

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, MPA

The mission of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at The University of Alabama is to prepare students to lead and manage public service organizations. We strive to develop critical thinking skills enabling our graduates to formulate policies and approaches to management while ensuring the integrity of the public service. Our program emphasizes public service values while facilitating intellectual and professional development through learning experiences that integrate theory with practice. We provide an institutional culture that promotes diversity and advances governance while preparing students to reach standards of excellence in the public service.

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program is designed to prepare students for leadership and administrative roles in federal, state, and local government. It is directed at pre-career students seeking to enhance their employability and level of entry into public service, as well as students already working in public service who desire to upgrade their skills, enhance promotion opportunities, or deepen their appreciation for the science and art of public administration. Through exposure to a rich body of theoretical and applied knowledge, students develop talents for managing employees, formulating budgets, structuring organizations, analyzing policies, and evaluating programs.

Admissions

The Master of Public Administration is an accredited professional degree program designed primarily for those who plan a career in federal, state, or local government.

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, to be considered for regular admission an application must include:

- A resume
- 3 letters of recommendation

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

Curricular Requirements

Students are required to complete 39 semester hours of coursework.

The 39 hours are subdivided as follows: 21 hours of public policy and administration core courses, 3 hours of quantitative methods, 12 hours of approved electives if a 3 hour internship is completed or 15 hours of approved electives if a 3 hour internship is not completed. An internship is required for all pre-service students. In addition to the 39 hours of coursework, students must successfully complete a Portfolio Project.

Course requirements

Code and Title	Hours
Public Policy and Administration Core	
PSC 565 Foundations of Public Admin	3
PSC 562 Public Personnel Admin	3
PSC 662 Organization Theory	3
PSC 664 Public Policy Analysis	3
PSC 665 Local Government Admin	3
PSC 667 Public Budgeting	3
PSC 668 Program Evaluation	3
Quantitative Methods	
PSC 522 Quant Methods PSC I	3
Approved Electives	12

PSC 663 Sel Prob Public Admin (topics vary; repeatable (3-6 Hours))	
Electives approved by MPA Director (6-9 hours)	
Internship or Additional Elective	3
PSC 679 Internship & Research	
Portfolio Project Completed in Final Semester	
Total Hours	39

Transfer Credit

Refer to the Graduate School Master's degree requirements page for more information.

Accelerated Master's Program

Information on the Accelerated Master's Program can be found on the department website.

Refer to the Graduate School [Accelerated Master's Program](#) page for more information.

Comprehensive Exam/Capstone

Successful completion of the Portfolio Project is required to graduate with an MPA degree.

The purpose of the Portfolio Project is to assess the extent to which MPA students have achieved the core competencies set forth by our accrediting body, the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). The five core competencies are:

1. Lead and manage in public governance;
2. Participate in and contribute to the public policy process;
3. Analyze, synthesize, think creatively, solve problems, and make decisions;
4. Articulate and apply public service perspectives; and
5. Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

For each core competency, the student will complete a structured reflection essay assessing the core competency. Explicit instructions regarding the Portfolio Project are provided to students in their final semester of coursework. Portfolio Projects are evaluated by the MPA faculty.

Fieldwork/Practicum/Internship Requirements

The MPA Program requires students to complete 300 hours of work in their internship for 3 credit hours. Students typically pursue an internship after completing 18 hours in the program, but exceptions to the 18-hour completion rule may be made by the MPA Director. Internships may be completed during the semester or, more commonly, during the summer. They may be paid or unpaid.

Once an internship is approved by the MPA Director, the student may register for 3 credit hours of PSC 679 MPA Internship. The MPA Director will provide an information and evaluation form for the student to complete at least two weeks before the internship begins.

Upon completion of the internship, the immediate work supervisor of the student during the internship will complete the evaluation form and return it to the MPA Director. To receive a final grade for the internship

hours, the student must complete an academic exercise that enhances the quality of the internship learning experience. The final grade will be determined based on the evaluation of the immediate work supervisor at the internship site and the quality of the academic exercise.

Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements

Refer to the Graduate School Master's degree requirements page for more information.

Student Progress Requirement

Refer to the Graduate School scholastic requirements for more information.

Academic Misconduct Information

Refer to the Graduate School academic misconduct policy for more information.

Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

Refer to the Graduate School [withdrawal and leave of absence policy](#) for more information.

Academic Grievances Information

Refer to the Graduate School academic grievance procedure for more information.

Grades and Academic Standing

Refer to the Graduate School grades and academic standing for more information.

Graduate School Deadlines Information

Refer to the Graduate School student deadlines page for more information.

Application for Graduation Information

Refer to the Graduate School Master's degree requirements page for more information.