

Wayne State University  
**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
2023 – 2024 Edition

Department of Political Science  
2049 FAB 656 W. Kirby  
Detroit, MI 48202

**MPA Director Brady Baybeck**

<https://clas.wayne.edu/politicalscience/grad/mpa>

Phone: 313-577-9831

Fax: 313-993-3435

Email: [mpa@wayne.edu](mailto:mpa@wayne.edu)

***Welcome to Wayne State University's Graduate Program in  
Public Administration!***

*This handbook is intended to be your reference guide as you proceed through the Master of Public Administration degree program. Please refer to it when you have questions about curriculum components, degree requirements, course scheduling, preparation of the Plan of Work, the comprehensive examination, satisfaction of the internship requirement, and other matters.*

*The information provided is intended as a supplement to the **Wayne State University Graduate Bulletin**. Students are strongly advised to consult the **Bulletin** for relevant information about University programs, academic rules governing graduate studies, and services available throughout your studies at WSU.*

*Students are also advised to consult with the Director of the Graduate Program in Public Administration regarding requirements and procedures. Additionally, please do not hesitate to consult with the Director and other faculty members and staff if you have questions or concerns regarding your academic plans or progress. Your concerns and suggestions are extremely important and can influence the way the program evolves. Please share your views – negative or positive- about the program*

*We are glad you have chosen to study with us!*

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## **About the MPA Program**

### **History of the Graduate Program in Public Administration**

The Graduate Program in Public Administration at Wayne State University is one of the oldest such programs in the nation. Since its inception in 1935, the program has produced hundreds of graduates who have gone on to successful and — in many cases —distinguished public service careers.

Dr. Lent Upson, one of the pioneers in the study of public administration, founded the program in 1935. He also served as the first Director of the Detroit Bureau of Municipal Research — now the Citizens Research Council of Michigan. Along with a Division of Social Work, the program was part of a School of Public Affairs at Wayne State University until 1950 when the Division of Social Work became a separate college. In 1951, the Public Administration Division merged with the Department of Government and became the Department of Political Science. The Graduate Program in Public Administration has been a part of this department ever since.

Reflecting its long and distinguished history, in 1985 the Wayne State Graduate Program in Public Administration became the first such program in Michigan to gain accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). To be accredited by NASPAA, a program must meet numerous standards for faculty size and quality, content, and structure of the curriculum, internship opportunities, and educational support resources such as libraries, computing facilities, and placement services. The program has been reaccredited every seven years since its initial accreditation.

### **Program Mission, Domains, and Competencies**

The mission of the MPA program at Wayne State University is to provide the highest quality graduate education to students committed to public service. The program provides an academically rigorous curriculum relevant to public and nonprofit policy and management. The program serves academically capable pre-service and in-service students and is an integral part of a major urban research university improving local and global communities.

Pursuant to its mission, the MPA program has established the following domains and their competencies. A graduate of the Wayne State University MPA Program should be able to do the following:

- To lead and manage in public interest;
  - o A graduate of our program will be able to understand how both structure and culture of public service organizations affect organizational effectiveness
  - o A graduate of our program will know how to effectively manage human resources and provide leadership in this regard
  
- To participate in and contribute to the policy process;
  - o A graduate of our program will be able to identify key stakeholders, their positions, coalitions, and the political context

- A graduate of our program will be able to understand and apply the different aspects of the policy making cycle
- To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment;
  - A graduate of our program will be able to utilize data and analytic techniques, scholarly research, and best professional practices in systematically analyzing and making policy and administrative decisions in public service organizations
  - A graduate of our program will be able to apply these concepts to a real world (substantive) case
- To articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective;
  - A graduate of our program will be able to make informed decisions and manage public service organizations in the public interest by effectively utilizing and balancing key public service values
  - A graduate of our program will understand the value of fair and transparent administration and will be able to effectively and ethically engage citizens in public service organizations
- To communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.
  - A graduate of our program will have the ability to develop and exercise intercultural sensitivity with employees and other stakeholder
  - A graduate of our program will be able to communicate and engage appropriately, effectively and respectfully with multiple audiences

### **Program Administration**

The Director administers the program with the assistance of the Public Administration Faculty, the Political Science Department's Academic Services Officer, and other staff. Although reporting to the Chair of the Department, the Director has primary responsibility for admission and advising of students and is available to students on a twelve-month basis. The Director also serves as the Advisor of Record for the MPA Program and should be the first point of contact for questions regarding course selection, the order in which courses should be taken, and other academic-related questions.

The Director consults closely with the MPA Faculty regarding program issues. As a member of the Department's Graduate Committee, the Director also works closely with the Department's Graduate Director. From time to time, the Graduate Committee is involved in reviewing program modifications or in admission or retention actions. It hears student academic appeals when necessary.

## The Structure of the MPA Program

### The MPA Components

The MPA degree program consists of four components:

- The core curriculum or required courses (30 credit hours, 10 courses);
- The concentration coursework (9 credit hours, 3 courses);
- The comprehensive examination;
- The internship (if required, 3 credit hours, 1 course).

### The Core Curriculum

The core curriculum is designed to provide students with a common body of knowledge and skills central to the work of public managers. This curriculum has evolved with the faculty's continuous study of NASPAA standards, the practices of other MPA programs, and the educational needs of public service professionals. The core consists of the following ten courses (30 credits):

		Fall	Winter	Sp/Su
PS 5630	Statistics and Data Analysis in Political Science I (4 credits)			
PS 7300	Public Administration and its Environment (3 credits)			
PS 7320	Organization Theory and Behavior (3 credits)			
PS 7330	Public Budgeting and Finance (3 credits)			
OR				
PS 6700	Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations (3 credits)			
PS 7340	Public Personnel Management (3 credits)			
PS 7350	Managing Public Organizations and Programs (3 credits)			
PS 7375	Professional Development Seminar (2 credits total)			
PS 7410	Policy Formation and Implementation (3 credits)			
PS 7480	Policy Analysis for Administration (3 credits)			
PS 7460	Program Evaluation (3 credits)			
OR				
PS 7660	Research Methods in Policy and Politics (3 credits)			

\*The dark-shaded boxes represent the semesters in which courses are traditionally offered. The light-shaded boxes represent the semesters in which courses may additionally be offered.

### Sequence of Enrollment

In order to be prepared for subsequent courses, students should take PS 7300 in the first semester enrolled or in the first available semester. Both PS 7350 and 7410 should be taken as early in their program as possible. It is strongly encouraged that students take PS 7350 prior to taking PS 7340.

MPA students have the option of taking PS 7330 or PS 6700. Students who wish to take PS 6700 to satisfy their core curriculum requirement and would like to pursue either Nonprofit

Management & Policy concentration or Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management should consult with the MPA director with course planning for their elective courses.

Most MPA students choose to take PS 7460 over PS 7660. However, for those with research-oriented career goals, PS 7660 may be an appropriate choice. The order in which core courses are taken may be affected by their availability.

