral portion as well, or if the student initially fails both questions, the entire MPA comprehensive examination must be repeated during the next semester. Students who fail the comprehensives for the second time are dropped from candidacy.
6. The comprehensive exam is to be taken on a computer provided by the MPA Director unless otherwise agreed to.

### **Comprehensive Exam Questions**

The following questions provide *examples* of questions that may show up on the comprehensive examination.

#### **Research Core**

##### Techniques of political and public administration research

Using the provided database, choose (1) a categorical/nominal variable, (2) an ordinal variable and (3) an interval variable and describe each in terms of central tendency and dispersion using the appropriate statistics and graphic representation. Next, test the relationships between (1) a categorical/nominal variable with a nominal variable, (2) a categorical/nominal variable with an interval variable, and (3) an interval variable with an interval variable using the appropriate statistical test and graphic representation. Finally, discuss your findings.

##### Policy analysis and program evaluation

You have been asked by ASU to return and carry out a program analysis of the Masters in Public Administration (MPA) program. You are expected to change certain aspects of the program to meet the changing needs of the public sector and enrolled students. Formulate and discuss the proposed program change stating formal hypotheses, establish measures linking them to the hypotheses and discussing validity and reliability, determine three different research designs (non-experimental, experimental or

quasi-experimental-- use "Xs & Os") and time-frame while discussing potential internal and external validity problems for each design and addressing ethical concerns. Finally, discuss what you believe the final results of the policy change will be.

#### Seminar in public administration

Traditional public administration theory would suggest a support for professionalism, expertise, and strong executive government; by contrast, contemporary public administration would favor smaller government, more direct citizen involvement, contracting out and privatizing, and market like incentives. Considering these two perspectives, and your own understanding of public administration, what ought to constitute the requisites of public administration? Why?

According to public administration scholars, what is ethics? Would you support a Code of Ethics for public administrators? Why or why not? How can one educate and promote ethics to the public sector? Is this a worthwhile endeavor? Why or why not?

How did early scholars, such as Woodrow Wilson, view the role of public administration in democracy? How valid were their beliefs? Does modern public administration differ from these traditional concepts of bureaucracy? If so, how and why?

#### Computer applications in public administration

1. In any organization, be it public or private, the relationship between the managers and the managed may be discussed in terms of the need for command and control. These relationships are often problematic. In what ways does computerization affect this problem? Which specific applications of computer hardware and/or software exacerbate problems of command and control; which ameliorate these problems?
2. What are the steps involved in a computerization needs assessment and procurement? What role should upper level management play in such an assessment? How should the line staff be involved?
3. Write an essay in which you discuss the various security threats faced by public organizations in terms of information systems, including hardware, software, and data. Has the nature of these threats changed due to the invention of computers? Discuss some of the measures used to counteract the threats.
4. Write an essay in which you discuss the various barriers to and legal issues surrounding the progress of municipal e-government. What are some of the factors that are positively associated with the adoption of a municipal Website?
5. Write a short essay on the need for a "Computer Usage Policy" in public organizations. What are the necessary elements to be found in such a policy? For each element, describe why it is needed, what problems it addresses, give an example, etc.

### **Management Core**

#### Administrative behavior

Considering scholarly research about workers attitudes/dispositions, your views, and the complexity of today's work environment, is it possible or realistic to "humanize" an organization to achieve higher levels of personal satisfaction on the job? Why or why not? Are there conditions under which the application of organizational humanism may be limited?

What is your own theory of management? You can describe it in words or draw it as a model. Based on your theory of management and today's environment, answer the following questions: What blind spots could your theory lead you to have? What personal values seem to underlie your theory; that is, "people, managers, or organizations should/should not \_\_\_\_\_ (what?)." What implicit assumptions, if any, are you making about human nature or motivation? What skills do you think are necessary to be a "master" manager?



### Seminar in human resources management

*Respond to the following, using examples as often as you can to clarify points:*

Describe and distinguish among equal employment opportunity (EEO), affirmative action (AA), and workplace diversity (WD) in terms of goals, methods, effects and the major laws and court decisions associated with each. Which of the three do you believe will be most widely practiced as we proceed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and why?

