

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Bowling Green, Kentucky

**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
(MPA)**

PROGRAM POLICY HANDBOOK

Effective Spring Semester 2008

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PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to assist students as they move through the MPA Program. If any part of this handbook conflicts with the WKU Graduate Catalog, the WKU Graduate Catalog takes precedence and that portion of this handbook becomes null. Anyone discovering a conflict between this handbook and the WKU Graduate Catalog, or a potential conflict, should report said conflict to the Director of the MPA Program.

PROGRAM MISSION

The MPA Program prepares graduate students to be productive citizens and employees in the public sector by sharing knowledge, encouraging excellence, and fostering an environment of professionalism. The MPA Program advances its mission by building upon a long history of providing quality education and practical experience to its students through community partnerships.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree is offered at Western Kentucky University through the Department of Political Science. The MPA is designed to provide knowledge and skills appropriate for professional career development in governmental and/or quasi-governmental organizations. Requirements for the degree reflect the need for an understanding of both the political and administrative nature of public organizations and the theoretical and ideological underpinnings of the field. The curriculum provides a balanced blend of both approaches to the study and practice of public administration. The MPA program is designed to: (1) prepare college graduates (pre-service) for professional careers and leadership roles in the public sector and (2) provide opportunities for practicing public managers for additional training and career development (in-service).

Effective Fall 2007, the MPA degree requires the completion of 39 semester hours, consisting of 18 hours of required course work, 18 hours of electives determined in conjunction with their MPA Advisor, and 3 hours of internship. All candidates for the MPA degree must also successfully pass a written MPA comprehensive exam. No thesis is required. All requirements for the degree must be completed within six years of the date of initial enrollment.

All course work can be completed on-campus in Bowling Green. The MPA can also be completed at the Fort Knox/Elizabethtown, Owensboro, and Glasgow regional campuses via a combination of on-site and interactive television courses. To accommodate the schedules of busy professionals, all required classes and electives are offered in the evenings. In addition, there is a full slate of courses offered in the summer semester. The MPA can be completed in three full-time semesters (including a summer semester), although most part-time students finish

after six semesters.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The MPA degree is divided into three components: 1) core courses, 2) elective courses, and 3) internship. Students must satisfy all three components in order to earn their degree. The MPA Program has developed an annualized matrix of course offerings to assist students in the planning of their degree. This annualized course matrix is shown in Appendix C.

1) Core Courses (18 hours):

All MPA students must complete the six courses listed below:

- PS 501 - Methods of Political Inquiry
- PS 538 - Ethics and Bureaucracy
- PS 540 - Seminar in Public Sector Organizations
- PS 541 - Public Personnel Management
- PS 542 - Governmental Financial Management
- *PS 545 - Seminar in Public Policy Analysis
- or
- *PS 546 - Public Policy Evaluation

*Students may elect either course in consultation with their MPA Advisor.

Students entering the MPA program with background deficiencies may be required, upon the advice of their MPA Advisor, to take PS 440G - Elements of Public Administration. When required, this course must be completed within the first 12 hours of course work and in advance of all "core courses" except PS 501 unless exempted from this policy by their MPA Advisor.

2) Elective Courses (18 hours):

In consultation with their MPA Advisor, students may select from the following departmental courses:

- PS 412G - Kentucky Government and Politics
- PS 424G - Administrative Law
- PS 440G - Elements of Public Administration
- PS 500 - Workshops in Public Administration (1.5 hours, may be repeated for credit)
- PS 510 - Problems in National Government
- PS 511 - Seminar in State Government
- PS 543 - Politics and Administration in Rural Communities
- PS 549 - Special Problems in Public Administration
- PS 580 - Directed Study
- PS 597 - Professional Seminar in Public Administration

PS 500 and PS 580 maybe repeated for a combined total of six credit hours. Courses from other

academic departments may be acceptable for inclusion as electives provided permission is obtained from their MPA Advisor prior to the student's enrollment in any such course. There is a maximum of 12 hours credit from any other department.

3) Internship (3 hours)

The MPA degree at WKU requires an internship. There are several internship options available to the MPA student.

PS 598 - Internship in Public Administration (3 hours)

or

PS 505 - Washington Internship (3 or 6 hours)**

** Students electing the six hour internship may substitute three of the hours for one of their elective courses.

Students entering the MPA program with appropriate previous administrative experience may, upon approval, have their internship requirement waived (see Appendix A for instructions and the waiver form). In cases where an internship would pose a severe hardship, students may request a special waiver. Students, who are granted a special waiver, must enroll in PS 597.

PROCEDURAL CHECKLIST FOR MPA STUDENTS

The department and the Office of Graduate Studies require a series of steps to enable the student to make orderly progress toward the completion of the MPA degree. It is important that students follow these steps in processing the appropriate forms and in completing their program requirements.