Students generally complete most of the core coursework before taking concentration work; however, this pattern may be modified by the scheduling of concentration courses of particular interest to a student.

### **Core Course Scheduling**

Each of the core courses is normally offered at least once during a calendar year (see above). However, a faculty sabbatical leave may require a core course to be offered during a different semester than is customary. Please plan accordingly.

### **Concentration Component**

The MPA program is designed as a generalist program to train students to work across sectors, and the primary focus is the core curriculum. However, the degree also has a concentration component, which permits students to focus on an area of public management or public policy that complements their professional goals. Concentrations are not directly analogous to undergraduate majors, as the choice of concentration does not show up on the diploma and (as noted previously) the MPA program is a generalist program. Thus, there is considerable flexibility in the choice of concentration courses.

A concentration consists of a **minimum of nine credit hours of coursework** (usually three courses). Students should not select concentration courses for convenience or ease of coursework.

The concentration coursework may consist of more extensive treatment of topics from the core courses, for example, the concentration in Human and Fiscal Resource Management. Or the concentration coursework might consist of courses in areas not treated in core courses, such as Health and Human Services Policy and Management. Alternatively, it might consist of an individually tailored concentration with the courses in public service areas chosen by the student. In the latter case, the Director must approve the course selection.

Sometimes concentration work will be taken entirely within the Department of Political Science. More often, however, at least a portion of the work for the concentration will consist of courses offered by other departments or colleges within the University. In a few cases, a concentration that includes a prescribed set of courses may also qualify the student for a special certificate. The following are currently offered concentrations.

The Appendix lists courses associated with these concentrations, although the information is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive:

- Economic Development Policy and Management
- Health and Human Services Policy and Management
- Human and Fiscal Resource Management
- Nonprofit Policy and Management
- Organizational Behavior and Management
- Urban and Metropolitan Policy and Management
- Individually Tailored

Students should fill out a *Declaration of Concentration* form that requires the MPA Director's signature to be approved.

### **Dual Enrollment in Graduate Certificates**

Students pursuing the Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree may have the option to pursue various graduate certificates alongside their program. These certificates provide students with focused knowledge and specialized skills in specific areas. However, it is important to note that some certificate options may require students to complete additional coursework beyond the regular MPA requirements. It is important for students to carefully review the specific requirements of each certificate program they are interested in pursuing. Some certificates may require additional courses or credit hours beyond the standard MPA curriculum. Students should consult with their academic advisors to ensure they can meet the requirements for both the MPA degree and the desired graduate certificate.

Students with career interests in the nonprofit sector may earn a *Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management* within the MPA degree. For more information on this option, students should consult with the Certificate Coordinator in the MPA Program (<https://clas.wayne.edu/politicalscience/grad/npm>).

Students with an interest in economic development with a focus on urban settings may earn a *Graduate Certificate in Economic Development* with the MPA degree. For more information on this option, students should consult with the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. (<http://www.clas.wayne.edu/DUSP/graduate-economic-development>).

Students with an interest in careers that require the creation, use, and analysis of spatial data may earn a *Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Sciences* with the MPA degree. For more information on this option, students should consult with the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (<https://clas.wayne.edu/usp/grad/gc-geographic-information-sciences>).

Students with an interest in gerontology may earn a *Graduate Certificate of Gerontology* with the MPA degree. These students should consult with the University's School of Social Work for more information on this opportunity (<https://socialwork.wayne.edu/certificate/gerontology>).

## Master of Public Administration Degree Requirements and Policies

### Credits Required

A minimum of 39 semester hours of graduate coursework must be completed to earn the MPA degree. Students who must complete an internship earn a minimum of 42 credits of work. As discussed above, 30 credits are taken in prescribed core coursework. The remaining coursework consists of a minimum of 9 credits in a concentration.

Students with strong statistical or economics training may not need to take PS 5630, Statistics and Data Analysis in Political Science I, a four-credit course, and can apply for a waiver. Obtaining this waiver, however, will not decrease the number of hours required for the MPA and the student will need to take additional coursework to replace the four credit hours not earned in PS 5630. The MPA Director must approve the waiver and the replacement coursework. The form is available from the Academic Services Officer. The Director may require that a waiver be contingent on obtaining a grade of B or better on a statistics exam used in PS 5630.

### The Plan of Work

Every Master's student must file a *Plan of Work* form with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Office before the completion of 12 credit hours of graduate work. The applicant is advanced to the status of 'Candidate' upon approval of the *Plan of Work*. A student failing to submit a *Plan* will have an advising hold placed on his or her account and be denied registration in subsequent semesters pending the filing of an approved *Plan*. Additionally, if a student receives notification of the placement of an advising hold, it is often because the *Plan* was not submitted in a timely manner.

In preparing a *Plan of Work*, students should consult with the Director to discuss the scheduling of their enrollment in the core courses. It is also an appropriate time to plan a concentration. The *Plan*, which must be approved by the Director, outlines the courses a student has taken and intends to take in the program.

The *Plan of Work* form can be obtained from the MPA website, the Director, or the Academic Services Officer. When preparing the *Plan of Work* form, the student must indicate the following data in the appropriate cells on the form:

- The term and year in which the course was taken (or will be taken). For instance, a course taken during the fall term of 2022 would read F 2022. If the student is not sure when one will be taking the course in the future, it may be left blank.
- The abbreviation of the department in which the course was/will be taken.
- The course number and course title.
- The total number of course credits. Core courses are listed in the "Core Hrs" column, political science courses in the "Major Hrs" column, and courses taken in other departments in the "Minor Hrs" column.
- Whether the internship requirement (PS 7310, Public Management Internship) has been waived or not waived. Students are required to take the internship unless they have

applied for and been granted a waiver in writing. See the section “The Internship Requirement” for a more detailed description.

Students should provide the Director with a copy of the *Plan of Work* form that bears a signature. It is acceptable and preferred to submit the form in electronic format.

### **Changing the Plan of Work**

A *Plan of Work* may need to be changed as a student’s goals shift, or in response to a change in course scheduling. This is especially true with concentration courses, which may be offered less regularly than core courses. Fortunately, a *Plan of Work* is easily changed. To change a *Plan*, a student should inform the Director of the courses to be added or deleted. The Director will then process the appropriate form to change the student’s plan. It is important to note that in certifying a student for graduation, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Office compares a student’s *Plan of Work (as amended)* with the courses on the student’s transcript. If the two differ, the Office will not permit the student to graduate until the discrepancy is resolved.

### **Six-Year Rule**

All of the requirements for the MPA degree must be completed within six years from the end of the semester in which a student first earned course credit for the degree. For example, if a student’s first term of coursework was Fall 2022, all degree requirements must be completed by the end of the Fall term in 2028.

Under some circumstances, a student may be granted more time to complete the degree. A student must inform the Director in writing of the need for an extension and the justification for it. If an extension seems warranted, the Director will request that the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Office grant it. In this case, an extension will normally be approved if the student requests it *prior* to the expiration of the original six-year period. It is more difficult, however, to obtain approval from the College once the six-year deadline has passed, regardless of the reason(s). In other words, students who anticipate a problem with meeting the deadline should discuss the situation with the Director as early as possible, prior to the lapsing of the deadline.