*Please review and answer the questions below in as much detail as you can.*

The Governor of Alabama issued an executive order in 2003 rescinding all executive branch regulations/agency personnel policies related to affirmative action and replacing them with the following: "All agencies making hiring, retention, promotion, or advancement decisions shall base the decision solely on selecting the **most** qualified applicant. No applicant for employment or advancement shall receive any special advantage, consideration, or credit because of race, color, national origin, religion, or gender status." After a year of implementation in hiring and promotion, the percentage of women, and particularly minorities, has plummeted. For example, in 70% of hiring decisions, there was a qualified minority or female candidate for selection but none was hired. So, the workforce composition is beginning a trend toward greater domination of white males.

What is the significance of this policy change? Does it represent a movement toward color-blind, gender-blind policies in hiring and promotion? Would such a movement be desirable in your opinion? Why or why not? Can/should disparate impact analysis be utilized to challenge and override the gubernatorial policy implemented here? What factors would your decision depend upon? (For example, if the hiring pattern above is based only on candidate scores on a general civil service exam, as opposed to a combination of exam and interview scores, would that affect your decision?) As we progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, should our focus as future public administrators be on equal opportunity law, affirmative action law, or workforce diversity? Use the case above to help defend/justify your position. Would recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the affirmative action area influence your decision? Why or why not?

### Public budgeting and finance

*Respond to the following question, using examples as often as you can to support your points.*

Identify the main sources of revenue (tax and non-tax) for the federal, state and local levels of government. After defining the standard criteria by which these sources of revenue are judged, assess each source according to the criteria. Which level of government has the most preferable overall revenue mix according to the criteria you have defined? Explain.

## **CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE IN THE MPA PROGRAM**

Because of the importance of practical application of public administration knowledge, it is expected MPA students will either bring with them substantial work experience or will gain this experience during their course of study.

Specifics about the Internship will be found in the appended "Public Service Internship Guidelines." Every MPA candidate must take the Internship unless:

- (a) The student chooses the MPA thesis option; or
- (b) The student petitions and receives the approval of the MPA committee to take six additional graduate hours in Political Science/Public Administration courses approved by the advisor.

### **The MPA Thesis**

The MPA thesis is expected to consist of a systematic study which contributes to the knowledge base of some aspect of public administration. Generally, the best MPA theses are those which 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. Students who have a professional interest in program evaluation and policy analysis, as well as those who plan to take graduate work beyond the MPA degree, are encouraged to take the thesis option.

The MPA thesis will normally contain the following elements:

- a) a survey of previous research literature pertaining to the student's thesis;
- b) a statement of research methods being employed;
- c) data analysis and reporting of results; and
- d) the drawing of implications and conclusions.

Please refer to the Graduate Bulletin for additional information about theses. Students contemplating the thesis option should consult with the MPA Director.

## **The MPA Public Internship**

Public service internships provide students with work experience to give them a realistic exposure to an organizational/bureaucratic environment and the administrative method. This experience is expected to develop the student's awareness of the internal dynamics of a public organization and of the values and attitudes of public employees pertaining to both their clientele and their administrative and political superiors.

The internship should provide the students the opportunity to become aware of their profession and of the public. Although the intern is expected to handle real work assignments and, consequently, be held accountable for concrete assistance to the employing agency, it should be remembered by the agency supervisor that the major reason for the internship is to provide a learning experience for the intern. Consequently, it is expected that employing agencies will make a systematic effort to expose interns to a variety of duties and experiences which will provide them with genuine on-the-job learning.

## **Duration and Timing**

For obtaining the full six hours of graduate credit, the internship period must consist, at a minimum, of 15 weeks of full-time employment or its equivalent of 600 hours. Students may opt for the three credit hour of internship credit by serving in their internship position for 300 hours. The internship should be undertaken after the student has completed 18 credit hours in the core curriculum.

## **Placement**

Students may seek their own placement with a public service agency or seek the assistance of the MPA Program Director to obtain such placement. In either case, placement must be approved by the Director. Many MPA candidates will serve their internships under the auspices of the Arkansas Public Administration Consortium; a joint program of Arkansas State University, University of Arkansas -- Little Rock and University of Arkansas- Fayetteville. The Consortium (APAC) will assist the placement of the intern, provide unified liaison and supervision, will pay the intern's salary from agency funding, and provide for the intern's performance evaluation. Students whose placement is outside the Consortium's MPA Intern Program, will be subject to direct supervision by the MPA Program Director.