Admission Procedures:

Students desiring admission to the MPA program must complete each of the following prior to their first semester of enrollment:

- (1) Complete the Application for Admission (Form A) and submit it to the Graduate Studies Office along with the required fee;
- (2) Request that official transcripts of their undergraduate and/or graduate work (from all undergraduate and/or graduate institutions attended) be sent directly to the Office of Graduate Studies;
- (3) Request that your Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Students, who can not complete these three items before their first semester and not applying for financial aid, may begin their studies as “Non-degree Seeking Students” for one semester and not more than 12 credit hours.

Admission to the MPA program may be unconditional or conditional depending on the following criteria:

Unconditional Admission:

Admission will be granted to any applicant who achieves a GAP score of 2200 or above (GAP score = undergraduate GPA x the sum of the two computer graded components of the GRE).

Conditional Admission:

Any applicant who receives a GAP score below 2200 may apply for “alternate admission” by following the procedure in WKU’s Graduate Catalog. The MPA Program and the Alternate Admissions Committee for Potter College reserve the right to attach special conditions to the applications that are approved for conditional admission.

Students seeking alternate admission into the MPA Program must apply prior to the completion of 12 hours of coursework. Students will not be allowed to transfer in more than 12 hours of coursework taken before their alternate admission was approved.

Non-Admission:

Students, not meeting the requirements for unconditional admission or being approved for admission via the alternate admission procedure, will not be admitted into the MPA Program.

Program Content and Timetables:

The following procedures are required in order to ensure that you are making progress toward your MPA degree.

(1) Program of Study (Form B/C):

This form includes a listing of the MPA program curriculum courses which the MPA student agrees to complete in order to receive the MPA degree.

NOTE: Entering MPA students are strongly advised not to register for any course work without prior consultation with their MPA Advisor.

- (a) The Program of Study (Form C) must be completed in cooperation with their MPA Advisor during the **first semester** of enrollment in MPA course work;
- (b) The Form C must be filed with and accepted by the Graduate Studies Office during the **first semester** of enrollment in MPA course work.

(2) Program Course Substitutions (Course Change Form)

It is possible that some elective courses listed on a student's Form C may not always be offered at a time suitable for completion. Changes (substitutions) for courses already included on the Form C must be requested and approved by the MPA Advisor prior to enrollment in any alternative course work.

(3) Transfer Credit

Up to 12 semester hours of transfer credit from an accredited institution may be accepted toward meeting the course requirements for the MPA degree. These courses must be properly identified as graduate level courses. Course accepted for transfer credit must fall within the 6 year limit for degree completion.

Requests for transfer credit must be approved by the MPA Director with the advice of the Graduate Committee. All requests for transfer credit must include supporting documentation regarding course content and requirements. Course outlines, syllabi and reading lists are appropriate for this requirement.

MPA students who have completed graduate level work through the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College may apply for consideration of that work for transfer credit. Normally, 3 semester hours credit is awarded for such work.

(4) Admission to Candidacy (Form D):

This form enables the Graduate Studies Office to review your progress toward your MPA degree and to determine whether or not you have "problems" which need to be resolved prior to further course work.

(a) Form D (Admission to Candidacy) Criteria include:

- (1) GRE scores and Form C are on file;
- (2) any "conditional" status has been satisfied;
- (3) student maintains a 3.0 or above in all graduate course work.

(b) The Form D may be filed at any time after the student has completed 12 graduate semester hours and before completing 21 credit hours.

(c) It must be on file no later than the beginning of the graduate student's **last semester of enrollment** in graduate classes.

(5) Program Completion:

The completion of the MPA program includes the successful passing of all courses on the student's Form C, the successful completion of the MPA Comprehensive Exam, and the filing of an application for degree form (along with the requisite fees) with the Office of the Registrar.

(a) Students are expected to file for graduation either during the semester previous to the semester of graduation or early in the semester they expect to graduate. These forms may be obtained at the Registrar's Office.

(b) Students who have completed at least 27 semester hours of their MPA coursework (including all of the required core courses) are eligible to apply to take the written MPA

Comprehensive Exam. (See Appendix B for the appropriate application form).

(c) Upon successful passage of the MPA Comprehensive Exam, a Form E (report on the Comprehensive Exam) will be filed by the Political Science Department with the Office of Graduate Studies.

(d) All necessary course work must, of course, be completed, all "incompletes" removed, and all records be complete and on file before the MPA degree will be officially awarded.

THE MPA COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The MPA Comprehensive Exam is structured to measure the student's ability to integrate and apply knowledge acquired in MPA coursework to current and/or hypothetical problems involving public management and/or policy. The written exam consists of five substantive areas, all of which directly relate to the MPA "Core". All core courses must be completed and 27 hours within the Program before a student is eligible to take the comprehensive exams. "Core course" topics will cover the following general areas:

- (1) ethical norms and issues (538);
- (2) public sector organizations: theory, structure, and behavior (540);
- (3) applications of personnel management in the public sector (541);
- (4) applications of public financial management (542);
- (5) public policy: analysis and/or evaluation (545-546).