### **Grade-Point Average**

Students must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.00 to earn the MPA degree. The GPA is calculated based on all graduate work taken at Wayne State—not just coursework taken in the MPA program. Grades earned at other universities and transferred are not included in calculating the GPA. A limited number of credits below 3.00 may be applied to a graduate degree provided such grades are offset by an equal number of credits above 3.00. Graduate students are permitted to repeat only two courses in order to improve their GPA. A student must secure the written permission of the Director as well as the Dean of the Graduate School to repeat a course. This is done by filling out and getting approval for the *Request to Repeat a Graduate Course* form.

If a student's GPA falls below 3.00, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Office places the student on academic probation. Probation entails an Academic Hold on a student's registration for subsequent terms. The Graduate Office will release such a hold only upon written request from the MPA Director. Students with a hold must consult with the Director about remedying the situation before the Director can request a release. Often, the student may be asked to retake a course in which a grade of less than B was earned. Normally, students on probation who fail to bring their average up within two semesters will no longer be eligible to take additional coursework for credit in the MPA program. Once the cumulative average exceeds 3.00, the student will be removed from probation.

### **Incomplete Grades**

An Incomplete grade is assigned only after a student has obtained approval from his or her instructor prior to the end of the term in which the grade is to be assigned and made arrangements to complete course requirements at the earliest possible opportunity. Generally, an Incomplete grade is appropriate only when the uncompleted coursework is limited to the final examination and/or a final paper. It will not be granted if a student has failed to attend regularly scheduled class meetings during the term. A written contract specifying the work to be completed should be signed by the student and the instructor. A draft template is available at <https://wayne.edu/registrar/pdfs/incomplete.pdf>.

**The student has *one calendar year* from the end of the term in which the “I” was granted to complete the required coursework.** Finishing incomplete coursework in a timely fashion is the responsibility of the student. As noted below, there are no exceptions to this timeline. If the work has not been completed, and the instructor has not reported a regular course grade by the end of one calendar year, the grade of “I” is automatically changed to failing – an “F” – on the transcript. Per university policy, there are no exceptions to this timeline permitted and the grade shall not be changed once the “F” is posted.

An additional extension may be granted if the student has requested such an extension from his instructor prior to the end of the one-year period. The instructor must then request such an extension in writing from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Office. An extension is typically one semester long, and such an extension is not automatic. The instructor has sole discretion in granting it and is not obligated to do so.

### **Directed Study**

Students may occasionally wish to register for PS 7950, Directed Study. Registration in PS 7950 permits a student to explore an area not treated in regularly scheduled courses. Students conducting extended research on a specialized topic may also use this option. Registration in PS 7950 will not be approved in lieu of regularly offered core courses except under rare circumstances.

Students pursuing this option *must* discuss it with the Director prior to registration. The student will also likely be required to identify and obtain permission from a faculty member who would be willing to serve in this capacity.

Registration for PS 7950 requires the completion of a *Graduate Directed Study* form, available from the department's Academic Services Officer. Both the MPA Director and the faculty member who will supervise the Directed Study must sign this form.

### **Transfer of Credit**

Students who have completed some graduate work at another university but have not completed a graduate degree with that coursework may be able to transfer some or all of their graduate credit hours to Wayne State University. However, a minimum of 24 hours of graduate work must be taken in residence at Wayne State University. A student wishing to receive transfer credit—after beginning degree work at Wayne State—must submit a *Petition of Graduate Credit* (<https://wayne.edu/registrar/pdfs/gradtransfer.pdf>) to the Director. The Director makes the final decision as to whether the course credits will or will not be accepted for transfer.

Syllabi, reading lists, and other relevant course materials, which allow the Director to evaluate the coursework, must be submitted with the *Petition*. Transfer credit can only be granted for courses in which a grade of B or better was earned. Once approved by the Director, the student presents the *Petition* along with an official transcript with the course and grade indicated to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Office.

### **Michigan Intercollegiate Graduate Studies (MIGS) Program**

Wayne State University students may enroll in courses at several graduate schools in Michigan if the courses fit into their degree programs and if they are unavailable at Wayne State. Such enrollment must be approved in advance by the MPA program, by the Wayne State University registrar, and by the department and university where the student is taking the course. Forms to permit such registration can be downloaded from the Graduate School at: <https://wayne.edu/admissions/pdf/migs-application-2018.pdf>.

### **Applying for Graduation**

A candidate for a degree applies for graduation on or before Friday of the fourth week of class in the semester in which he/she expects to complete the requirements for the MPA degree. A candidate may apply online through *Academica* (<http://academica.wayne.edu>). If the student does not complete the degree requirements in the semester for which one applied, one must reapply in a later semester.

## The Comprehensive Examination

All students pursuing the Master of Public Administration degree must pass a comprehensive examination, the capstone component of the program. The examination requires a student to integrate and demonstrate a mastery of material from the following core courses:

- PS 7300 Public Administration and Its Environment
- PS 7320 Organizational Theory and Behavior
- PS 7330 Public Budgeting and Finance **OR** PS 6700 Financial Management for Nonprofit Orgs.
- PS 7340 Public Personnel Management and Labor Relations
- PS 7350 Managing Public Organizations and Programs
- PS 7410 Policy Formation and Implementation
- PS 7460 Program Evaluation **OR** PS 7660 Research Methods in Policy and Politics
- PS 7480 Policy Analysis for Administration

In the examination, students are expected to demonstrate a grasp of important substantive and analytic concepts, to show familiarity with major works in the field, and to integrate and apply important ideas and concepts. Performance standards for the MPA comprehensive examination reflect this expectation.

### Eligibility to Take the Examination

*Students are strongly encouraged to take the examination as soon as possible after finishing the core coursework.* Material from concentration courses, and any core courses not listed in the matrix, is not on the exam. Some students may have to retake the examination and taking it before the expected semester of graduation helps to avoid delaying the date of graduation. Except in special circumstances approved by the Director, students may not register to take the examination if they have any incomplete grades on their record or if their grade point average is below 3.00. Students who fail part or all of the examinations may retake those parts that they failed. (See Retaking the Examination below).

### Examination Schedule

The comprehensive examination is a five-hour written test. It is regularly scheduled on a Saturday morning in October, February, and June/July of each academic year. In exceptional cases, it may be administered at other times to accommodate a compelling student need. Arrangements can be made for students residing some distance from the campus (i.e., outside of Michigan) to take the examination closer to their residence.

### Structure of the Examination

The MPA comprehensive examination is drawn from a set of study questions that change from term to term. A study guide that includes the questions is made available to students approximately six weeks prior to the date of the next comprehensive exam. This guide is posted on a Canvas site that students can access after they notify the MPA Director that they plan to take the test.

The examination is comprised of two parts, Part A and Part B.

