MPA Graduate Handbook

Master of Public Administration · Shippensburg University

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Program Overview

The MPA degree prepares students for public-service careers with local, state, and federal government agencies and nonprofit organizations. The program is offered 100% online.

The program develops service-oriented public officials with practical knowledge and skills in public management theory and techniques, and it offers experiential learning through internships, field research, and electives. Graduates work in policy-making roles across the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of federal and state government, as well as in local government, nonprofit agencies, and the private sector.

Degree	Master of Public Administration (MPA)
Offered by	Department of Political and Social Inquiry, Shippensburg University
Total credits	36 credit hours (6 core courses, 4 electives, and a 6-credit internship)
Format	100% online

Sessions	Eight-week sessions during the fall and spring semesters; five-week summer sessions
Time to complete	One to two years, at your own pace
Start terms	Spring, summer, or fall
Program website	ship.edu/programs/public-administration-mpa

Admission Requirements

Admission is rolling, with no application deadline. Review begins as soon as your application is complete, and the department aims to make decisions promptly. To apply, submit:

- A completed application
- Official transcripts
- A resume

Applicants should have a minimum 2.75 GPA with relevant coursework or professional experience. Applicants below that GPA may be asked to submit GRE or GMAT scores to the department.

Curriculum

The MPA requires 36 credit hours: six core courses (18 credits), four elective courses (12 credits), and a six-credit internship. Students with qualifying professional or military experience may request a waiver of the internship credits (see Internships).

Core Courses (18 Credits)

Course	Title
POLI 501	Organizational Theory and Behavior
POLI 502	Human Resources Management
POLI 503	Public Budgeting and Financial Management
POLI 601	Research Methods
POLI 603	Public Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation
POLI 605	Capstone Seminar: Applied Public Management

Electives (12 Credits; choose four)

Course	Title
POLI 504	Ethics for Public Service Managers
POLI 511	State Government
POLI 512	Intergovernmental Relations
POLI 522	Advocacy in Public Administration
POLI 523	Communication for the Public Manager
POLI 524	Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Government
POLI 531	Nonprofit Management and Leadership
POLI 561	Administrative Law
POLI 591	Selected Topics in Political Science
POLI 623	Field Research I
POLI 624	Field Research II

Experiential Requirement (6 Credits)

Course	Title
POLI 611	Internship I
POLI 612	Internship II

Save your coursework: Keep a copy of all of your work from every course you take in the program. The final project in POLI 605 Capstone Seminar is a portfolio that includes selected work samples from across your program courses.

Course Descriptions

Core Courses

All students take the six core courses. Consult your advisor before registering. You must complete the other core courses before you are eligible to take POLI 605: Capstone Seminar.

POLI 501: Organizational Theory and Behavior (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.

POLI 502: Human Resources Management (3 credits)

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

POLI 503: Public Budgeting and Financial Management (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.

POLI 601: Research Methods (3 credits)

Survey of the research process including preparation of a research design, use of theoretical framework, and testing of hypotheses by gathering and analyzing data. Students are encouraged to complete this course as early in the graduate program as possible.

POLI 603: Public Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation (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, including program evaluation and cost-benefit analysis.

POLI 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 students, as individuals and in teams, to work with the development and implementation of public policy. The course takes an application and problem-solving approach designed to develop the practical management skills required in the current public administration workplace.

Elective Courses

Students take at least four electives, chosen based on their interests and the availability of courses.

POLI 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 are discussed, emphasizing the constantly changing standards in the public sector.

POLI 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.

POLI 512: Intergovernmental Relations (3 credits)

Examines the developing area of intergovernmental relations among federal, state, and local governments. Special emphasis is placed upon the work of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and implementation where feasible by state and local governments.

POLI 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 examine reasons for doing advocacy and lobbying, advocacy and lobbying techniques, and the effect of lobbying and advocacy on policy outcomes.

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

Improves the student's ability to communicate effectively in a public sector setting. The course relies on exercises, analysis, and evaluation to improve communication in various formats, including written, oral, and graphic methods.