**Compensation**

The placement agency is strongly encouraged to provide a stipend or a salary to the intern. However, the non-availability of compensation in no way impinges of the academic validity of the internship experience.

**Academic Component**

The culminating point of the student's internship is the preparation and submission for faculty review of the INTERNSHIP REPORT. (Please see following).

**Procedural Matters**

The student intern must register for a total of 6 hours of POSC 6600: Internship in Public Administration.

The student intern must provide a statement of internship service on organization letterhead signed by the intern's supervisor at the commencement of the internship experience.

The clinical component of the student's internship is considered fulfilled when the student meets the time duration requirement and when his agency supervisor provides APAC and the MPA Director with a completed performance evaluation form.

The academic component of the student's internship is considered fulfilled when the student's INTERNSHIP REPORT is approved by the MPA faculty.

There is no letter grade for POSC 6600. It is graded, just as the Master's thesis, on a PASS or FAIL basis. The assignment of a "PASS" (normally by the MPA Director) is based on how well the student integrated the academic and clinical components of the internship. Such a perception is generally influenced by both the quality of the report that the student prepares (such as familiarity with literature used in the MPA program) and the performance evaluation by the agency supervisor. The several pages immediately following contain forms which apply to the internship assignment. Students placed by the Arkansas Public Administration Consortium (APAC) will be furnished with slightly different forms. Instructions for the Internship Report are the same for all interns.

**Work Schedule**

The work schedule is to be arranged by the intern and the supervisor. It is expected that the cumulative hours devoted by the intern to his/her assigned work for a six-credit hour internship will be no less than the equivalent of fifteen weeks of full time (40 hours per week) employment (i.e., 600 hours).

**Supervision**

The supervisor will confer on a regular basis with the intern to give directions and aid, and review work performed. The supervisor will also make a systematic effort to expose the intern to the full range of agency operations.

**Evaluation**

The supervisor, at the end of the student's internship, will prepare an evaluation of the intern (see the AGENCY EVALUATION OF STUDENT INTERN form attached).

## **Guidelines for the Preparation of the Internship Report**

- A) The report must be submitted to the MPA Director no later than two weeks prior to the anticipated degree award date.
- B) The paper must meet accepted standards of graduate level work and adhere to an accepted manual of bibliographical style (APA, MLA).
- C) The paper should contain the following sections:
  - (1) Identification of the organization where internship was served;
  - (2) Summary of responsibilities assumed during the internship; and,
  - (3) Evaluation of the internship experience.
  - (4) Records of time spent working at the internship.

The "Evaluation of Internship Experience" section is the heart of the report. It should be prepared from the following perspective: Assume a stance of a consultant who has been requested to recommend such improvements in the programs and administration of the agency for which you interned which would enhance its productivity (i.e. improve its efficiency and/or effectiveness). The evaluation section therefore should, generally, address the following issues:

- A. State of the programmatic art assessment. Search current professional journals which deal with programs handled by the agency for which you have interned and explain the latest developments in the field. Based on such study, suggest any projects/programs which your agency could undertake which would place it "on the cutting edge" of such developments. Be sure to reference your suggestions to literature reviewed. (Example: one interning for an human resources agency would review, among others, last eight issues of. Public Personnel Management);
- B. Administrative capacity assessment. Reflect on your public administration literature which you have studied in the MPA program and assess, to the extent to which you have been exposed by your internship to such areas as the organizational structure of the agency, its. personnel practices, the quality of its fiscal controls and practices, and its program evaluation methods. Recommend actions which you expect to improve the management of the organization.

Your recommendations should reflect formal learning (literature studied) and not your personal opinion. Please ground the basis for any recommendation that you make in public administration body of knowledge. When referring to a theory, a principle or a research finding derived from your MPA studies, or other literature, you are required to cite such works.

The Internship Report is expected to be no less than 20, typed, double-spaced pages including footnotes and bibliography but excluding appended materials. There is no upper limit on the length, but mere verbosity is discouraged.

