

LSU MPA Student Handbook

I. Guidelines for Pursuing the MPA Degree

A. Program Goals

The Master of Public Administration prepares students to work in government, nonprofit organizations, and private entities that deal with governmental agencies, public entities, and public policy. It is a 36-hour program, including 27 hours of core courses and nine hours of electives. The program offers classes in both public policy and public management.

Core courses include economics, budgeting, finance, organizational behavior, data analytics, and human resource management. Additionally, students link coursework to real-world experience through a practicum.

B. Admission

1. [LSU Graduate School Admissions Requirements](#) – LSU Graduate School's regular admission requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, a 3.0 GPA on all undergraduate and previous graduate work, and a resume with a complete chronological outline. Students who do not qualify for regular admission may qualify for probationary or provisional admission.
2. [Department of Public Administration Admissions Requirements](#) – The MPA Program evaluates applicants based on the following criteria:
 - ▶ Undergraduate academic performance and previous graduate academic performance if applicable
 - ▶ Three letters of recommendation
 - ▶ Work experience
 - ▶ Activities indicating an interest in public management and public policy
 - ▶ Other experiences that may indicate the ability to complete a professional program

C. Transfer of Credit

1. A limit of three hours of elective credit can be transferred into the MPA Program
2. Core curriculum cannot be transferred into the MPA Program
3. Non-degree seeking students can transfer up to 12 hours into the MPA Program (with approval from a graduate advisor and department chair). It is recommended that students registered as non-degree seeking meet with the MPA Graduate Advisor to assist in their course schedules.
4. [LSU Catalog – Transfer of Credit](#)

D. Registration

1. Specific registration dates for fall, spring, and summer semesters or modules are listed on the LSU academic calendar. Registration procedures are published in the semester or term's schedule of classes on the [University Registrar's website](#).
2. [How to schedule & drop classes](#)
3. [How to pay fee bill](#)
4. How to complete registration
 - ▶ Go to MyLSU
 - ▶ Fee bill
 - ▶ Registration services
 - ▶ View fee bill
 - ▶ Pay fees, if needed or if paid fees with a ZERO balance
 - ▶ Click **complete registration** button
5. [Time Limitation to Complete the Degree](#) – The MPA degree must be completed within five years from entrance into the program. Details of this requirement are available in the current LSU Graduate School catalog.

6. [Minimum GPA Requirements](#) — A minimum of a 3.0 GPA is required for students to maintain good academic standing in the MPA Program. A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation. A student whose GPA falls below 2.75 may be dismissed from the LSU Graduate School and from the MPA Program without a probationary period. These GPA standards are required each module/term and cumulatively.
7. [Academic Renewal](#) — Academic Renewal is a process that allows graduate students who were academically dismissed from LSU to become eligible for readmission and reenrollment. To be considered for reinstatement, you must meet various eligibility criteria.

II. MPA Program Requirements

A. The MPA Program is a 36-hour program that includes 27 hours of core courses and nine hours of electives. A required practicum is included in the core coursework.

- ▶ At least one-half of the minimum required credit in the student's master's program must be courses at or above 7000-level.

B. Core courses

1. **PADM 7910 Public Administration Theory and Practice (3)** – Students learn the contents and boundaries of public administration as a discipline. Topics include the historical development of public administration as a field of study, organizational theory, professional ethics, policy development, management techniques to enhance productivity and performance, leadership, and diversity. The course includes plenty of case study work.
2. **PADM 7912 Public Human Resource Management (3)** – The course explores human resource policy, including procedures and principles of personnel administration. Students will learn traditional aspects of personnel administration, including recruiting, job classification, evaluation, and compensation. Additional topics include workforce diversity, drug abuse, whistleblowing, sexual discrimination, and labor relations.
3. **PADM 7009 Data Analytics for Public Administration I (3)** – The course introduces students to the development of a research question and the procedures of using empirical observations and data that describe the practical and technical issues of sampling, surveying, measurement, research design, analysis, and preparation of research reports.
4. **PADM 7914 Public Budgeting (3)** – This is an introduction to public budgeting. Topics include budget techniques, the importance of budgeting in policymaking, and understanding the budget process.
5. **PADM 7902 Seminar in Public Policy (3)** – This course is a seminar on policymaking and administration in the American political system, emphasizing the institutions of governance including their constitutional foundations. Students learn about the political process of formulating, implementing, and evaluating public policy and the public-private, intergovernmental, and international dynamics of policy.
6. **PADM 5600 Microeconomic Theory for Policy Analysis (3)** - This course teaches the concepts and analytical tools of microeconomics and their relevance for decision and policy making in public and nonprofit sectors. It also teaches theories of demand, production, cost, market structures, and distribution. In addition, students study the analysis of economic problems and policies, efficiency criteria, social impacts, and limitations of the market system.
7. **PADM 7010 Data Analytics for Public Administration II (3)** – *Prereq.: PADM 7009.* Students learn descriptive measures for populations and samples, basic probability theory, and distributions of discrete and continuous random variables. The course also includes hypothesis testing and estimation for means, variances, and proportions, measures of association, regression analysis, index numbers, applications in public administration, and policy evaluation.
8. **PADM 7911 Organizational Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (3)** – The course includes analyzing elements of effective organizational functioning in the public and nonprofit sectors, and the development of diagnostic skills to improve performance. It also teaches students how to incorporate organizational behavior and theory in the study of achieving effectiveness, efficiency, and growth.
9. **PADM 7852 MPA Practicum (1)** – *Prereq.: PADM 7009, PADM 7010, PADM 5600, PADM 7902, PADM 7912, PADM 7914, PADM 7910, PADM 7911.* *May vary by modality. Enrollment by permission of the department.* MPA Practicum is required of all MPA students. To enroll in this course, students must have an approved internship or other relevant position. Assignments are designed around the work of the position and include letters of appointment from an employer.
10. **PADM 7901 MPA Capstone (2)** – *Prereq.: PADM 7009, PADM 7010, PADM 5600, PADM 7902, PADM 7912, PADM 7914, PADM 7910, PADM 7911.* *May vary by modality. Enrollment by permission of the department.* The MPA capstone course covers major components of public administration through guest lectures. Topics include budgeting, policy, management, organizational behavior, and economics. Students take this course at the conclusion of their path to the MPA. The final exam is comprehensive.

