

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA) PROGRAM GUIDE

Online Program Edition

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Updated Feb 2023

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 nonprofit sectors by equipping pre-service and mid-career students with sound management skills and a public/nonprofit 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

The A-State Graduate Bulletin under which you entered the program governs your curriculum. That is your "contract" with the University. Your curriculum is also governed by these guidelines which detail the operation of the MPA program and 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 *Arkansas State University Graduate School Bulletin*.

Checklist for success in your MPA Program:

- Read the Arkansas State University Graduate Bulletin
- Consult with your advisors about the program as needed
- Familiarize yourself with the MPA course rotation
- Complete any required co-requisite courses during your first semester if you only need one or by the end of your second semester if you need both
- Submit the Intent to Graduate form on the Registrar's website and take the MPA Capstone in your last semester

The MPA Director/ Your Faculty Advisor

Dr. Reese is the overall MPA Program Director. Dr Neal is the AOS MPA Program Coordinator and your regular academic advisor in the online mode of the MPA Program. Please contact Dr. Neal regarding matters of degree appropriateness, program planning, and internships. The best way to contact her is via email at sneal@astate.edu For technical matters such as how to register, problems/error messages signing up for a course, clearing advising holds, financial aid (and related paperwork), admissions, and deadlines for registration, please contact the Online MPA Advisor, Natalie Hanna, at nhanna@astate.edu

E-Mail

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

Online Degree Evaluation: Note that you can check your 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 an undergraduate course in (1) U.S. Government and (2) research methodology. Otherwise, the student must complete these courses in the first semester if he/she only needs one of them or by the end of the second semester of the student needs both. The student must earn at least a “C” grade in each course. A higher-level course in the same subject area may substitute for the above co-requisites; CLEP tests may also substitute for these courses as per university policy.

NASPAA Accreditation: The Master of Public Administration Program at Arkansas State University is globally 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.

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.

Course Transfers: 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.

Final Course 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. The Chair will seek a disposition of your grievance, and if such is not resolved, will inform you of the appeals process. Please read the A-State Student Handbook for more detail.

PLAGIARISM & 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		
POSC 3003 Introduction to Political Analysis*		

CORE COURSES (POSC) (21 HOURS)

COURSE	SEMESTER	GRADE
6563 Seminar in Public Admin		
6003 Techniques of Research		
6593 Human Resource Admin		
6553 Public Budgeting & Finance		
6613 Admin Leadership		
6623 Admin Ethics		
6573 Grant Writing Admin		

TRACKS (9 HOURS)

PUBLIC MGT			OR	NON-PROFIT MGT		
COURSE	SEM	GR		COURSE	SEM	GR
6543 Admin Behavior				6843 NP Mgmt		
6423 Pub Financial Mgmt				6433 NP Fundraising/FM		
6533 Policy Analysis				6443 NP Plan/Mkt		

INTERNSHIP & CAPSTONE (6 HOURS)

COURSE	SEMESTER	GRADE
6603 Internship OR 6473 Strategic Planng		
6653 MPA Capstone Experience		

* Or any undergraduate-level research methodology course

MPA PROGRAM COURSEWORK: ONLINE ROTATION

Courses in the Online Mode Are 7 Weeks Long

FALL 1 6563 Seminar in PA 6553 Public Budgeting & Finance 6603 Internship 6653 Capstone	FALL 2 6613 Leadership 6543 Admin Behavior OR 6643 NPM 6003 Techniques 6603 Internship 6653 Capstone
SPRING 1 6563 Seminar in PA 6593 Human Resources Mgmt 6573 Grant Writing 6603 Internship OR 6473 Strategic Planng 6653 Capstone	SPRING 2 6623 Ethics 6423 Fin Mgmt OR 6433 NP Fund 6553 Public Budgeting & Finance 6603 Internship 6653 Capstone
SUMMER 1 6563 Seminar in PA 6003 Techniques 6613 Leadership 6593 Human Resources Mgmt 6603 Internship 6653 Capstone	SUMMER 2 6573 Grant Writing 6533 Political Analysis OR 6443 NP Plan 6623 Ethics 6603 Internship 6653 Capstone

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 thesis is *not recommended* for MPA students unless they are planning on pursuing a Ph.D., and often not even then. 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 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 PUBLIC ADMIN

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 meetings and local chapter meetings in many areas. Probably 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, which includes articles of

research, analysis, and commentary. 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 – The Public Administration Honor Association

Arkansas State University has a 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), the Global Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration?

A. Dr. Reese or Dr. Neal will request a list of eligible students 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. These are the only times in the year when you may be inducted or order graduation regalia; it is just too time consuming to have random orders. So, 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 United States and Canada (GFAO)

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 (PLEASE WRITE ME WITH MORE!)

<https://aspanational.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.brookings.edu/podcasts/>

<http://leagueofwomeningovernment.org/>

<http://fiscalhealthandwellness.blogspot.com/>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ccbe2bbe7a93

<http://www.govtech.com/govgirl/>

<https://www.n-r-c.com/news-and-knowledge/the-civil-review/>

MPA GRADUATION

Q. I would like to participate in the A-State Commencement Ceremony. May I do that?

A. Yes, most definitely! When we started our online program, we did not know if students would come to Jonesboro for the graduation ceremony, but we have been pleasantly surprised!

Q. What if my final online course ends a week after commencement?

A. If you wish to participate in commencement, you may still walk even if your very last class is not completed. You will just not receive your diploma at commencement. It will be mailed to you after your last class is completed.

Q. If I walk at graduation, will I meet some of my professors?

A. Yes, usually you will meet most of us. Most of us who are local attend most graduations, at least in non-pandemic times. Those of us who attend graduation *always* congregate up in the reception area following the ceremony for at least 20 minutes. We hope that you will come up to meet us. We would love to meet you and take pictures with you.

EX-OFFICIO A-STATE MPA ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Albert Banuelos	<i>Assistant Director of Eligibility Operations, County of San Diego</i>	afbanuelos@aol.com
Sue Neal	<i>Research Consultant, Maddies Fund; Executive Director, Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve in Michigan</i>	sneal@astate.edu
Brock Robertson	<i>Academic Assistant, A-State MPA Program</i>	trobertson@astate.edu

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