

AUBURN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT *of* POLITICAL SCIENCE



**MASTER *of* PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION**



PROGRAM HANDBOOK
2019-2020

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Program History

MASTERS *with* MISSION

The MPA program was created within the Department of Political Science in 1985 upon design and recommendation by a faculty committee. To prepare for the new program, the University administration provided a new faculty position (the Director), a secretary, offices, an operating budget, funds for adjunct faculty, the creation of seven new courses, and significant supplementary funds for library acquisitions. By the late 1980s, the program had also greatly improved its ability to offer financial aid by gaining teaching assistantships and by negotiating a number of on-campus paid internships.

Because of Auburn University's location away from urban centers and places of major government employment, enrollment growth was slow; and the students were primarily pre-service. Given these environmental factors, the MPA faculty defined the program's primary mission as training well educated generalists in public administration. In line with this mission, the program's curriculum was built around eight Core seminars that cover the major fields in public administration (seminar in public administration, policy and administration, organization theory, administrative leadership and ethics, public personnel, public budgeting, program evaluation, and research methods), in addition to four electives and either an internship or research project. By the early 1990s, all eight Core seminars were offered annually; and 8-to-15 students were entering the program each year. Since then the program has grown gradually to 15-20 new students per year.

The MPA program conducted its first Self-Study Report for NASPAA accreditation in 1989-90. In July, 1991, the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation notified the Director that the program conformed to NASPAA standards and received accreditation. Since then, the program developed and strengthened in many ways, yet it has largely maintained its original philosophy and mission. Subsequently, the program was reaccredited in 1999, 2006, and 2011. The program has applied for reaccreditation AY 2019-2020.



MPA Program

The mission of the MPA program at Auburn University is to advance responsible public service leadership in a changing environment through teaching, research, and outreach.

OVERVIEW

The Master of Public Administration degree program at Auburn University is a NASPAA-accredited program with diverse course offerings, dedicated faculty actively engaged in research, and an internship requirement that builds successful leaders for careers in public service. The two-year program provides an environment for networking, research opportunities, and program personalization through various graduate certificate options or a dual-degree program with Community Planning. Students come from a variety of backgrounds, some directly from undergraduate studies, while others have significant work or military experience.

The mission of the Auburn University MPA program is to advance effective and accountable public service in a dynamic, increasingly global environment that includes government agencies and nonprofit organizations. We accomplish this using a collaborative model of teaching, research, and outreach that instills in a diverse group of students the capacity for civic agency, providing them with the knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make a difference in the civic life of their communities.

Our program emphasizes the necessity of professional knowledge, skills, and abilities that help ensure our students are capable of serving as effective, accountable leaders and managers in government and nonprofit organizations.

We view the environment of public service as increasingly diverse, dynamic, and globally interconnected. Therefore, we strive to create students who are global citizens that embrace the benefits of diversity. We also seek to create students who are flexible, innovative and capable of handling changing dynamics in the public service environment.

Our collaborative model of teaching, research, and service as echoed in our mission is carefully designed to instill what we call "civic agency" in our students. This means we not only equip them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need to be successful in public service but that we also seek to instill in them the motivation to make a difference in local and global communities.

Most of our graduates go on to hold positions in public agencies, nonprofit organizations, or the private sector. Our alumni are effective members of their communities, whether at work or in volunteer activities. This is Auburn MPA.



MPA Program

The mission of the MPA program at Auburn University is to advance responsible public service leadership in a changing environment through teaching, research, and outreach.

REQUIRED COURSES

Required MPA Core Courses (24 hours)	
POLI 7140	Financial Management for Public Nonprofit Organizations (3)
POLI 7150	Public Personnel Administration (3)
POLI 7350	Foundations of Public Administration and Public Service (3)
POLI 7920	MPA Internship (3)
POLI 7930	MPA Research Project (3)
POLI 7000	Research Methods for Public and Nonprofit Organization (3)
POLI 7330	Administrative Leadership and Democratic Governance (3)
POLI 7360	Foundations of Public Policy (3)
ePortfolio	

ELECTIVE COURSES

Elective Courses (18 hours)
Students may complete the elective requirement by completing one of the graduate certificates or by taking other graduate level electives offered by the MPA program.
Students wishing to take course electives outside of the MPA program and political science department are required to get approval from the MPA director prior to enrolling.