POLI 524: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Government (3 credits)

Government at the federal, state, and local levels plays an important role in everyone's workplace. Administrators in the public sector and social service agencies have significant discretion to regulate, assist, and hamper work done in the private sector. At the same time, many of these agencies need social services professionals who have the skills, knowledge, and ability to lead expertly. Students receive public administration education that complements their work in allied fields and helps prepare them for future work and possible administrative leadership roles in social service.

POLI 531: Nonprofit Management and Leadership (3 credits)

Introduces nonprofit management in the United States and provides 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, and it introduces various aspects of nonprofit management, including the role of boards of directors, human resource management, grants administration, fundraising, and financial management.

POLI 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.

POLI 591: Selected Topics in Political Science (3 credits)

Offers courses in areas of major departmental interest not covered by the regular courses.

POLI 623: Field Research I (3 credits)

An independent supervised research project.

POLI 624: Field Research II (3 credits)

An independent supervised research project.

Experiential Courses

Students take 6 credits of internship (POLI 611 and POLI 612). Students with qualifying experience may request an internship waiver (see Internships).

POLI 611: Internship I (3 credits)

Supervised internship with an approved organization.

POLI 612: Internship II (3 credits)

Supervised internship with an approved organization.

Sample Program Schedules

These samples assume you start in the fall semester. If you start in another term, plan your sequence with your advisor.

Full Time, Including Summer (Two Years)

The program offers two elective courses every summer. Taking a summer elective after your first year lightens your second-year course load.

Term	Courses	Credits
Fall, Year 1	POLI 501 Organizational Theory and Behavior POLI 503 Public Budgeting and Financial Management Elective	9
Spring, Year 1	POLI 502 Human Resources Management POLI 603 Public Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation Elective	9
Summer, Year 1	Elective	3
Fall, Year 2	POLI 601 Research Methods Elective	6
Spring, Year 2	POLI 605 Capstone Seminar: Applied Public Management POLI 611 Internship I* POLI 612 Internship II*	9

*Not required if you are granted an internship waiver.

Part Time, Including Summers (Two Years)

Taking two courses per term, including summers, lets you finish in two years while working. The program offers two elective courses every summer.

Term	Courses	Credits
Fall, Year 1	POLI 501 Organizational Theory and Behavior POLI 503 Public Budgeting and Financial Management	6
Spring, Year 1	POLI 502 Human Resources Management POLI 603 Public Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation	6
Summer, Year 1	Elective Elective	6
Fall, Year 2	POLI 601 Research Methods Elective	6
Spring, Year 2	POLI 605 Capstone Seminar: Applied Public Management Elective	6
Summer, Year 2	POLI 611 Internship I* POLI 612 Internship II*	6

*With an internship waiver, you finish after Spring, Year 2.

Online Learning and Registration

All MPA courses are delivered online through Brightspace (D2L). Courses run in eight-week sessions during the fall and spring semesters and in five-week sessions in the summer, so you can take one course at a time while you work.

> **Plan ahead for the capstone:** POLI 605 Capstone Seminar is offered only in the spring semester, and you must complete the other core courses first.

Technology You Will Use

- **Brightspace (D2L):** course materials, lecture videos, discussions, assignments, and exams.
- **Respondus LockDown Browser:** required for some online exams. Install it before your first exam.
- **Ship email:** your official university email. Announcements and instructor messages go there, so check it regularly.
- **MyShip portal:** registration, schedules, grades, and billing.

What You Need

- A reliable computer with high-speed internet access and a current web browser.
- A webcam and microphone for virtual meetings with faculty and advisors.
- Word processing software and comfort working with online tools.

Getting Technical Help

Contact the Technology Help Desk by phone at (717) 477-4357, by email at helpdesk@ship.edu, or through the Technology Help Desk website. Each request generates a ticket in your Ship email; forward a copy to your instructor if a technical problem affects an assignment.

Registering for Classes

Register for courses through the MyShip portal. You will need a student ID before you can register. Registration usually follows this schedule:

- **Fall and summer classes:** registration opens in March. You can still register for fall classes over the summer if the course has openings.
- **Spring and winter classes:** registration opens in mid-October.