Most importantly, the tone, content, and format of your report should reflect a professional level communication from "a management consultant to his client". Your report should indicate your contemporary erudition in public administration, a mature appreciation of the agency's real world operational environment, and, as a result, reflect a balanced and a constructive criticism. In the end, you should be confident that your report would indeed help improve your host agency's programs and its administration. A copy of your Internship Report may be given to the agency and their comment on its quality and pertinence may be requested. Consequently, write the report not just as another academic paper. Give it a "flair" which will enhance your credibility with your agency superiors and colleagues.

Note: It is recognized that some Internships may be such where the above report format is not suitable. Under such circumstances a proper report format must be approved by the advisor.



## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

### Operation procedures and standards

#### Mail

You will be assigned a mail box located in Wilson 405. Please check your box daily. All messages for you and other pertinent information will be left in your mailbox. You may receive professional mail. The address is:

Your name  
Political Science Department  
P.O. Box 1750  
State University, AR 72467

#### Salaries and Paydays

All graduate assistantships will be paid on the fifteenth and last working day of the month. Graduate Assistants checks may be picked up from Diane in the Political Science office. New employees must fill out W-4 Federal Tax Form, State Withholding, etc. in the Human Resources offices no later than the second week of classes in order to receive their first paycheck on the fifteenth of the month.

#### Tuition and Fee Waivers

No tuition waivers are currently offered to GA's. You may, however, elect to have your tuition deferred so that you can pay for it in installments. To defer tuition go to the Administration Building and request to see Student Account Services. Forms will be given to you at this point.

#### Reappointments

Assistantships are normally renewed annually if you remain enrolled in the University. Reappointments are not automatic and depend upon several factors including:

- Satisfactory performance
- Progress toward a degree, with at least a 3.0 GPA
- University, College and Department Budgeting
- Graduate School and departmental limits on the number of semesters a graduate assistant may receive financial support (5 semesters)

**Note:** Please see appendix for "Graduate Student Evaluation Form" to be filled out by the Graduate Assistant's assigned professor(s). It is the responsibility of the student to have the form filled out.

#### Expectations

As a graduate assistant you are expected to work 20 hours per week. Graduates must be full-time graduate students. You must take a minimum of six (6) graduate credit hours of courses (5000-8000 level) per semester and remain in good academic standing. It is not recommended that you register for more than nine (9) contact hours during any semester that you are receiving an assistantship.

**As a graduate assistant you must HOLD OFFICE HOURS.** Office hours should be posted on the Graduate Assistant office door, Wilson 427. If you are unable to hold office hours on any specific day leave a note on the door stating when you will next be available.

If you are unable to meet deadlines assigned by the professor or if you are ill, **NOTIFY** the professor or

the department as early as possible. Excessive absences and neglectful conduct may lead to removal of your assistantship.

### **Anti-Discrimination**

As an employee of Arkansas State University you may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or other unlawful actions in the treatment of your students.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is not tolerated anywhere on the campus of Arkansas State University. If this occurs in the student-instructor relationship it interferes with the interactive learning process and causes unnecessary suffering to its victims.

As an instructor or graduate assistant you may help eliminate sexual harassment or any appearance of sexual harassment by:

- Avoiding personal relationships with your students
- Leaving your office door open during student conferences
- Keeping your office free of pictures, cartoons or other items which are predominantly sexual in nature
- Keeping your classroom atmosphere open and unthreatening (KEEP JOKES CLEAN, DO NOT STEREOTYPE)

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

Refer to Graduate Assistant Duties and Responsibilities Form (attached). Give form to Diane Unger, department secretary as soon as possible.

### **No Smoking Policy**

There is a no smoking policy in Wilson Hall. Designated smoking areas are outside the building.

### **Telephone**

Long distance calls may not be made on the telephone in Wilson 427 or by Graduate Assistants in any office in the Department. Abuse of this policy may lead to removal of the phone from personal use.

### **Reference**

References on Graduate Assistant Applications will be checked. Should reference checks lead to a disclosure of false information or serious misinformation, the department reserves the right to terminate.

### **Miscellaneous**

Graduate Assistants must pay for coffee in the department office. Graduate Assistants may not use the copy machine for personal use.