Part A is the case study portion of the examination. For this part, students must analyze and answer questions regarding a management issue encountered in a public service organization. In the study guide, students are provided with two (2) case studies. One of these will appear on the examination.

Part B is the essay portion of the examination. Students must answer two questions that focus on particular areas of the core curriculum. The study guide contains six (6) study questions for this part of the exam. Four (4) questions will appear on the exam and students must write passing answers to any two (2) of these four. Typically, questions in Part B relate to public administration theory, public management, personnel management, public budgeting and finance, policy formation, policy implementation, program evaluation, organizational theory, and administrative behavior and policy analysis.

Students are encouraged to prepare and bring a bibliography of relevant public administration literature to the exam (See Preparing for the Examination: Information on the Content of the Bibliography).

### **Examination Grading**

Part A and Part B questions are graded independently of each other. After the exam, each answer is provided to two MPA faculty members, who grade the answers anonymously, without knowing the student's identity. Part A questions are assigned to faculty based on workload; Part B questions are generally assigned to faculty based on teaching and/or research interests. However, all MPA faculty are qualified to grade any question. The faculty use rubrics to assign grades. If both agree on the grade (which can be Pass with Distinction, Pass, or Fail), then that is the grade. If there is disagreement, then the question is assigned to a third faculty member, whose assessment breaks the tie.

It normally takes four to six weeks for the exams to be graded. The Director or the Academic Services Officer notifies each student of the results of their exam. After notification, students can review graders' comments on their answers. Students failing all or part of the exam are especially urged to do this as part of their preparation for retaking the exam. They should also schedule an appointment with the Director to discuss their performance and their plans for retaking the examination.

### **Retaking the Examination**

While most students pass both parts of the comprehensive exam the first time they take it, a few may fail one or more questions. Students failing all or part of the examination are automatically entitled to retake the failed section a second time. A student passing one part of the examination, who retakes the exam the very next time it is scheduled, need only retake the failed portion. *A student who fails the examination for a second time must notify the MPA Director as soon as possible and request permission from the MPA Program to take it a third time.* Such a petition is

not automatically approved, and the student must present compelling reasons that justify its approval. *If such approval is denied, no further work toward the degree is permitted.*

**Please see Appendix: Preparing for the Examination and Expectations for additional information that can help you prepare for the comprehensive exam.**

## The Internship Guide

The internship is a very important component of the Wayne State MPA degree program, providing valuable experience that can enhance future employment prospects. Sometimes interns who impress their host organizations are offered permanent positions. Pre-service students must complete a structured, supervised internship.

The purpose of the internship is to offer students an opportunity to both observe and participate in the process of program management or policy analysis. It complements the knowledge and skills acquired through coursework. The MPA Director serves as the internship coordinator helping to connect students with internship opportunities. However, a separate faculty member will be chosen to serve as the Internship Advisor. Three hours of credit are awarded for the internship under PS 7310. This course will be listed in the core course column on the *Plan of Work*.

Program rules stipulate that a minimum of 21 credits be earned before a student registers for an internship. The Director may waive this requirement if a very attractive or especially relevant opportunity arises, or if taking the internship prior to the completion of twenty-one hours will expedite the completion of a student's degree.

### Identifying Internship Opportunities

Wayne State University's location in the midst of a major metropolitan area provides MPA students with a diversity of internship opportunities that few programs can match. Nevertheless, finding the appropriate internship for each student can be a challenge. For this reason, students who need to complete an internship should consult with the Director well in advance of the semester they plan to fulfill this requirement. In this way, students will have a greater choice in selecting an internship. The Director can also aid the student in preparing a resume, developing interviewing skills, and securing an internship.

The MPA program regularly receives and posts on the program's email list information on internship opportunities in the Detroit area and elsewhere. Some recent internship placements include positions with the Citizens Research Council of Michigan, the Detroit Historical Society, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Wayne State University, and local governments (such as the cities of Detroit, Royal Oak, and Grosse Pointe Woods).

The final responsibility for securing an internship rests with the student. It is the student's responsibility to prepare a resume and make it available to the MPA Director and potential internship sponsors, to arrange interviews with agencies offering internships, and to negotiate the specific terms of the internship, including hours, duties, and remuneration.

In general, paid internships are preferable. However, remuneration alone should not cause a student to either reject or select an internship. An internship should be chosen (or rejected) based on the quality of experience it offers and the extent to which it advances the professional goals of the student.

## The Internship Agreement

After securing an internship, but before registering for PS 7310 and beginning the internship, the *Internship Learning Agreement* must be completed. This spells out the nature of the position, the proposed duties or responsibilities, and collateral reading and written assignments. The student, the MPA Director, and the intern's workplace supervisor must sign this form, which clarifies performance expectations and provides the Director with some authority should an intern report that assigned duties are far different from those spelled out in the contract.

Students will be assigned an Internship Advisor who is responsible for guiding the student's internship experience. The Internship Advisor is a faculty member with expertise and experience in the area selected for the internship. A student may request a specific faculty member to serve as a faculty internship advisor, but availability is not guaranteed. Students should be prepared to talk by telephone or meet periodically with the Internship Advisor to discuss internship-related problems, issues, and experiences.

## Internship Requirements

There are two main requirements for the Internship requirement as follows: First, interns work 300 hours at the host agency, allocated based upon student/site needs and availability; and second, students must complete an internship portfolio and submit the portfolio to the Internship Advisor. The role of the faculty advisor is to add value to the intern's experience by helping her develop and cultivate professional materials to prepare the intern for the job market upon completion of the degree.

The goals of the students participating in the internship are: (1) to gain professional experience, skills, and abilities while working for a prospective long-term employer; and (2) to develop and refine personal and professional development goals.

Each portfolio must contain the following sections and materials:

- Cover Sheet
- Table of Contents
- Internship Agreement
- Internship Timesheet
- Internship Journal
- Internship Report
- Internship Work Products
- Current Resume

During the course of the internship, each student must maintain and make available to the Internship Advisor copies of an **Internship Journal**. The journal should include brief periodic descriptions of tasks performed and observations on activities and experiences occurring in the workplace. The journal can be completed daily, weekly, or monthly depending on the scope and nature of the internship. The faculty member and the student will agree on the frequency at the start of the internship. The journals can also include reporting on internship activities related to MPA coursework. As part of the journal, students should complete a **Professional Networking**

**Activity Report** that can include a discussion of activities like attending the Lent Upson Event, participating in a professional association conference, joining a professional association, etc.

The **Internship Report** should be written in the style of a technical report. The topic of the Internship report should be discussed with the Internship Faculty Advisor. The student must incorporate a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the internship experience. An effort should be made to incorporate the student's views about the relevancy of the skills and knowledge acquired in the program to the experience of working in an organizational setting in a managerial capacity.

Interns will prepare materials for the **Internship Work Products** section, which also should be discussed with the Internship Advisor. Work products can include memos, papers, reports, presentations, projects, grant proposals, and instructional materials that reflect examples of their internship experience.