Graduate Certificate in Election Administration

OVERVIEW

The Graduate Certificate in Election Administration is a 15 credit hour program within the Auburn University Master of Public Administration Program. The certificate requirements include 3 required courses and 2 electives, which are available online.

The curriculum is designed to provide graduate-level students and practicing professionals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to function effectively in election administration. The certificate can be earned while pursuing an MPA or independently. Courses cover institutional arrangements, law and policy, and critical contemporary issues facing the election administration community. Students are also required to complete an ePortfolio.

COURSES

Election Administration Courses (15 hours)	
POLI 6270*	Seminar in Election Administration (3)
POLI 6280*	Election Regulation and Reform (3)
POLI 7920*	MPA Internship (3)
POLI 6150	Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations (3)
POLI 6290	Public Sector Information, Security and Risk (3)
POLI 6470	Comparative Election Administration (3)
POLI 7520	Program Evaluation (3)

* Required



Graduate Certificate in NonProfit Organizations and Community Governance

OVERVIEW

The Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Organizations and Community Governance is a 15 credit hour program within the Auburn University Master of Public Administration Program. The certificate requirements include 3 required courses and 2 electives.

The curriculum is designed to prepare graduate-level students and practicing professionals for leadership positions in nonprofit organizations. The certificate can be earned while pursuing an MPA or independently. Courses cover nonprofit management, law and governance, and resource development for domestic and international public service. The certificate is aligned with the curricular goals of both the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), and the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC). Students are also required to complete an ePortfolio.

COURSES

NonProfit Organization and Community Governance Courses (15 hours)	
POLI 6350*	Nonprofit Law and Governance (3)
POLI 6360*	Nonprofit Resource Development (3)
POLI 6370*	Nonprofit Management (3)
POLI 6150	Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations (3)
POLI 6380	INGOs and International Organizations (3)
POLI 6390	NGOs and International Development (3)
POLI 6550	Public Administration, Civil Society, and Democracy (3)
POLI 7520	Program Evaluation (3)

* Required



Graduate Minor in Economic Development

OVERVIEW

Recognizing this need, Auburn University established the Graduate Minor in Economic Development. Administered by the Master of Public Administration program, the Minor offers graduate students the opportunity to specialize in Economic Development.

Designed to address the state’s need for professional education and training in economic development, the program curriculum was developed with significant input from Alabama’s economic development community through a partnership with the Economic Development Association of Alabama. As a result, the Graduate Minor in Economic Development features a strong academic orientation along with the opportunity to engage in practical experiences through special research projects.

The 9 credit hour Graduate Minor’s interdisciplinary curriculum provides students and practitioners with an excellent opportunity to build upon their existing knowledge and to acquire new skills in this challenging discipline.

COURSES

Economic Development Courses		Economic Development Courses	
POLI 7700*	Economic Development (Summer) (3)	First week of the Auburn Government & Economic Development Institute’s Professional Development Program*	
AGEC 7110	Agricultural Economic Development (3)	ECON 6100	Economics of Growth and Development (3)
RSOC 6610	Rural Sociology (3)	ECON 6200	Urban and Regional Economic Development (3)
RSOC 6640	Sociology of Community Development (3)	ECON 6600	Business and Economic Forecasting (3)
RSOC 7620	Sociology of Community (3)	ECON 6800	Government Spending and Taxation (3)
RSOC 7650	Sociology of National Resources and the Environment (3)	ADED 7640	Workforce Education (3)
CPLN 6000	History and Theory of Urban Form (3)	HIST 7530	Seminar in Southern Industrialization (3)
CPLN 6100	Urban Design Methods (3)		
CPLN 6300	Real Property Development (3)		
CPLN 7430	Planning Law, Ethics, and Implementation (3)		

*Required



5-YEAR ACCELERATED BA/MPA PROGRAM

Our goal is to give you the skills and tools you need in order to be effective “civic agents.”

OVERVIEW

This BA/MPA Program provides an opportunity for AU’s most talented undergraduates in the public administration major to complete graduate training in a reduced time frame. Many of these students in their senior years meet or exceed the standards for the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program.

This program attracts outstanding graduate students to the AU MPA program. By offering this opportunity to our best undergraduates, we attract highly qualified students to the MPA program. This improves the quality of classes and the learning experiences of all students. In addition, it aids the development of high-performing students into public servants.