C Electives

Nine hours of graduate-level electives are required for MPA students. Electives should be 7000-level or above, taught by a graduate faculty instructor, and are selected with the guidance of Public Administration faculty. The Department of Public Administration offers a variety of electives (PADM courses). Students who wish to pursue electives in other departments must have the elective course approved by the Department of Public Administration. The elective approval form found on the Department of Public Administration's webpage, must be submitted and approved prior to registration.

D. [MPA / JD Joint Program Requirements](#) – The Department of Public Administration offers a joint program with the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center for on-campus students to complete an MPA and a JD in a four-year program. Students interested in this joint program should meet with a Department of Public Administration advisor to establish an academic plan. Students need to be admitted simultaneously to both programs.

E. Recommended Schedules – The MPA degree is offered to both full-time and part-time students. The Department of Public Administration considers it the responsibility of the student to ensure that the student fulfills all course requirements. Students with questions on course schedules should contact their Graduate Advisor. Full-time and part-time recommended On-Campus MPA Schedules can be found on the [MPA website](#).

III. Practicum

1. PADM 7852 MPA Practicum – The MPA practicum is required of all MPA students. For this course, all students should have an approved internship or other relevant position.
2. Students will link coursework to real world experience through a practicum. If you are currently working in the public sector or public administration related field, you'll complete the practicum coursework using your current job. Students who are not currently employed in the public sector will acquire and complete an internship of at least 20 hr/week for eight weeks.
3. Pre-requisites: MPA students must complete PADM 5600, PADM 7009, PADM 7010, PADM 7902, PADM 7910, PADM 7911, PADM 7912, and PADM 7914 before enrolling in PADM 7852.
4. Application and approval
 - ▶ Complete the practicum approval form on department webpage.
 - ▶ Provide letter from employer or internship offer letter
 - ▶ Provide position description, including description of duties

IV. Degree Completion

1. Each student will take a comprehensive examination, which each MPA student takes during the student's last term in the MPA Program. This comprehensive examination is evaluated by the Public Administration Capstone professor and at least one other Public Administration faculty member.
 - a. To qualify for taking the comprehensive examination, a student must have completed all of the required core courses for the MPA degree. If a student follows the recommended schedule for both full-time and part-time students, then the comprehensive exam is taken in the semester or module of graduation.
2. Students are required to complete forms from the Graduate School signifying their intent to graduate. Each student is responsible for ensuring their forms are submitted correctly and timely.

V. Financial Assistance

1. Graduate Assistantships
 - a. Graduate assistantships within the Department of Public Administration are available to on-campus, full-time MPA students. Complete the public administration application form to apply. To be considered, applicants must be accepted to the MPA Program on a regular or provisional admission status.
 - b. The LSU Graduate School announces other graduate assistantships outside of the Department of Public Administration, which are also available to students (see the LSU Graduate School weekly announcements).
 - c. Graduate assistants are contractually required to devote full-time to their graduate programs and to the responsibilities of their graduate assistantships. A graduate assistant may accept additional employment only with the department chair or graduate advisor approval and approval from the dean of the LSU Graduate School. Please see Policy Statement 21 for details about the responsibilities of a graduate assistant.
2. [Conference Travel Support](#)
 - a. The department offers a limited number of travel awards to Public Administration students who attend widely recognized academic conferences to present research. Each student can receive a maximum of \$500 per academic year to cover conference and travel costs such as conference registration fee, airfare, lodging, and food. Students receiving department travel awards must book airfare through the University contracted travel agency with the assistance of the department.
 - b. Award eligibility:
 - ▶ Student must present a formal letter or email indicating their proposal was accepted by the conference.
 - ▶ Students must complete the conference paperwork and present the work to department faculty before the conference.
 - ▶ Students must submit all the receipts and documents for reimbursement after the conference.
 - c. Students are encouraged to apply for conference sponsored financial aid such as a registration fee waiver or discount, scholarships, fellowships, and travel stipends.
 - d. [Graduate Student Association Travel Award](#). Awards for reimbursement of approved travel expenses are also available from the Graduate School for qualified graduate students presenting their research at widely recognized, professional conferences.
3. Campus-wide financial aid opportunities can be found on the [LSU Financial Aid & Scholarships website](#).