For more help, see the Registrar's graduate scheduling information.

Internships

The internship gives each student a meaningful experience in a government agency or nonprofit organization. **You are responsible for securing your own internship** with a public or nonprofit organization, in a position closely related to the MPA field of study; the department does not place students. The University's Career Center and the MPA faculty can help with advice throughout the process.

Before You Begin

- Complete the core courses before beginning your internship.
- Arrange your internship much like a job search: prepare a current resume, contact potential agencies, and negotiate a position.
- You may intern at your current employer, but your internship responsibilities must be unrelated to your current job and you must have a different supervisor.

Registration and Credit

Register for both internship courses, POLI 611 and POLI 612. Your work hours do not need to match the exact dates of the semester or summer term.

Credit is based on 40 hours of internship work per semester credit hour: 120 hours for POLI 611 and 120 hours for POLI 612. Both courses may be completed with the same agency or with two different agencies. If you use two agencies, complete all of the paperwork for each one.

Completion Requirements

To complete the internship, submit these five items to your Faculty Internship Coordinator:

1. **Internship Application.** Use the College of Arts and Sciences Internship Application. It includes the statement of activities and goals (worked out with your internship supervisor), the letter of agreement, and your educational goals. You and your supervisor sign it, and your Faculty Internship Coordinator must approve it before the internship begins. Application deadlines are listed in the table below.
2. **Journal and log of hours.** Keep a journal describing your activities and hours, daily for the first two weeks and weekly after that, as described in the College information form. Send a copy to your Faculty Internship Coordinator each month.
3. **Supervisor's evaluations.** Your work supervisor submits two evaluations of your performance: one at the midpoint and one at the end of the internship.
4. **Final report.** A ten-page summary of the activities you completed, relating them to your MPA coursework. Append copies of work projects as required.
5. **Internship evaluation.** When the internship is complete, fill out the final page of the College application form to evaluate your experience.

Internship Term	Application Due to the College of Arts and Sciences
Spring	December 1
Summer	May 1
Fall	June 1

Internship Waiver

You may request a waiver of the six internship credits when you apply to the MPA program if you are:

- Currently working in a public, nonprofit, or government affairs organization, with at least one year of professional public service experience; or
- A US military veteran (honorably discharged), a member of the National Guard or reserve, or an active-duty service member.

Academic Policies

Student Expectations

All MPA students are expected to be familiar with the University's policies for graduate studies, as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.

Maintaining Good Academic Standing

- Maintain at least a 3.0 GPA each semester.
- If your GPA falls below 3.0, you will be placed on academic probation and must raise it to 3.0 by the end of the following semester.
- If your GPA falls below 2.0, you will be dismissed from the degree program.

For details on academic standing, probation, and dismissal, see the Graduate Catalog.

Other Graduate Policies

These policies come from the Graduate School. See the Graduate Program Guidebook for full details.

- **Transfer credit:** no more than 9 graduate credits from other institutions or professional experience assessment, combined. Courses must be graduate level, appropriate to the degree, and earned with a grade of B or higher. Credit earned more than five years before you start the program requires department and Graduate School approval.
- **Course repeats:** you may repeat a course once to improve your grade, with a maximum of two repeats across your program. The most recent grade counts.
- **Grade appeals:** appeal forms are available from the Graduate Success Center.
- **Staying active:** if you do not schedule courses for 24 months, you must reapply to the program.
- **Graduation GPA:** a cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to graduate.

Graduation

You are responsible for applying for graduation before the beginning of your final semester. See the University's graduation webpage for important dates and the application process.

Opportunities

Graduate Assistantships

The Department of Political and Social Inquiry offers Graduate Assistantships (GAs) to highly qualified full-time MPA students. GAs work on campus in the department office and report to the Department Chair. For details, see the Graduate School's Graduate Assistantship website.

Special Programs

- **4+1 MPA program:** earn a BA in Political Science or a BS in Public Service, plus the MPA, in about one additional year of study.
- **Dual MSW/MPA degree:** earn both a Master of Social Work and a Master of Public Administration.
- **Professional Experience Credit (PEC):** Commonwealth of Pennsylvania employees may be able to earn MPA credit for professional experience.