Students typically explore the BA/MPA option in the Fall or Spring of their junior year. To apply, a student must fill out the application form and submit a short letter of interest indicating why he or she wishes to participate in the program to the MPA Program Director. After making sure that all minimum qualifications are met, she will circulate the file to the MPA Admissions Committee. In addition to the minimum requirements, the Admissions Committee may consider other relevant factors, such as work experience, level of maturity, and recommendations from faculty members. The MPA Director will notify the student of the Admissions Committee’s decision. For those accepted, a Letter of Acceptance to the Accelerated Program will be sent to student, with copies to the student’s CLA advisor and the Graduate Dean.

Students selected will complete their undergraduate degree in the following academic year. Upon successful completion of the Fall semester, they will apply to the MPA program under the same standards as other applicants.

ADMISSION

Eligible undergraduate students must meet a set of requirements for admission into the 5-year accelerated program. These requirements are set in place to ensure quality education for all students in the program. The requirements are as follows:

- Have completed at least 45 credit hours but no more than 96 credit hours, including advanced placement credits;
- Have completed at least 24 credit hours at Auburn University;
- Have a minimum GPA of 3.4 overall;
- Have been admitted into the PA major and completed at least 12 credit hours in the major, including POLI-1090 American Government in a Multicultural World and POLI-3250 Introduction to Public Administration.
- Receive a minimum grade of B in POLI-1090 and POLI-3250.



DUAL MCP/MPA DEGREE

Our goal is to give you the skills and tools you need in order to be effective in interactive and interdisciplinary environments.

OVERVIEW

Community planning is one of the essential activities carried out by governments in the United States, resulting in a significant overlap and synergism between expertise and career development in public administration and community planning. Thus, a dual degree program in the Master of Community Planning (MCP) and the Master of Public Administration (MPA) should be valuable and attractive for many of the students in these two fields.

Students apply separately to each program and are admitted (or rejected) based on the program's current admissions criteria. They proceed normally through each program meeting the requirements for all MCP and MPA students. In essence (as detailed in the course requirements below), students take the core classes in both programs with the MPA core counting as MCP electives and *vice versa*. This allows students to receive both degrees with 57 credit hours, as opposed to the 88 credit hours that would be required if they were taken separately.

COURSES

As mentioned, students pursuing the dual degree will need to complete course requirements of both the master of community planning and master of public administration plans of study. Below, listed separately, are the course requirements for the dual degree.

Required MCP Core Courses (21 hours)	
CPLN 6010	Introduction to Community Planning (3)
CPLN 6050	Land and Urban Economics (3)
CPLN 6450	Planning History and Theory (3)
CPLN 6460	GIS for Planning and Policy (3)
CPLN 7200	Urban Design Studio (3)
CPLN 7430	Land Use Law (3)
CPLN 7600	Synthesis Studio (3)
ePortfolio Project	
Comprehensive Exam	

Required MPA Core Courses (21 hours)	
POLI 7140	Financial Management for Public Nonprofit Organizations (3)
POLI 7150	Public Personnel Administration (3)
POLI 7350	Foundations of Public Administration and Public Service (3)
POLI 7920	MPA Internship (3)
POLI 7930	MPA Research Project (3)
POLI 7000	Research Methods for Public and Nonprofit Organization (3)
POLI 7330	Administrative Leadership and Democratic Governance (3)
POLI 7360	Foundations of Public Policy (3)
ePortfolio	



MPA PORTFOLIOS

OVERVIEW

As a student in the MPA Program, you are required to develop an ePortfolio that demonstrates your mastery of each of NASPAA's "Universal Competencies" around which the MPA program is structured. The MPA ePortfolio is the culminating experience of the MPA program.

The five MPA core competencies include the ability:

1. To lead and manage in public governance
2. To participate in and contribute to the policy process
3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions
4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective
5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry

Your ePortfolio must contain artifacts that demonstrate your proficiency in these five areas of core competency. In addition, your ePortfolio may also be used to identify your professional goals, and can incorporate artifacts that showcase your preparedness for accomplishing those goals. Typically, your professional goals will focus on attaining a position of employment in public service. However, you may also decide to use your ePortfolio to pursue an additional internship, or gain entry into an additional program of higher education.

