



Graduate Handbook

Master of Public Administration

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I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

From the Graduate Catalog: The MPA degree prepares students for public-service careers with local, state, and federal government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Students may earn their MPA by taking courses on campus or online.

Students applying for the MPA program should have a 2.75 GPA with relevant coursework or professional experience. Applicants who do not meet minimum requirements will be required to take the GRE or GMAT and report the score to the Department. Applications require a resume.

Applicants entering the MPA program without professional experience are required to complete 36 credit hours. Each student's Program includes six core courses, four elective courses, and a six-credit-hour internship. Applicants may request an internship waiver based upon professional experience when applying to the MPA program. Students obtaining an internship waiver must take additional elective credits for a total of 33 credit hours.

II. CURRICULUM

Core Classes (18 Credits)

- PLS501 Organizational Theory and Behavior
- PLS502 Human Resource Management
- PLS503 Public Budgeting and Financial Management
- PLS601 Research Methods
- PLS603 Public Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation
- PLS605 Capstone Seminar: Applied Public Management

Electives (12 Credits)

- PLS 504 Ethics for Public Service Managers
- PLS 511 State Government
- PLS 512 Intergovernmental Relations
- PLS 522 Advocacy in Public Administration
- PLS 523 Communication for the Public Manager
- PLS 561 Administrative Law
- PLS 591 Selected Topics
- PLS 621 Field Research I
- PLS 622 Field Research II

Experiential Requirements (6 Credits)

- PLS611 Internship I
- PLS612 Internship II

-OR-

Additional Elective Requirement for Internship Waiver (3 Credits)

- Any PLS elective course at the 500 level or above

III. STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

All MPA students are expected to be familiar with all University policies pertaining to graduate studies as outlined in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

IV. INTERNSHIPS

The student is responsible for securing an internship with a public or nonprofit organization in a position closely related to the MPA field of study. The Department of Political Science is NOT responsible for securing a student's internship. Students may use the University's [Career Center](#) or speak with faculty members in the MPA program for help and advice with the internship process.

Purpose

The purpose of the internship program is to provide each student with an opportunity to have a meaningful experience in a government agency or nonprofit organization.

Pre-requisites

Students should have completed the core courses before beginning the internship. Students arrange an internship position much like a job search. The student needs a current resume. The student will contact potential internship agencies and negotiate a position. Students may perform within their current work but must carry out responsibilities unrelated to their current job and with a different supervisor.

Registration

Students must register for the internship credits, PLS 611 and PLS 612, but the actual work time does not have to correspond to the exact dates of the semester or summer term.

Credit for Internships

The credit allocation is based upon the formula of 40 hours of internship work for each semester credit hour. Thus, 120 hours for PLS 611 and 120 hours for PLS 612. Both classes can be with the same agency, or each can be used for a different agency. If separate agencies are used, then all the paperwork must be completed for each agency.

Completion Requirements

To complete the internship, the student must submit the following five (5) items to their Faculty Internship Coordinator:

1. Internship Application—This includes the statement of activities and goals (worked out with the internship supervisor), the letter of agreement, and the student's educational goals. The College of Arts and Sciences Internship Application is used to complete this component. This form must be submitted before the initiation of the internship and approved by their Faculty Internship Coordinator after being signed by the student and the supervisor. The deadlines for Internship Applications to be submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences are as follows

- For spring - December 1
- For summer - May 1
- For fall - June 1

2. Journal and Log of Hours—The student must maintain a journal describing the activities and hours devoted to the job and forward a copy to the Faculty Internship Coordinator on a monthly basis. As described in the College information form, the journal is maintained on a daily basis for the first two weeks and a weekly basis thereafter.

3. Supervisor's Evaluations—The work supervisor submits two (2) evaluations of the student's performance, one at the midpoint and one at the end of the internship.

4. Final report—This report is a summary (ten pages) of the activities completed during the internship. Copies of work projects should be appended as required. Students are expected to relate these activities to their coursework in the MPA program.

5. Internship Evaluation—Students complete the final page of the College application form when the internship is complete to provide an evaluation of their experiences.

Internship Waiver

Students with professional experience may request an internship waiver. If a student receives an internship waiver, they are required to take an additional three credits of MPA elective coursework, for a total of 33 credits (rather than 36 credits without the waiver).