### **Internship Evaluation**

A grade for the internship will be posted only after the internship portfolio requirement has been satisfied. At the completion of the internship, the workplace supervisor must assess the intern's performance and forward the report to the Internship Advisor. The Program will collect the supervisor evaluation by Qualtrics online survey. It is the student's responsibility to see that this is done.

### **Waiving the Internship Requirement**

A student with significant professional public service experience may have the internship waived. If this requirement is waived, then the degree program is 39 credit hours. If it is not waived, then the degree program is 42 credit hours.

To qualify for a waiver, the experience must be professional and significant and in most cases must have taken place in a public service organization. At the very least, the experience must have some public service focus and /or application.

The student applies for the waiver from the MPA program by filling out an *Internship Waiver Form*, available on the MPA website or from the MPA Director or Academic Services Officer. Such a waiver requires a letter from the student describing the nature of any past or current professional experience, along with contact information for the relevant supervisor(s) in case the program needs to verify the student's status. A resume is extremely helpful but not required. If the Director deems the work experience to have met the objectives of the internship requirement, the Director will approve the request for a waiver. Students granted a waiver should indicate this on their *Plan of Work*.

## **Professional Development and Career Planning**

As noted, student consultation with the Director on career goals occurs as part of the process leading to the development of a student's Plan of Work. Students who are undecided about career direction or location preference should make special appointments with the Director early in their first semester.

Students thinking about professional development and career goals are encouraged to visit [MPA Careers](https://clas.wayne.edu/politicalscience/grad/mpa/career) (<https://clas.wayne.edu/politicalscience/grad/mpa/career>) for links to professional associations and public sector job resources. All MPA faculty members, particularly the Director, are available to provide students with guidance in planning a career. It is the responsibility of the student to contact MPA faculty members for this purpose. Regularly, the Director's Office receives job postings from various sources. The Director will post information on such openings on the student email list.

### **MPA Careers**

The MPA program annually monitors the careers of its graduates. The most recent study was conducted in August 2021. Recent graduates from the 2019-2020 academic year have been successful in finding professional employment – 94% of MPA graduates secured or continued employment in the sector within six months of graduation. Of these graduates, 13% worked in nonprofits, 6% in federal government, 25% in state government, 25% worked in local government, and 6% worked in the government in other countries.

### **Career Services**

Skills such as resume writing and interviewing can be acquired through Wayne State's [Career Services Office](https://careerservices.wayne.edu/) (<https://careerservices.wayne.edu/>). The MPA Director and Academic Services Officer do not arrange interviews with prospective employers or act as agents for job placements. Their placement role is primarily informational. However, students may interview with prospective employers through Career Services. From time to time, public employers do schedule interviews with graduate students in the Department of Political Science and elsewhere on campus.

### **Professional Development**

Students are encouraged to join professional associations early on, as these provide opportunities to network and gain visibility in the career field of choice. A good start would be the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), which has a local chapter. Students interested in working or currently working in local government may be interested in joining Michigan Municipal Executives (MME) Next Gen for further networking opportunities.

PublicServiceCareers.org, a joint venture of ASPA, the Network of Schools of Public Policy and Administration (NASPAA), and the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), is the most comprehensive nationwide career site for those looking to work in the public sector.

The Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program was established by Executive Order in 1977. It is designed to attract outstanding graduate students from a variety of academic disciplines who have an interest and commitment to a career in the analysis and management of public policies and programs within the federal government. Individuals eligible to be nominated for the PMF Program are graduate students completing or expecting to complete a master's or doctoral-level degree from an accredited college or university during the current academic year. Students interested in obtaining an application and other PMF information should consult information on their webpage (<https://www.pmf.gov/>). Applications for the PMF Program are available by early September. All degree requirements must be completed by the time that a PMF begins employment.

## Connecting with the MPA Program

The MPA Program sponsors various activities designed to facilitate student interaction with fellow students, alumni, and faculty; recognize academic excellence; and provide forums outside the classroom for the discussion of public policy and management issues. The student email list (listserv) is the primary means of communication for such activities. It is also the source of other important information for students and alumni of the MPA Program. *Students need to make sure they read emails that come via the listserv.* In order to take advantage of all that the MPA program has to offer, students are highly encouraged to attend program events, lectures, and other networking opportunities.

### Lent Upson Lecture and Public Administration Awards Reception

Each spring, the Department of Political Science, the Citizens Research Council of Michigan, and other sponsors host the Lent Upson Lecture. The invited lecturer is a prominent academic or practitioner in the field of public administration. The lecture is followed by a reception, whereby the program honors one of its alumni, awards various scholarships, and inducts outstanding MPA and Ph.D. students into Pi Alpha Alpha.

### Fall Graduate Reception

Each Fall, the Department of Political Science hosts a late afternoon reception for new and returning graduate students in the Department's several graduate degree programs. This reception provides an opportunity for students to interact with fellow students, with program alumni, and with program faculty. The reception is often the occasion for recognizing outstanding student performance, including the awarding of scholarships.

### Pi Alpha Alpha National Honor Society

The MPA Program recognizes outstanding students in several ways. Students and alumni with strong academic records and accomplishments in the field of public administration are eligible for induction into *Pi Alpha Alpha*, the global honorary society for public affairs and administration. A substantial number of students have been inducted into this prestigious honorary society. To be eligible a student must be pursuing one of the following degrees: BPA, MPA, or an MA or PhD in Political Science.

### MPA Scholarship Opportunities

The *Alfred M. Pelham Scholarship* honors the memory of a public servant with a long and distinguished career in Wayne County and Detroit government who was also a member of the faculty of the Graduate Program in Public Administration. At least one scholarship is awarded annually to encourage and facilitate graduate study in public administration, especially by minority students.

The *Wayne State Internship in Local Government* provides support for a paid internship in local government. This scholarship was first awarded in 2016 and is awarded annually to an MPA student.

The *Master of Public Administration Annual Scholarship* is a scholarship that provides support to a student who is working full-time while earning an MPA. This anonymous scholarship was first awarded in the fall of 2017 and is awarded annually to an MPA student.

The *Master of Public Administration Annual Recruitment Scholarship* is a scholarship that provides support to a student who is working full-time while earning an MPA. This anonymous scholarship was first awarded in the fall of 2021 and is awarded annually to an MPA student.

The *Dr. Daryl J. and Constance R. Delabbio Public Service Endowed Scholarship* will first be awarded in the fall of 2018. Dr. Delabbio's career in the public service sector spanned four decades, most recently serving for 22 years as the Kent County Administrator. This scholarship supports students interested in local government administration.

Periodically, the Department of Political Science awards an MPA student the *Jorge Tapia-Videla Award*, a scholarship that honors a former Director of the MPA program.

### **Public Administration Newsletter and Website**

Periodically the Program publishes and distributes a newsletter to alumni, current students, and friends of the program. It includes news on the achievements of current students and alumni, on the activities of faculty, as well as information on the program of use to current students. Since the news-gathering process for the newsletter is informal, students and alumni are encouraged to inform the Director of items of personal or professional interest.