Your artifacts will be examples of work that you select from your MPA coursework (core courses, concentration courses and electives) and experiences (internship, research project, service learning and volunteer projects, etc.) to communicate with a professional audience about how this experience relates to your goals. You will begin developing your ePortfolio during your first semester in the program. The ePortfolio is then intended to be developed and improved during your two years in the Auburn MPA program – it is iterative, and will involve scaffolding and revision of course assignments. You will finalize your ePortfolio during your last semester in the program.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Intro/Bio
2. Career Objectives/Professional Goals
3. Your Public Service Philosophy
4. Resume/Contact info
5. Your Internship (POLI 7920): You should present your internship as a separate component (tab) in the ePortfolio. The presentation of your internship should include a reflective essay that addresses the way the internship has enhanced your professionalism across all five MPA core competencies. 2 artifacts from your internship must be included.
6. MPA Core Competencies: Each of the five core competencies must be illustrated using at least two artifacts per competency. Each competency must be introduced using a Reflective Essay. The ten artifacts used to demonstrate the five core competencies must include:
 - a. 6 artifacts from core courses
 - b. 1 artifact from your concentration and/or certificate courses (if applicable)
 - c. 4 additional artifacts can come from anywhere in your MPA coursework/experiences that you choose. 3 additional artifacts if pursuing a concentration or graduate certificate.



Opportunities

Outreach becomes an avenue by which students make contacts in the community for internship and employment opportunities.

Graduate Fellowships & Assistantships

Graduate Assistantships

The MPA program offers a limited number of graduate assistantships each semester. These are awarded on the basis of academic performance and vary each semester based on the pool of applicants. Priority consideration is given to qualified applicants who meet the deadlines listed above. To be considered for a Graduate Assistantship, please submit a letter of interest highlighting your skills, a resume, and a statement of claim (need-based or merit-based) to the MPA program director by the priority application deadlines on the MPA website.

Election Center Fellowship

The Election Center Fellow works with faculty who teach in the graduate program in election administration on a variety of projects related to the field of election administration. This fellow performs tasks that are both administrative and research focused and provides support for the Election Center.

City of Auburn Fellowship

The Graduate Fellow works on tasks and projects of value to the City of Auburn while giving the Graduate Fellow practical, real-world experience in municipal government. If the selected candidate has a specific interest in a City Department, the hiring managers will try to match the Graduate Fellow with that department as resources allow and as projects arise, however in most cases the Graduate Fellow will be assigned to the Department with identified projects.

City of Opelika Fellowship

The Graduate Fellow works on tasks and projects of value to the City of Opelika while giving the Graduate Fellow practical, real-world experience in municipal government. If the selected candidate has a specific interest in a City Department, the hiring managers will try to match the Graduate Fellow with that department as resources allow and as projects arise, however in most cases the Graduate Fellow will be assigned to the Department with identified projects.



Opportunities

Outreach becomes an avenue by which students make contacts in the community for internship and employment opportunities.

Events

Public Service Week

Established in 2015, every spring the Department of Political Science/Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Auburn University sponsors a week of public service. Throughout the week, students engage in a variety of public service activities and events that celebrate a commitment to the ideals of civic agency and public service. The students also raise funds for an agreed upon the nonprofit organization of their choosing. MPA classes are suspended during public service weeks to provide students with the opportunity to attend all events.

Gordon Sherman Lecture

The Gordon Sherman Lecture brings successful and highly visible public servants to Auburn University to discuss their professional experiences thereby enhancing the education of our students by providing them with examples of successful public service careers in government. This lecture series has a rich history at Auburn and was established by Mr. Sherman in view of his extensive federal service with the Social Security Administration at the national and regional levels.

Election Symposium

A national symposium on election administration, which is held bi-annually during odd numbered years, will be held for the third time in Fall 2019. The *Voting Rights Act at 50* was held in 2015, and *Inclusion and Integrity* was held in 2017. These national gatherings hosted over three days have convened scholars, practitioners at all levels of government including US EAC commissioners and elected election officials, and stakeholders in conversations about policy and administrative practice.

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

Every semester the ICMA student chapter holds networking events with local government practitioners and hosts events that focused on reaching out to MPA students, career/job market preparation.



Opportunities

Outreach becomes an avenue by which students make contacts in the community for internship and employment opportunities.

Honor Societies

Pi Alpha Alpha is the national public administration honor society for students in the field of public administration. The purpose of Pi Alpha Alpha is to encourage and recognize outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in public affairs and administration.

Pi Sigma Alpha is the national political science honor society for students in the field of political science. The purpose of Pi Sigma Alpha is to recognize and promote high academic achievement in the field of political science.