### **Termination**

Persons found in violation of these rules, policies and procedures and other duties assigned may be terminated upon the issuance of three warnings. The following procedure will be employed:

- First - Oral warning by professor
- Second - Written warning initiated by Professor issued by Chairperson
- Third - Termination

## **Political Science Department Committee on Graduate Assistants (CONGA) Guidelines for Graduate Assistant Duties and Assignments**

### **Duties**

1. Graduate Assistants assigned to assist the instructor will attend every session of the class.
2. Graduate Assistants will hold regular office hours, and provide tutorial assistance counseling for any undergraduate student enrolled in the class.
3. Grad Assistants will conduct help sessions prior to major exams for students enrolled in the class.
4. Graduate Assistants will help proctor and assist with exams.
5. Graduate Assistants may lead class discussion sessions, under the guidance/direction of the assigned professor.
6. Graduate assistants may help class simulation or exercise (such as computer project), under the guidance/direction of the assigned professor.
7. Graduate assistants must set office hours and post them outside the graduate student office.
8. It is the graduate assistant's responsibility to make contact with the professor he/she is assisting on a regular basis.

### **Qualifications**

1. Graduate Assistants assisting in sections of Intro to U.S. Government or Intro to Politics will have completed a minimum of one semester's full-time course work prior to the start of the term in which they are to assist with the class.
2. Graduate Assistants assisting with large sections must be approved for the assignment by the faculty member teaching the course and the department chair.

### **Revisions**

This plan will be monitored and refined as necessary by the committee (CONGA), with revisions approved by the entire department.

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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

Membership includes students, academic specialists, and practitioners from local, state, and federal agencies. ASPA has one national meeting a year, and there are also regular multi-state regional



meetings and local chapter meetings in many areas. ASPA publishes *Public Administration Review* (PAR), perhaps the most important journal in public administration, which includes articles of commentary, analysis, and research. Members also receive *Public Administration Times*, a monthly newspaper which provides information on current events in public administration as well as job openings across the United States.

American Society for Public Administration  
1120 G Street NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005  
<http://www.aspanet.org/>

### **American Political Science Association (APSA)**

APSA is the national professional association for political scientists and holds an annual conference. Members receive the *American Political Science Review* (APSR), which state of the art public research articles, *Perspectives on Politics*, which publishes book reviews and reviews of field research, and *PS: Political Science and Politics*, which focuses on current political topics and news of the profession. In addition to APSA, there are regional organizations that serve the political science community, including the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), the Southern Political Science Association (SPSA) and others, which have annual conferences and journals carrying research on political topics.

American Political Science Association  
1527 New Hampshire Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20002  
<http://www.apsanet.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.

International City/County Management Association  
777 N. Capitol Street NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20002  
<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.

International Personnel Management Association  
1850 K Street NW, Suite 870  
Washington, DC 20006  
<http://www.ipma-hr.org/>

### **Government Finance Officers Association of the United States 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.

Government Finance Officers Association

180 North Michigan Avenue

Chicago, IL 60601

<http://www.gfoa.org/>

### **Pi Alpha Alpha – The Public Administration Honor Association**

Arkansas State University has established 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. We encourage all eligible MPA students to apply for induction. Eligibility qualifications for MPA students are that they must have completed at least 21 semester hours of graduate work with a GPA of at least 3.7.

## **Forms for the MPA Program**

### AGENCY EVALUATION OF STUDENT INTERN

Please return to:

Director, MPA Program  
 Department of Political Science  
 Arkansas State University  
 P. O. Box 1750  
 State University, AR 72467-1750

Intern Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To Agency Supervisor:

We hope that this intern has been of assistance to you and to your agency, and that now you may help us and the student by providing the following evaluation. As a first hand observer of the student intern's day to day performance, your assessment is vital to a valid evaluation of the student's internship experience. Your feedback provides the Arkansas State University with information regarding his/her ability to translate that knowledge into practice. Please discuss the assessment with the student. Use the following clusters of questions as a guideline, disregarding those that are not applicable while adding information you consider appropriate.

1. Describe the intern's most significant accomplishment or activity.
  
2. How would you rate the intern's ability to perform the major duties assigned during the internship period?
 

Excellent	_____
Good	_____
Average	_____
Fair	_____
Poor	_____

*Comments:* \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. How would you rate the intern's ability to take initiative within the level of responsibility given? Make decisions commensurate with responsibility given?
 

Excellent	_____
Good	_____
Average	_____
Fair	_____
Poor	_____

*Comments:* \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. How would you rate the intern's ability to comprehend the overall mission of the agency; the agency's primary function and the agency's relationship to the larger environment?
 