V. REGISTERING FOR CLASSES

Course registration is accomplished via the [MyShip website](#). Before you register, you will have to obtain a student ID. Course registration usually follows the following schedule:

Registration for Fall & Summer Semester classes occurs in March; however, you can register for fall classes over the summer as long as the course has openings. Registration for Spring & Winter Semester classes occurs in mid-October.

See the following link for helpful resources about course registration:

https://www.ship.edu/academics/academics-resources/registrar/graduate_scheduling_information/

VI. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

The Department of Political Science offers Graduate Assistantships (Gas) to highly qualified full-time MPA students. For information about GAs, please see the Graduate School's [Graduate Assistantship website](#). GAs must be available to work on campus in the Political Science Department office and report to the Department Chairperson.

VII. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Shippensburg University offers two specialized programs for the MPA degree: a 4+1 MPA program and a dual degree program culminating in a Master of Social Work (MSW) and MPA. For more information on these programs, please contact your program advisor.

VIII. MAINTAINING GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

Graduate students are expected to maintain good academic standing at the University. Students must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA each semester. Students will be placed on academic probation if their GPA is below 3.0 and must raise their GPA to 3.0 by the end of the following semester. If a student's GPA is below 2.0, they will be dismissed from the degree program. For additional details about academic standing, probation, and dismissal, please see the Graduate Handbook.

IX. ONLINE COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Students have the option of registering for face-to-face classes at the Shippensburg campus -or- online. Students may choose to take some or all of their classes online or face-to-face. The modality (online or face-to-face) of course offerings alternates every year for each course. For example, if PLS 502 Human Resources is offered face-to-face in the spring of year 1, it will be offered online in the spring of year 2. **The only exception to the rotation of modalities is PLS 605 Capstone Seminar. All offerings of PLS 605 will be ONLINE in the spring semester. There will be no face-to-face option for PLS 605.**

X. GRADUATION

Students are responsible for applying for graduation prior to the beginning of their final semester. Please the Shippensburg University graduation webpage for important dates and information about the graduation application process:

https://www.ship.edu/academics/academics-resources/registrar/graduation_process2/

XI. PI ALPHA ALPHA

Shippensburg University hosts a chapter of [Pi Alpha Alpha](#), the global honor society of public administration and affairs. Membership in Pi Alpha Alpha is a prestigious recognition of a student's outstanding academic achievement. Students may be inducted from among the master's degree students in the MPA program provided:

- They have maintained a GPA of at least 3.7. A chapter may set higher GPA requirements if it chooses.
- Master degree students must have completed at least fifty percent (50%) of the required course work (a minimum of 18 semester hours or 27 quarter hours).

Contact Dr. Lonce Bailey (LHBailey@ship.edu), Faculty Advisor for Pi Alpha Alpha with questions about chapter membership.

XII. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Core Classes

To complete the MPA program, a student must take six core classes. The student should consult their advisor before registering for courses. A student must complete these courses before they are eligible to take PLS 605: Capstone Seminar-Applied Public Management. The following are the core MPA classes:

PLS 501: Organizational Theory (3 credits)

Examines organization theory relevant to the administration and leadership in complex organizations. Focus is on topics of bureaucracy and development of administrative thought; human behavior in organizations including individual motivation, group and interpersonal dynamics, and leadership modes; organization structure, process, and dynamics; organizational development and change; and emerging perspectives in the field.

PLS 502: Human Resource Management (3 credits)

Case study course reviewing personnel administrative interactively as an administrative, behavioral, and technical area. Role of the line manager and personnel administration is covered, as well as the technical roles of central personnel agency and the operating personnel office.

PLS 503: Public Budgeting (3 credits)

Provides the knowledge base required to understand and interpret public sector budgets and the principles underlying public sector budgeting and decision making. Budget processes, influences, and tensions are explored as well as various budgeting approaches, formats, and historical developments. Emphasis is placed on developing

analytical skills to interpret and design budgets and their processes and understanding the expanding role that budgets play in public sector management.

PLS 601: Research Methods (3 credits)

Survey of the research process including preparation of a research design, use of theoretical framework, and testing of hypothesis by gathering and analyzing data. Recommend the student complete this course as early in the graduate program as possible.

PLS 603: Public Policy Analysis (3 credits)

Examines the policy making and policy implementation processes as they relate to the analysis of public policies. Major focus is upon results-oriented management techniques, and several specific quantitative policy analysis techniques. This includes program evaluation and cost benefit analysis.