The MPA website is a valuable resource for past and current students. Often, information will appear on the website first. Students can access the MPA web page at <https://clas.wayne.edu/politicalscience/grad/mpa>. The MPA Program also hosts a closed [LinkedIn group](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8232704/) (Wayne State MPA Community). All students are encouraged to sign up for LinkedIn and to request access to the group.

### **Practitioner Advisory Council Board**

A Practitioner Advisory Council Board facilitates the program's relations with the practitioner community in the Detroit metropolitan area. Members have important managerial or policymaking roles in local and state government as well as in nonprofit organizations. The Board advises the Program faculty on curriculum, employment trends, student recruitment, and continuing education and training needs. Please contact the MPA Director if you are interested in becoming a member of the Advisory Board.

## Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, this handbook is designed to address many of the major issues that MPA students will confront as they pursue their degrees. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the most recent addition to *Wayne State University's Graduate Bulletin*. When a discrepancy exists between the two, information found in the *Bulletin must be deemed correct*.

While it is hoped this handbook will facilitate your understanding of the rules and procedures governing the MPA degree, it is not intended as a substitute for personal advisement. Students are encouraged to consult with the Director, with the Department's Academic Services Officer, or with particular members of the Program Faculty as the need arises.

The MPA faculty are delighted that you have chosen to pursue a public service career and to study in the MPA program at Wayne State University. We look forward to being part of your journey in public service and we are here to help you succeed in achieving your goals.

## Appendix: Concentration Profiles

Concentrations are not directly analogous to undergraduate majors, as the choice of concentration does not show up on the diploma and (as noted previously) the MPA program is a generalist program. Thus, there is considerable flexibility in the choice of concentration courses. The course listings below are suggested courses that may fit a student's interest in a concentration. However, a student may select courses outside of the concentration if one believes they provide the needed substantive background. Courses need only be listed on the *Declaration of Concentration* and approved by the MPA Director.

Please be advised that many of the courses listed below are cross-listed under several university departments. Please consult the *Graduate Bulletin* for this information (<https://bulletins.wayne.edu/graduate/>).

### Economic Development Policy and Management

**Objective:** This concentration is designed to prepare students for public service careers in various organizations that engage in economic development and planning activities in the context of urban and metropolitan settings. These careers are found in state government, in larger local governments, and in nonprofit and private organizations that conduct research or provide services in these areas. In addition to pursuing a concentration in this area, MPA students may choose to also earn a Graduate Certificate in Economic Development offered through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This certificate requires an MPA student to take two additional courses beyond the 9 credit hours required for the concentration.

#### Possible courses:

##### *Strongly Recommended for Concentration*

PS 6440 Regional, State and Urban Economic Development: Policy and Administration (Cr. 3) [Cross-listed as UP 6550 and ECO 6650]

##### *Other Recommended Courses*

PS 6340 Public Sector Labor Relations (Cr. 3)  
PS 6700 Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations (Cr. 3)  
PS 7210 Approaches to the Study of Urban Politics (Cr. 3)  
PS 7240 Urban Public Policy (Cr. 3)  
PS 7250 Seminar in Urban Administration (Cr. 3)  
PS 7460 Program Evaluation (Cr. 3)  
PS 7700 Foundations of Nonprofit Management (Cr. 3)  
BA 7020 Corporate Financial Management (Cr. 3)  
ECO 6510 Advanced Public Finance (Cr. 4)  
ECO 6800 Advanced Urban and Regional Economics (Cr. 4)  
ELR 7400 Labor Relations Law in North America (Cr. 3)

ELR	7450	Employment Relations Law in North America (Cr. 3)
ELR	8500	Strategic Analysis of North America Labor and Human Resource Issues (Cr. 3)
MKT	7460	International Business (Cr. 3)
MGT	7660	Entrepreneurial Management (Cr. 3)
MGT	7750	Managing Employee Relations (Cr. 3)
UP	5110	Urban Planning Process (Cr. 3)
UP	6310	Real Estate Development (Cr. 3)
UP	6340	Community Development (Cr. 3)
UP	6350	Housing Policy and Programs (Cr. 3)
UP	6470	Environmental Planning (Cr. 3)
UP	6510	Urban and Regional Systems (Cr. 3)
UP	6520	Transportation Policy and Planning (Cr. 3)
UP	6570	Local Economic Development: Implementation and Finance (Cr. 3)
UP	6650	Planning and Development Law (Cr. 3)
UP	6680	Neighborhood Decline and Revitalization (Cr. 3)
UP	6700	Geographic Information Systems (Cr. 4)
UP	7130	Advanced GIS Applications (Cr. 4)

### **Health and Human Services Policy and Management**

**Objective:** This concentration is designed to prepare students for public service careers in various healthcare organizations. These include public agencies such as the National Institute of Health, public agencies that deliver health care services as part of their mission, such as the Veterans Administration, state and local public health departments, publicly owned hospitals, and regulatory agencies. They include organizations that deliver health care services such as home health care agencies, health clinics, and hospitals. They include organizations that insure, manage, or pay for health care services including insurance companies, PPOs, and HMOs. They include organizations that provide healthcare management and consulting services of various types.

#### **Possible Courses:**

PS	6700	Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations (Cr. 3)
PS	7700	Foundations of Nonprofit Management (Cr. 3)
ANT	5400	Anthropology of Health and Illness (Cr. 3)
ANT	7680	Medical Anthropology (Cr. 3)
COM	6180	Principles of Health Communication (Cr. 3)
COM	7170	Health and Risk Communication (Cr. 3)
ECO	6550	Advanced Economics of Health Care (Cr. 4)
ECO	7550	Economics of Health Care I (Cr. 4)
ECO	7560	Economics of Health Care II (Cr. 4)
FPH	7011	Foundations of Public Health (Cr. 3)
FPH	7012	Social Justice in Public Health (Cr. 3)
FPH	7100	Health Care Organization and Administration (Cr. 3)
FPH	7120	Global Public Health (Cr. 3)

FPH	7230	Health Program Evaluations (Cr. 3)
FPH	7240	Epidemiology (Cr. 3)
FPH	7300	Public Health Policy (Cr. 3)
FPH	7320	The Social Basis of Health (Cr. 3)
FPH	7420	Principles of Environmental Health (Cr. 3)
FPH	7510	Leadership and Population Health (Cr. 3)
FPH	7511	Health Promotion Messaging and Advocacy (Cr. 3)
FPH	7760	Community Health Education (Cr. 3)
FPH	7860	Principles of Occupational Health (Cr. 3)
SOC	6750	Sociology of Urban Health (Cr. 3)
SOC	7100	Women and Health (Cr. 3)
SOC	7760	Health and Life Course (Cr. 3)
SOC	7770	Seminar in Medical Sociology (Cr. 3)
SOC	7780	Topics in the Sociology of Health and Illness (Cr. 3)
SW	7150	Health Disparities and Substance Use (Cr. 3)
SW	7770	Palliative Care and Elder Law (Cr. 3)
SW	9260	Current and Historical Trends in US Social Welfare Policy (Cr. 3)

### **Human and Fiscal Resource Management**

**Objective:** This concentration is designed to prepare students for public service careers in “back office” functions of public and nonprofit organizations: human resources and financial management. The MPA program, through its required courses, provides all students with a solid grounding in these topics. This concentration enables students to broaden and deepen their knowledge and skills in dealing with issues and problems in these areas.