For questions about any of these programs, contact MPA Director Dr. Michael Moltz at mcmoltz@ship.edu or 717-477-1737.

Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society

Shippensburg University hosts a chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society. Membership recognizes outstanding academic achievement, and it can help members qualify for a higher GS level when applying for federal jobs.

For questions about chapter membership, contact faculty advisor Dr. Lonce Bailey at LHBailey@ship.edu.

Student Support Resources

As an online student, you have full access to these university services.

Resource	How It Helps	Contact
Lehman Library	Online databases and articles; books and interlibrary loan items mailed to your home; research help	Library distance services 717-477-1465
Graduate Writing Center	Help with any writing assignment, by Zoom or by emailing a draft for written and video feedback	Graduate Writing Center onlinewriting@ship.edu 717-477-1430

Resource	How It Helps	Contact
Office of Accessibility Resources	Accommodations for students with disabilities	OAR website oar@ship.edu 717-477-1364
Counseling Center	Counseling for undergraduate and graduate students	Counseling Center 717-477-1481
Career Center	Internship and job search support, resumes, and career planning	Career Center for graduate students
Graduate Success Center	Academic success support, graduate forms, and grade appeals	Graduate Success Center gradsuccess@ship.edu

> **In a crisis:** After 5 p.m. on weekdays and anytime on weekends, call Campus Police at 717-477-1444 to reach the on-call counselor during the semester. You can also call or text 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline) or text HOME to 741741. In an emergency, call 911.

Key Contacts

Office	Contact For	Contact
MPA Director Dr. Michael Moltz	Advising, program planning, internship waivers, and special programs (4+1, MSW/MPA, PEC)	mcmoltz@ship.edu 717-477-1737
Department of Political and Social Inquiry	Department office, Grove Hall 424	717-477-1718
Graduate Admissions	Applications and admission status	graduateadmissions@ship.edu 717-477-1231
Registrar	Registration, transcripts, and graduation	Registrar website 717-477-1381
Financial Aid	Loans, aid eligibility, and billing questions	finaid@ship.edu 717-477-1131
Technology Help Desk	Brightspace, email, and login problems	helpdesk@ship.edu 717-477-4357

MPA Faculty

All faculty offices are in Grove Hall.

Name	Teaching Areas	Email	Office	Phone
Dr. Alison Dagnes *Department Chair*	Advocacy, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Government	addagn@ship.edu	417	717-477-1754
Dr. Michael Moltz *MPA Director*	Human Resources, Budgeting, Nonprofit Management	mcmoltz@ship.edu	427	717-477-1737
Dr. Lonce Bailey	Organizational Theory, Ethics, Grant Writing	lhbailey@ship.edu	423	717-477-1743
Dr. C. Nielsen Brasher	Research Methods, Policy Analysis	cnbras@ship.edu	420	717-477-1714
Dr. Michael E. Greenberg	State Government, Intergovernmental Relations	MEGree@ship.edu	329	717-477-1719
Dr. Mark Sachleben	Communication for the Public Manager	mdsachleben@ship.edu	419	717-477-1343

Program Checklist

Use this checklist to track your progress. Record the semester and year you complete each course and the credits earned. As you finish each course, save a copy of your work for your POLI 605 portfolio.

Core Courses (18 Credits)

Course	Semester/Year	Credits Earned
POLI 501 Organizational Theory and Behavior		
POLI 502 Human Resources Management		
POLI 503 Public Budgeting and Financial Management		
POLI 601 Research Methods		
POLI 603 Public Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation		
POLI 605 Capstone Seminar		

Elective Courses (12 Credits)

Course	Semester/Year	Credits Earned
Elective 1:		
Elective 2:		
Elective 3:		
Elective 4:		

Experiential Courses (6 Credits)

Course	Semester/Year	Credits Earned
POLI 611 Internship I (or waiver)		
POLI 612 Internship II (or waiver)		

Total credits earned: _____ of 36