PLS 605: Capstone Seminar- Applied Public Management (3 credits)

Requires students to demonstrate their ability to successfully resolve workplace situations by utilizing principles and concepts of public management as presented in the core and elective courses of the MPA curriculum. Employing the case study method, and additional reading, the principal focus requires the students as individuals and in teams to work with the development and implementation of public policy. Course takes an application and problem-solving approach designed to develop the practical management skills required in the current public administration workplace.

Elective Courses

A student is required to take a minimum of four elective courses. These electives should be decided based on the student's interests and the availability of applicable courses. The following serve as elective courses for the MPA degree:

PLS 504: Ethics for Public Service Managers (3 credits)

Examines specific contemporary ethical concerns in the public sector and the ethical conduct required by statutes and codes of conduct. Appropriate case studies discussed, emphasizing the constantly changing standards in the public sector.

PLS 511: State Government (3 credits)

Studies state governments in the American federal system and analyzes state government institutions and processes with special reference to Pennsylvania.

PLS 512: Intergovernmental Relations (3 credits)

Examines the developing area of intergovernmental relations among federal, state, and local governments. Special emphasis placed upon the work of the Advisory Commission

on Intergovernmental Relations and implementation where feasible by state and local governments.

PLS 522: Advocacy in Public Administration (3 credits)

Advocacy and lobbying are two of the core activities in the relationship between citizens and the government. This course demonstrates the strong relationship between these activities and governmental outcomes. Students will examine reasons for doing advocacy and lobbying, advocacy and lobbying techniques and the effect of lobbying and advocacy on policy outcomes.

PLS 523: Communication for the Public Manager (3 credits)

This course will improve the ability of the student to effectively communicate in a public sector setting. It will rely on exercises, analysis, and evaluation to improve the student's ability to communicate better in various formats, including written, oral, and graphic methods.

PLS 531: Nonprofit Management and Leadership (3 credits)

This class provides an introduction to nonprofit management in the United States. The purpose of this course is to provide a foundation for understanding the unique functions and characteristics of nonprofit organizations. The course examines the legal, political, economic, and social environment in which nonprofit organizations operate. This course will introduce students to various aspects on nonprofit management, including the role of boards of directors, human resource management, grants administration, fundraising, and financial management.

PLS 561: Administrative Law (3 credits)

Study of the law concerning the powers and procedures of administrative agencies. These governmental bodies which affect the rights of private and public parties through either adjudication or rule making are compared to and contrasted with the judicial, legislative, and executive processes using the case method.

PLS 591: Selected Topics (3 credits)

Opportunity to offer courses in areas of departmental major interest not covered by the regular courses.

PLS 621: Field Research I (3 credits)

An independent supervised research project.

PLS 622: Field Research II (3 credits)

An independent supervised research project.

Experiential Classes

Students are required to take 6 credits of internship courses (PLS 611 and PLS 612). Students with approved professional experience in a relevant career field may apply for an internship waiver. If the waiver is awarded, the student is not required to take internship credits but MUST take an additional 3 credits of elective courses.

PLS 611 Internship I (3 credits)

Supervised internship with an approved organization.

PLS 612 Internship II (3 credits)

Supervised internship with an approved organization.

XIII. SAMPLE PROGRAM SCHEDULE

**Note: the following sample schedule assumes a student (1) enters the program during the fall semester and (2) completes the program as a FULL-time student. If a student enters during another semester or completes the program part-time, adjustments should be made accordingly.

Fall Year 1

- PLS 501 Organizational Theory and Behavior
- PLS 603 Public Policy Analysis
- Elective

Spring Year 1

- PLS 502 Human Resource Management
- PLS 601 Research Methods
- Elective

Fall Year 2

- PLS 503 Public Budgeting and Financial Management
- Elective
- Elective

Spring Year 2

- PLS 605 Capstone Seminar: Applied Management
- PLS 611 Internship I or Elective*
- PLS 612 Internship II

*Elective required if granted internship waiver

XIV. MPA Faculty



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XV. Program Checklist

Course	Semester/Year	Credits Earned
<i>Core Requirements</i>		
PLS 501: Organizational Theory		
PLS 502: Human Resource Management		
PLS 503: Public Budgeting		
PLS 601: Research Methods		
PLS 603: Public Policy Analysis		
PLS 605: Capstone Seminar		
<i>Elective Courses</i>		
Elective Course 1:		
Elective Course 2:		
Elective Course 3:		
Elective Course 4:		
<i>Experiential Courses</i>		
PLS 611: Internship I -or- Elective 5:		
PLS 612: Internship II		
TOTAL CREDITS		