#### **Possible Courses:**

PS	5890	Dispute Resolution (Cr. 3)
PS	6340	Public Sector Labor Relations (Cr. 3)
PS	6700	Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations (Cr. 3)
ACC	7188	Government and Not-for-Profit Accounting (Cr. 3)
BA	6000	Introduction to Accounting and Financial Reporting (Cr. 2)
BA	6005	Basics of Financial Management (Cr. 2)
BA	6030	Budgeting, Operations, and Grants (Cr. 2)
ECO	6420	Labor Relations and Public Policy (Cr. 3)
ECO	6510	Advanced Public Finance (Cr. 4)
ECO	6520	Advanced State and Local Public Finance (Cr. 4)
EDA	7675	Public School Finance and Budgeting (Cr. 4)
EDA	8620	School Personnel Administration (Cr. 4)
ELR	7010	Health Care, Retirement, and Employee Benefit Plans (Cr. 3)
ELR	7430	Public Sector Labor Relations (Cr. 3)
ELR	7400	Labor Relations Law in North America (Cr. 3)
ELR	7450	Employment Relations Law in North America (Cr. 3)
ELR	7700	Current and Future Trends in Collective Bargaining (Cr. 3)

ELR	8500	Strategic Analysis of North American Labor and Human Resource Issues (Cr. 3)
MGT	7640	Management of Human Resources (Cr. 3)
MGT	7650	Strategic Human Resource Management (Cr. 3)
MGT	7750	Managing Employee Relations (Cr. 3)
MGT	7780	Concepts & Processes of Dispute Resolution I: Negotiating Theory and Practice (Cr. 3)
MGT	7850	Management through Constructive Persuasion (Cr. 3)
PSY	6550	Training and Employee Development (Cr. 3)
PSY	7560	Leadership and Executive Development: Theory and Research (Cr. 3)
PSY	7745	Job Analysis and Performance Criteria (Cr. 3)
PSY	7750	Organizational Staffing (Cr. 3)

### **Nonprofit Policy and Management**

**Objective:** The *Nonprofit Policy and Management* track prepares leaders of nonprofit organizations to effectively respond to the dynamic environment, as well as various governance and management challenges that these organizations face while fulfilling their public service roles, by allowing students to develop a critical set of skills, including leadership, board recruitment and development, fundraising, grant writing, program evaluation, financial management, strategic management, cross-sectoral collaboration, innovation management, and management of staff and volunteers, among other.

#### **Possible Courses:**

##### *Strongly Recommended for Concentration*

PS	7700	Foundations of Nonprofit Management (Cr. 3)
PS	6700	Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations (Cr. 3)
PS	6720	Marketing, Development, & Grant Writing for Nonprofit Organizations (Cr. 3)

##### *Other Recommended Courses*

PS	5890	Dispute Resolution (Cr. 3)
PS	7260	Urban Poverty and Racial Segregation (Cr. 3)
PS	7460	Program Evaluation (Cr. 3)
PS	6440	Regional, State & Urban Economic Development: Policy & Administration (Cr. 3)
BA	6000	Introduction to Accounting and Financial Reporting (Cr. 2)
BA	6005	Basics of Financial Management (Cr. 2)
BA	6015	Marketing Foundations (Cr. 2)
BA	7040	Managing Organizational Behavior (Cr. 3)
COM	7150	Micro-Level Organizational Communication (Cr. 3)
COM	7210	New Media and Strategic Communication (Cr. 3)
MGT	7620	Complex Organizations (Cr.3)
MGT	7630	Organizational Change and Development (Cr. 3)
MGT	7660	Entrepreneurial Management (Cr. 3)
MGT	7700	Leadership and Management of Innovation and Technology (Cr. 3)

MGT	7815	Strategic Leadership (Cr. 3)
MGT	7816	Leading in Organizations (Cr. 3)
MGT	7900	Project Management (Cr. 3)
PSY	6550	Training and Employee Development (Cr. 3)
SOC	8710	Advanced Seminar in Race/Ethnicity (Cr. 3)
SW	5720	Social Services for Older Adults (Cr. 3)
SW	7085	Social Work Leadership Strategies (Cr. 3)
SW	7095	Social Entrepreneurship (Cr. 3)
SW	7720	Social Policy and Advocacy (Cr. 3)
SW	9260	Current and Historical Trends in US Social Welfare Policy (Cr. 3)
UP	5650	Metropolitan Detroit (Cr. 4)
UP	5430	Cities and Food (Cr. 3)
UP	6340	Community Development (Cr. 3)
UP	6350	Housing Policy and Programs (Cr. 3)
UP	6680	Neighborhood Decline and Revitalization (Cr. 3)

### **Organizational Behavior and Management**

**Objective:** This is one of the more general concentrations and is designed for students preparing for leadership and management positions in public service organizations. Students select from a broad array of courses that deal with the challenges of managing, and techniques useful in managing complex public service organizations.

#### **Possible Courses:**

PS	5890	Dispute Resolution (Cr. 3)
BA	6020	Contemporary Principles of Management (Cr. 2)
BA	7040	Managing Organizational Behavior (Cr. 3)
BA	8220	Seminar in Organizational Behavior (Cr. 3)
BA	8420	Seminar in Organizational Theory (Cr. 3)
MGT	7620	Complex Organizations (Cr.3)
MGT	7630	Organizational Change and Development (Cr. 3)
MGT	7640	Management of Human Resources (Cr. 3)
MGT	7660	Entrepreneurial Management (Cr. 3)
MGT	7700	Leadership and Management of Innovation and Technology (Cr. 3)
MGT	7815	Strategic Leadership (Cr. 3)
MGT	7816	Leading in Organizations (Cr. 3)
MGT	7900	Project Management (Cr. 3)
PSY	6510	Organization Theory (Cr. 3)
PSY	6520	Organizational Behavior (Cr. 3)
PSY	6550	Training and Employee Development (Cr. 3)
SW	7055	Social Work Practices With Groups (Cr. 3)
SW	7085	Social Work Leadership Strategies (Cr. 3)
SW	7660	Human Behavior in the Social Environment II: Diversity in a Multicultural Society (Cr. 3)

## Urban and Metropolitan Policy and Management

**Objective:** This concentration is designed to prepare students for public service careers in organizations focusing on unique challenges facing urban and metropolitan areas. Students will take courses that enable them to analyze urban issues and provide solutions at the local level. This concentration develops knowledge and skills to prepare students to work as professional city, county, town, or village managers.