The specific content of each question will be prepared by the faculty responsible for that subject matter area. In general, the content of the questions will consist of "case scenarios" about which the student will be expected to focus responses to analytical questions posed by the faculty. Reason and logic will be critical to a student's success in applying course subject matter to the particular situation. Students will be provided with suggested study materials and they are strongly urged to consult with their respective faculty prior to the exam.

The MPA Comprehensive Exam is offered once per semester (Fall, Spring, Summer) on the WKU Bowling Green campus. Schedules for the specific exam dates are identified on the MPA Comprehensive Exam Application (see Appendix B). Applications may be obtained in the Political Science Department office and/or at WKU's regional campus offices.

Completed forms should be sent to:

MPA Director
Western Kentucky University
Department of Political Science
1906 College Heights Blvd. 11060
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1060

Students will be notified as to their eligibility to take the exam. Specific information will be provided at that time about the location and time of the exam.

The Exam is graded on a pass-fail basis and a passing grade on all five areas is required. Students are permitted to apply to re-take any question(s) which is/are not successfully

passed on the exam. The second exam must be completed no later than the end of the semester following the first exam. Students who fail questions twice will be required to take additional course work as directed by the Graduate Committee before being eligible to take the exam a third (and final) time. Upon successful passage of the MPA Comprehensive Exam, a Form E (report on the Comprehensive Exam) will be filed by the Political Science Department with the Office of Graduate Studies.

Additional Opportunities for MPA Students

Graduate Assistantships

The MPA Program has several graduate assistantship positions available each semester. Students are usually awarded the assistantships for an entire academic year. Currently, the MPA Program utilizes a non-competitive first come basis in awarding its GA slots.

If a student desires consideration for an available GA position, an Application for Graduate Assistantship (Form F) must be submitted to Graduate Studies. Three Graduate Assistantship Recommendation Forms or letters of reference should also accompany the Application.

Outstanding MPA Course Paper (Fall and Spring semesters)

Each Fall and Spring semester, MPA faculty submits student course papers for consideration. A committee of the MPA faculty reviews these submissions and determines the best paper. The paper is placed in a permanent binder in the MPA conference room. The writer of the selected paper has their name inscribed on the plaque in the MPA conference room.

Outstanding MPA Graduate (Fall and Spring graduations)

Each Fall and Spring semester, a committee of the MPA faculty reviews all the graduates for that semester and selects the outstanding graduate based on scholarship, research, contribution to the MPA Program, and other factors of relevance as they materialize from time to time. The graduate selected has his/her name inscribed on a plaque in the MPA conference room.

External Presentations

MPA students are encouraged to pursue their research interests. As such, the MPA faculty acts as sponsors in working with students in the development and presentation of their research. Such venues as the Kentucky Political Science Association (KPSA), and Southeastern Conference of Public Administration (SECoPA) are utilized for this purpose.

Mentoring

Beginning with the Fall 2007 semester, MPA students will be offered the opportunity of establishing a mentoring relationship with a MPA graduate. This will create another opportunity for MPA students to receive information and network outside of the current MPA student body.

Annual MPA Gathering

At the beginning of the Fall semester, the Political Science Department sponsors a gathering of current MPA students and alumni to share information and develop external linkages to the broader community.

Communication

Communication is essential to the fulfillment of the MPA Program's mission at WKU. All instructors in the MPA Program have regular office hours to assist students. In cases where students need assistance beyond these normal office hours, instructors can be reached via telephone or email.

In order to fully assist students, the use of email communication can greatly enhance the overall ability for instructors and students to communicate. However, email is not a secure mode of communication. Therefore, respecting the students' right to privacy, the MPA Program has developed a consent form (Appendix D) that authorizes instructors to utilize email in discussing grades and other Program information with students. This new procedure will be implemented during the Spring 2008 semester. Students, who do not have a consent form on file with the MPA Program, will receive their grade information and other sensitive Program information via phone or mail.

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APPENDIX A
Guidelines for Exemption from Required Internship

All students enrolling in the MPA program are required to complete an internship unless they qualify for an exemption. Students must apply for an exemption at the time that they are filing their Form B/C (Plan of Study). Among the criteria for consideration of a request for an exemption are:

- (1) At least one year of administrative management and/or leadership experience in governmental and/or not-for-profit agencies (may include elected or appointed positions) and/or military service.
- (2) A minimum of one year of appropriate managerial and administrative responsibilities in public/political/community organizations which required working with or through governmental agencies and/or leaders.
- (3) No less than one year of private sector management experience appropriate for demonstrating management and/or leadership experience and relevant contact or involvement with governmental agencies and activities.
- (4) Current full-time public or private employment of at least one year which will include any of the above experiences during the duration (at least one year) of your MPA program.