VI. Activities, Awards and Honors

1. Conferences and Professional Organizations – There are many opportunities for students to become involved in professional organizations affiliated with public affairs and administration programs. Interested students should discuss these opportunities with an advisor or faculty member. Some of the professional organizations include:

- a. [American Society for Public Administration \(ASPA\)](#) – The American Society for Public Administration serves as the bridge between public administration scholarship and practitioners in the field. ASPA hosts an annual meeting in the spring and offers many opportunities for students to present their research, including the ASPA Founders’ Fellows, which is open to graduate students and professionals in the first three years of their public service career.
 - b. [Southeastern Conference for Public Administration \(SECoPA\)](#) – The Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA) is the gathering place of ideas for public service practitioners, researchers, and students in a ten- state region. The conference offers attendees the opportunity to engage in scholarly discourse, discover the latest innovations in the field, share ideas from practitioners in the field, and network with other public service administrators across the region.
 - c. [International City/County Management Association \(ICMA\)](#) – ICMA was formed in 1914 and is one of the oldest governmental management associations in the country. It hosts an annual meeting usually in the fall. It is one of the largest annual gatherings of local government officials.
2. Department Activities and Organizations
- a. The Public Administration Student Association (PASA) is a professional organization for students in the MPA Program. PASA supports the department’s work by providing professional development, career counseling, and social activities for MPA students. The organization regularly hosts networking events where students and alums can interact with senior-level public administrators and political leaders. PASA elects its officers annually. Any MPA student who has at least a 3.0 GPA and is in good standing with the university is eligible to run for office. For more information on PASA: e-mail pasa.lsu@gmail.com or follow the group on Facebook (@PASALSU).
 - b. [Pi Alpha Alpha](#) is the global honor society for public affairs and administration. There are more than 160 chapters located around the world at NASPAA member schools. Pi Alpha Alpha is run by NASPAA. The purpose of Pi Alpha Alpha is to encourage and recognize outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in public affairs and administration. Its objectives include fostering integrity, professionalism, and effective performance, promoting the advancement of quality in education, and the practice of the art and science of public affairs and administration. PAA membership identifies those with the highest performance levels in educational programs and helps prepare them for public service careers. MPA students who excel in scholarship may be nominated to join Pi Alpha Alpha by members of the department faculty during their last enrolled term in the program.
 - c. Department Student Awards
 - ▶ [MPA Alum of the Year](#) — This award is presented annually to an alum of the LSU MPA Program who has demonstrated outstanding service and leadership in the public sector and in the community.
 - ▶ [Rising Leader Award](#) —This award honors and recognizes exceptional leadership and contribution to the field of public policy, administration, and service within 10 years of graduation from the MPA Program.
 - ▶ [Astrid Merget Award](#) — This award is presented annually to an MPA student who demonstrates a dedication to public service, citizenship, and community engagement.
 - ▶ [Academic Excellence Award](#) — This award is presented annually to an MPA student in recognition of academic achievement. Honorees plan to enter the public sector, have an inquiring mind about public policy issues, and demonstrate a commitment to improving public management/policy.

VII. Student Advisements

Students are responsible for scheduling their own classes and for ensuring that they complete courses necessary to graduate. The Department of Public Administration offers courses in accordance with the schedules for full-time and part-time degree paths. Deviations from these degree paths could result in a delay in graduation. Not all courses are offered every semester.

Students are encouraged to seek advice on their schedules from the department’s program manager or graduate advisor. Students can email pa@lsu.edu to schedule a meeting or contact their graduate advisor.

VIII. Campus resources

1. [LSU Parking & Transportation Services](#)
 - ▶ [Student Parking Permits](#)
2. Reserve a room
 - ▶ [Reserve a room in the Business Education Complex](#)
 - ▶ [Reserve a room on LSU’s campus](#)
3. Maps
 - ▶ [Business Education Complex Map](#)
 - ▶ [LSU Map](#)
4. Get a Student ID ([Tiger Card](#))
 - ▶ [Setup your MyLSU Account](#)