### Possible Courses:

#### *Strongly Recommended for Concentration*

- PS 7240 Urban Public Policy (Cr. 3)
- PS 7250 Seminar in Urban Administration (Cr. 3)

#### *Other Recommended Courses*

- PS 6020 Intergovernmental Relations and American Federalism (Cr. 3)
- PS 6050 Class, Race, and Politics in America (Cr. 3)
- PS 6340 Public Sector Labor Relations (Cr. 3)
- PS 6440 Regional, State and Urban Economic Development: Policy and Administration (Cr. 3) [Cross-listed as UP 6550 and ECO 6650]
- PS 7210 Approaches to the Study of Urban Politics (Cr. 3)
- PS 7260 Urban Poverty and Racial Segregation (Cr. 3)
- ECO 6800 Advanced Urban and Regional Economics (Cr. 4)
- SOC 7810 Race Relations in Urban Society (Cr. 3)
- UP 5650 Metropolitan Detroit (Cr. 4)
- UP 6340 Community Development (Cr. 3)
- UP 6350 Housing Policy and Programs (Cr. 3)
- UP 6470 Environmental Planning (Cr. 3)
- UP 6510 Urban and Regional Systems (Cr. 3)
- UP 6520 Transportation Policy and Planning (Cr. 3)
- UP 6570 Local Economic Development: Implementation and Finance (Cr. 3)
- UP 6680 Neighborhood Decline and Revitalization (Cr. 3)
- UP 6700 Geographic Information Systems (Cr. 4)
- UP 6750 State and Local Public Finance (Cr. 4)
- UP 7130 Advanced GIS Applications (Cr. 4)

### Elective Option (Individually Tailored)

**Objective:** The elective option allows students to tailor their own concentration to suit a specific career goal. An example would be a student who wishes to pursue a public service career within an organization that is involved internationally (consulates, interest groups, trade groups, non-governmental organizations).

**Curriculum:** The student selects courses and must provide justification to the Director.

## **Appendix: Preparing for the Examination and Expectations**

The following is additional information regarding the comprehensive examination. If you have any questions, it is strongly encouraged that you consult with the Director as far in advance of the exam as possible.

### **Preparing for the Examination**

The content of courses taught by the same instructor often changes over time. Required readings in the current academic year will, in all likelihood, be somewhat different from those used in earlier years. Furthermore, since comprehensive exam questions are often, by design, different from questions on a final exam in a specific course, studying using only core course readings may be insufficient. Hence, students preparing for their examination should secure and review syllabi for the most recent offerings of various core courses and for offerings of any core course that might be taught by different instructors. This is especially true for students moving through the program more slowly. Syllabi are available from the political science department office in 2040 FAB and may be posted on a course website or the MPA program website.

One of the purposes of the comprehensive examination is to assess the ability of students to apply knowledge to concrete situations. Hence, good answers often require a review of materials that go beyond what was assigned in a particular course. While it is impossible to specify infallible guidelines, student experience suggests the following advice in preparing to take the exam:

Waiting to take the examination until the end of one's coursework is generally unwise since the examination focuses on the core coursework, which is usually taken early in the program. The more time that elapses between the completion of this coursework and sitting for the examination, the more difficult it seems to be for students to do well.

The amount of time necessary to prepare for the exam will vary. Students who have consistently read required readings for their courses will need less time to prepare than others. Students who do well in the exam typically prepare by outlining answers to the study questions. If some time has elapsed since the completion of the core courses, the amount of preparation time will increase.

As noted, students may prepare and use for reference a bibliography of relevant, scholarly materials. Entries on the bibliography are limited to the author's name, the title of the book or article, and other citation information. Students are strongly encouraged to prepare such a bibliography. Aside from jogging one's memory during the exam, the effort required in preparing it may highlight major gaps in a student's knowledge. Students who choose to prepare a bibliography must submit a copy of it with their examination answers.

Students planning to take the exam should consult with the Director early in the term prior to taking the exam. The Director can provide insight into how to prepare for the exam and inform the student of any plans to hold group meetings with those registered for the examination. The

Director can also suggest which faculty members to consult on materials relevant to particular study questions.

Finally, MPA students should appreciate that the comprehensive examination has always been an important part of the structure of the Wayne State Graduate Program in Public Administration. Successful completion of the examination reflects a mature knowledge of the role of a public service professional. Coursework is integrated through serious preparation for the exam – which makes the MPA program more than just a series of disparate courses.

### **Exam Expectations**

The MPA comprehensive examination has always been an important part of the structure of the Wayne State Graduate Program in Public Administration. Successful completion of the examination requires a mature knowledge of the role of a public service professional. There are general guidelines that students should follow as they construct their answers.

For all answers, students should follow some key principles that, although obvious, are still worth noting. Answers should be organized, using paragraph structure and complete sentences, and minimal abbreviation. There are no page or citation minimums, but answers should be comprehensive. An answer that merits a grade of “pass” will integrate concepts from different courses, as appropriate, and apply those concepts to concrete situations. One way to assure this is for you to go back through your course notes, re-read the assigned reading, and connect any answers you outline to the coursework.

Part A of the examination is a case study where students are expected to demonstrate that they can utilize concepts and methods to solve a real-world problem. In constructing an answer, students should follow some general principles by including the following in the answer:

- Describe the central issue, dilemma, or decision point in the case.
- Describe the relevant facts of the case.
- Appropriately draw upon coursework to weigh the central aspects of the case.
- Utilize literature where appropriate to justify the course of action that is being recommended.

Part B of the examination consists of questions that require students to develop answers based on relevant coursework. Answers that merit a “pass” will do the following:

- *Answer the question(s).* The best way to answer the question(s) is to present a thesis in the first paragraph and then draw upon this main argument as one progresses through the answer. An answer that merits a grade of “fail” will not answer the question that is asked. Although a student may find it far easier to answer a question and address issues upon which he or she is more familiar, this is not a successful strategy. Students may want to draw up an outline beforehand that covers all of the points required in the question.
- *Acknowledge multiple perspectives.* While the answer should have a point of view, it should also discuss other, possibly competing or complementary, perspectives. A completely one-sided discussion is not acceptable.

- *Use citations to support arguments.* The answer should utilize insights from sources covered in class. These sources include but are not limited to, the readings. Some questions may also benefit from incorporating materials from outside of the coursework.
- *Use examples.* It is important for students to demonstrate that they can apply knowledge of abstract concepts and ideas to examples from the real world. For example, a discussion of performance measurement would benefit from a discussion of how the technique could work (or not work) in an organization of interest to the student.
- *Integrate answers.* Many, but not all, of the questions, draw upon concepts covered in multiple classes. Be sure to consider this as you outline your answers.

### **Exam Accommodations**

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS: <https://studentdisability.wayne.edu>) for coordination of your exam accommodations. To register with Student Disability Services, complete the online registration form at: [https://wayne-accommodate.symplicity.com/public\\_accommodation](https://wayne-accommodate.symplicity.com/public_accommodation). The SDS office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. The telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-202-4216 for videophone use.