Requests for an Exemption from the Internship Requirement (Appendix A) must be made in writing to the MPA Advisor no later than the time of the filing of the student's Form C. Specific details regarding the student's previous or current administrative/management experiences and why the student feels those experiences merit consideration as a basis for an exemption from the required internship are required. Copy of the student's resume and/or qualifying job description may also be requested.

Requests will be reviewed by the MPA Director and must be approved by the MPA Graduate Committee.

Appendix A

Requests for an Exemption from the Internship Requirement

Name: _____ WKU# _____ Phone# _____

Email Address: _____

_____ Request for waiver of internship (based on employment)

Name of employer: _____

Length of employment: _____

Describe duties/responsibilities: _____

_____ Request for PS 597 substitution for internship (based on hardship) Explain in the space provided above.

Request Approved _____ Request Denied _____, if denied reason _____

MPA Director

Date

Rev. 8/07

APPENDIX B
APPLICATION FOR MPA WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Name: _____ WKU# _____ Phone# _____

Email Address: _____

COMPLETE THIS SECTION FOR GRADUATE COURSES YOU HAVE COMPLETED:

TERM	DEPT	COURSE NUMBER	ABD TITLE	INSTRUCTOR	GRADE
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

COURSES IN PROGRAM REMAINING TO TAKE OR COMPLETE:

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS: The exam contains five questions covering core course subject matter: one question covering 541; one from 542; one from 538; one from 540; and one from either 545 or 546.

APPLICATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY:
First Friday in November
Fourth Friday in March
Fourth Friday in June

FOR THE EXAM ON:
First Saturday in December
Third Saturday in April
Fourth Saturday in July

Send your application to:

MPA Director
Department of Political Science
Western Kentucky University
1906 College Heights Blvd. 11060
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1060

Rev. 8/07

Appendix C

Master of Public Administration Program (MPA)

Annualized Course Matrix

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>Spring Semester</u>	<u>Summer Semester</u>
PS 501	PS 510 (web)	PS 412G (web)
PS 541	PS 538	PS 424G
PS 545/546*	PS 540	PS 511/543**
PS 549 (web)	PS 542	PS 597
PS 440G (web)	PS 440G (web)	PS 440G (web)
PS 505	PS 505	PS 505
PS 580	PS 580	PS 580
PS 598	PS 598	PS 598

Winter Term (January) and Summer Term (May)

PS 500 (1.5 credit hours each time it is offered)

An increasing number of the MPA classes are restricted and require instructor approval in order to register.

* PS 545 in even numbered years and PS 546 in odd numbered years

** PS 511 in even numbered years and PS 543 in odd numbered years

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Appendix D

Communication Release

As the MPA Program increases the number of web-based courses and considers other alternate course delivery mechanisms, the need to receive and send course related materials and other information, including grades and comments on assignments, via email or other method has also increased.

However, email is not a private and secure form of communication. Therefore, your permission is needed, if this form of communication is to be utilized. You have several options. Please review the options listed below, then initial in the space provided by the option you choose. Finally, sign and date this form and return it to:

Director, MPA Program
Grise Hall, Room 313
1906 College Heights Blvd. 11060
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1060

_____ **A.** I give my consent to the faculty/instructors/director of the MPA Program to discuss my course grades, assignments, and other personal MPA information with me via email.

_____ **B.** I prefer that my course related information and other personal information relating to the MPA Program be discussed with me via phone, U. S. mail, or posted by the Registrar at the end of the term.

I will promptly notify the MPA Program in writing (via U. S. mail and/or receipted email of any changes in my choice of options. I understand that the choice I make will remain in effect until a new signed copy of this form is received and on file with the MPA Program.

Printed Name

WKU ID Number

Signature

Date

Effective 2/1/2008

List of MPA Faculty

Faculty Member

Primary Area of Instruction

Saundra Ardrey, Ph.D.

Washington D.C. Internships

James Chappell, D.P.A.

Fiscal Management
Administrative Law
Research Methods
Program Evaluation
Elements of Public Administration
Directed Studies

Victoria Gordon, D.P.A.

Human Resource Management
Public Sector Organizations
National Government
Special Problems
Grant Writing/Administration
Directed Studies

Jeffrey Kash, Ph.D.

Public Policy
Directed Studies

Scott Lasley, Ph.D.

KY Government and Politics
Research Methods
Directed Studies

Roger Murphy, Ph.D.

Directed Studies

Joel Turner, Ph.D.

Research Methods
State and Local Government

Edward Yager, Ph.D.

Ethics and Bureaucracy
Internships