Nu Lambda Mu is an international honor society established by the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) to recognize students dedicated to the study of nonprofit management, philanthropy, and social enterprise. Nu Lambda Mu seeks to advance the study of nonprofit organizations in society, and promotes scholarly achievement among those studying the third sector.

Student Organizations

More Than Auburn is an MPA service organization that engages in service projects for global nonprofits, allowing us to put our nonprofit classroom knowledge and skills into practice, while also supporting deserving organizations. We plan and execute fun and innovative projects such as: virtual 5Ks, foot golf, and a “Chopped” event. We have fun, hone our skills, and it looks great on a resume!

International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is the world's leading association of professional city and county managers and other employees who serve local governments.

Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA) is a campus wide academic and professional organization that exists to address the unique needs and concerns of minority graduate and professional students and to promote diversity within the Auburn community. The purpose of BGPSA is to advance scholarly activities of minority students and to improve the conditions of the social environment here on Auburn's campus through consistent social interaction and multi-cultural programming.



NASPAA Competencies

Our program is designed to help our students articulate and apply the five following public service values and perspectives:

To Lead and Manage in Public Governance

The mission of the Auburn MPA program is to help our students become well trained generalists for careers in the public and non-profit sectors. We believe that the central skill that will aid our students to lead and manage in public governance is the ability to develop, articulate, and advocate broad visions about policies and organizational cultures. More specifically this involves:

1. Discern and apply appropriate legal and ethical parameters for public service employment in government agencies and nonprofit organizations and voluntary activities including nonprofit board and other volunteer service
2. Discern and apply managerial tools used in public service employment in government agencies and nonprofit organizations and voluntary activities including nonprofit board and other volunteer service
3. Distinguish among competing approaches to employee evaluation and motivation in public service activities in government agencies and nonprofit organizations
4. Prepare and deliver professional presentations to large and small citizen and workplace audiences
5. Prepare and deliver professional reports for workplace and citizen audiences

To Participate in and Contribute to the Public Policy Process

The mission of the Auburn MPA program is to help our students become well trained generalists for careers in the public and non-profit sectors. We believe that there are several important skills that will help our students to participate in and contribute to the public policy process. These include:

1. Identify the stages of the public policy process and characteristics of each
2. Distinguish among competing theoretical perspectives and rationales for public action by government and by nonprofit organizations
3. Construct a written historical narrative of a policy field
4. Develop a problem statement and proposal for policy change across the stages of the policy process

To Analyze, Synthesize, Think Critically, Solve Problems, and Make Decisions

The mission of the Auburn MPA program is to help our students become well trained generalists for careers in the public and non-profit sectors. Our program emphasizes a wide variety of skills that help students to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions:

1. Collect relevant information to understand correctly an important question or problem
2. Curate an information set in a manner that is both comprehensive and parsimonious
3. Analyze that information using appropriate tools
4. Present that analysis in an understandable way to a lay audience
5. Using that analysis, identify questions and develop appropriate answers and solutions



NASPAA Competencies

Our program is designed to help our students articulate and apply the five following public service values and perspectives:

To Articulate and Apply a Public Service Perspective

The mission of the Auburn MPA program is to help our students become well trained generalists for careers in the public and non-profit sectors. Our program is designed to help our students articulate and apply the following public service values and perspectives:

1. Understand the different ethical systems and perspectives that have been applied in public administration and, based on one or more of these theories, to act ethically at all times in performing duties and responsibilities;
2. Serve the public, not just passively by considering what appears to be the “objective” public interest but actively by engaging citizens to discover their viewpoints and to promote “deliberative democracy;”
3. Follow professional norms in acting effectively and efficiently while working in the public and non-profit sectors;
4. Determine the major stakeholders affected by policy and organizational decisions and ensure that their viewpoints are actively solicited and considered before action is taken (e.g., representative bureaucracy); and
5. Understand and act on both normative values (e.g., regime values) and applied ethics for bureaucrats and public administrators.

To Communicate and Interact Productively with a Diverse and Changing Citizenry

The mission of the Auburn MPA program is to help our students become well trained generalists for careers in the public and non-profit sectors. Our program believes that the ability to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry rests upon a series of important skills:

1. Develop an understanding of the needs and values of specific communities in the United States and around the globe.
2. Develop an understanding of and commitment to the values of representative bureaucracy
3. Respect for the views and experience of all members of a public or non-profit organizations
4. Experience interacting with diverse individuals and groups
5. Observe public service function(s) in action