Excellent	_____
Good	_____
Average	_____
Fair	_____
Poor	_____

*Comments:* \_\_\_\_\_

5. How would rate the intern's ability to relate with the agency supervisor and co-workers? Did the intern establish open communication patterns; offer assistance; provide support?

Excellent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Good \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fair \_\_\_\_\_  
 Poor \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments:*

6. How would you rate the intern's ability to work with agency's "clients" or "clientele?" How well did the intern represent the agency and establish satisfactory rapport?

Excellent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Good \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fair \_\_\_\_\_  
 Poor \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments:*

7. How would you rate the intern's ability to comply with the basic regulations required by the agency's employees? Was the intern reliable, mature? Consider punctuality in meeting work deadlines.

Excellent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Good \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fair \_\_\_\_\_  
 Poor \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments:*

8. Were there any factors, beyond the student's control, that may have adversely affected his/her performance as an intern (such as change in agency supervisor, loss of funding or low workload, etc.)? If so, please explain.

9. If you were in a position to fill a vacancy in your agency, would you hire the intern based on performance during the internship period? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

*Comments:*

10. How would you rate the intern's academic preparation to perform administrative work in a governmental agency?

Excellent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Good \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fair \_\_\_\_\_  
 Poor \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments:*

Signature of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Intern: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## GRADUATE ASSISTANT EVALUATION

### POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT-ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate Assistant \_\_\_\_\_ Semester/Session \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Professor \_\_\_\_\_

This form is designed to provide a basis for future reference comments, assist in the professional development of the student, and help the department improve its learning, teaching, and research environment. The form will be placed in the student's permanent file. (Nothing in writing is fully confidential these days).  
Thanks for your assistance.

I. Ratings Please evaluate the Assistant on the following areas:

Area	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	N/A
Adaptability						
Initiative						
Ability to Organize						
Follow Through						
Attitude						
Cooperation						
Personality						

II. Duties Briefly indicate the assignments given to your graduate assistant during the term.

III. Performance Comment on the assistant's performance.

IV. General Comments (Such as ability, attitude, dependability, and relationships with associates.)

Professor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**MPA PROGRAM GRADUATING STUDENT EXIT SURVEY**

1. What are your current plans for the future?
2. What advice would you give to first year MPA students?
3. What initially attracted you to the Arkansas State University MPA Program?
4. How would you describe your experiences in the MPA Program?
5. What did you like most about your experiences in the MPA Program?
6. What did you like least about your experiences in the MPA Program?
7. What would you suggest to make the MPA Program more relevant?



### Arkansas State University MPA Program Checksheet

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### MPA Program Entry Requirements: (yes/no)

Undergraduate GPA: \_\_\_\_\_ (last 60 hours): \_\_\_\_\_

GRE (optional): Verbal: \_\_\_\_\_ Quantitative: \_\_\_\_\_ Analytic: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Purpose: (yes/no)

Letters of Recommendation (3): (yes/no)

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Prerequisite Coursework

<b><i>Class (or equivalent)</i></b>	<b><i>Title</i></b>	<b><i>Semester/Yr</i></b>	<b><i>Grade</i></b>
POSC 2103	Introduction to U.S. Govt.		
ECON 2333	Economic Issues & Concepts		

#### MPA Program Requirements (yes/no)

#### Graduate Coursework

<b><i>Class (or equivalent)</i></b>	<b><i>Title</i></b>	<b><i>Semester/Yr</i></b>	<b><i>Grade</i></b>
POSC 6003	Techniques of Pol. & PA Res.		
POSC 6533	Public Policy Anal. & Eval.		
POSC 6543	Administrative Behavior		
POSC 6553	Public Budgeting & Finance		
POSC 6563	Sem. in Public Administration		
POSC 6583	Computer Applications		
POSC 6593	Sem. in Human Res. Mgt.		
<b>Restricted Elect. (2)</b>			
<b>Unrestricted Elect. (3)</b>			
<b>Intern/Thesis/Electives</b>			

#### Comprehensive Examinations:

Research Core: (pass/fail)

Management Core: (pass/fail)

#### Exit Interview: (yes/no)

\_\_\_\_\_  
MPA Director's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

