Table of Contents

MPA Mission ................................................................. Page 3
Accreditation Information for the MPA ................................... Page 3
Program Objectives .......................................................... Page 3
MPA Academic Requirements to Graduate ................................. Page 4
Internship ................................................................. Page 5
Capstone ............................................................... Page 5
Student Outcomes Assessment ............................................... Page 6
Program Faculty .............................................................. Page 6
Administrator List ............................................................ Page 7
Program Policies .............................................................. Page 7
Guidelines for Graduate Assistantships ................................... Page 8
Procedures for Capstones and Comprehensive Exams ................ Page 11
Candidacy Procedures ....................................................... Page 13
Admission Policies and Procedures ......................................... Page 14
Tuition, Fees, and Deposits .................................................. Page 15
Registration ............................................................... Page 15
Academic Standards ......................................................... Page 15
Graduation Requirements ..................................................... Page 15
Department of Political Science

MPA Student Handbook

For all general policies pertaining to graduate education at SLU, please consult the Graduate Education Catalog at http://www.slu.edu/x57437.xml.

Policies specific to the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and/or to your program within CAS will be outlined in this handbook.
**MPA Mission**

Inspired by the Jesuit educational mission and its conviction that creation is good and human beings participate in its ongoing development toward a place where all can achieve their full potential, the Masters of Public Administration at Saint Louis University prepares students for public service who are ethically grounded, technically competent, and empathetic to the culturally diverse needs of all community members. Reflecting the values and mission statement of its home department, Political Science, the MPA degree also educates students to assess the root causes of political phenomena, developing the skill of thinking globally while acting locally.

**Accreditation Information**

The MPA program is accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) through 2014-2015. It is undergoing review for re-accreditation in 2015 - 2016. As an institution, Saint Louis University is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

**Program Objectives**

The following is a definition of the MPA degree from the NASPAA website:

The Masters of Public Administration (MPA) degree is the core professional degree for a management career in public service. The curriculum is designed to aid students in developing the skills and techniques used by leaders and managers to implement policies, projects, and programs that resolve important societal problems. Graduates of an MPA program work in all levels of government (federal, state, and local), in nonprofits, in international organizations, consulting firms, and in the private sector.

The primary focus of SLU’s MPA program is to prepare students to be leaders, managers and analysts in government and nonprofit organizations. As part of this preparation, our program provides training in the technical areas, such as budgeting, administrative law, etc., that are central to a public service career. Furthermore, in keeping with Saint Louis University’s Jesuit education mission, our program also emphasizes the importance of acting ethically. The MPA curriculum is the means by which we deliver this specialized training.

The MPA curriculum is built on a foundation of competencies which are required of all graduates from a NASPAA accredited program. Although these competencies are universal, each program has a large degree of latitude in interpreting and implementing them. These competencies are the following:
to lead and manage in public governance;
- to participate in and contribute to the public policy process;
- to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- to articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

To be accredited by NASPAA constitutes an assurance that the MPA program meets the high standards of the profession in all of these competencies.

**MPA Academic Requirements to Graduate**

In order to graduate, students must complete their core and elective courses, complete an internship (if pre-service), and complete a capstone. The core is made up of six courses and students must take an additional five elective courses and a capstone course, for a total of 36 credit hours. In addition, pre-service students are required to do an administrative internship. Thus in order to graduate, pre-service students must take a total of 39 credit hours in course work, while in-service students must take 36 credit hours.

**MPA Core Courses (18 credit hours):**

Organizational Theory and Behavior (POLS 6320);
Issues in U.S. Public Administration (POLS 5310);
Introduction to Public Sector Budgeting (POLS 5325);
Administrative Law (POLS 5300);
Introduction Public Sector Economics (POLS 5330);^2
Advanced Topics in Research Methods (POLS 5020).

**Other Requirements:**

Five elective courses (15 credit hours)
MPA Internship (POLS 5912) if pre-service

MPA Capstone (POLS 5960)

---

^1 Some classes have prerequisites. Depending on their undergraduate preparation, students may be required to take specific undergraduate classes prior to enrolling in graduate classes. Exceptions will be allowed only with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies for the department

^2 To be replaced by Urban Political and Social Theory by the spring 2016.
Elective courses may be taken from course offerings in Political Science, the Public and Social Policy Ph.D. program, Sociology, Economics, Psychology, Law, Public Health, and Social Work. Students are required to check with the Director of the MPA Program before they register for courses each semester. The purpose of contacting the MPA Director is to make sure that students are taking the courses they need to be able to fulfill the MPA program’s graduation requirements. Prior to checking with the Director, students should go on Banner to see what courses are available the next semester.

**Internship**

An important part of the MPA program is the internship requirement for pre-service students. In-service students are not required to do an internship but some still find doing one to be a valuable professional development experience. Students typically do their internship after the first full year of coursework. Most internships occur in the summer but students can do one during any time of year. To satisfy the requirement, students must work a minimum of 160 contact hours over one semester or the summer. Most typically work more than 160 hours. There is no waiver given for an internship except in the case of a student who is a graduate assistant in the program.

The MPA Director works with students to identify a suitable internship opportunity, which is typically done usually the semester before the internship. The internship program has been developed in cooperation with numerous governmental, nonprofit and private sector agencies, serving both the St. Louis region and various governmental units throughout the U.S. Recent interns have been placed with agencies in municipal government, East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, Beyond Housing (a nonprofit), Citizens for Missouri’s Children (a nonprofit), and Grand Rock Community Economic Development Corp.

**Capstone**

In their final semester, students do a capstone project (except for JD-MPA students), which consists of a written part in which they describe their research on a particular organizational or policy issue, and an oral presentation in which they present their findings before their capstone committee, typically comprised of three MPA faculty. The capstone project is designed to be an opportunity for students to demonstrate to the faculty their ability to do a project that integrates their coursework, particularly the core. Students meet with the MPA Director either the semester before or very early in their final semester to discuss their capstone ideas. The MPA Director works closely with students on the capstone. Usually, the Director reads more than one draft of the capstone before s/he signs off on the project. Please see the capstone page on the program’s website.
Student Outcomes Assessment

Students are assessed on their performance in courses, the supervisor’s evaluation of their internship, and the capstone. Graduate Assistants’ performance is assessed by the faculty they are assigned to.

Each student is assessed on their learning outcomes with regard to the five universal competencies. For example, for “To lead and manage in public governance” competency, students must demonstrate their knowledge of:

Different theories of human and financial resource administration of public and nonprofit organizations;

Different organizational theories, structures, processes and patterns of behavior;

How to use data to evaluate and improve program or agency performance;

The legal and regulatory environment of public and nonprofit organizations;

The different leadership styles and techniques in the public service.

Similarly, for the remaining four competencies, students are assessed on their demonstrating knowledge and skill sets for each one. Information on each competency may be obtained from the MPA Director.

Program Faculty

Robert A. Cropf, Ph.D., Professor, Political Science
James F. Gilsinan, Ph.D., Professor, Political Science
Morgan Hazelton, J.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Political Science
Chryl Laird, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Political Science and African American Studies
Daniel Monti, Ph.D., Professor, Sociology and Anthropology
Wynne Moskop, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Political Science
Richard Quirk, Ph.D., Adjunct Assistant Professor, Political Science (Adjunct)
Steven Rogers, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Political Science
Emmanuel Uwalaka, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Political Science
Kenneth Warren, Ph.D., Professor, Political Science
Jason Windett, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Political Science
Administrative List

Ellen Carnaghan, Ph.D., Department Chair
McGannon Hall Rm. 140
Phone: 314.977.3038
Email: carnagep@slu.edu

Robert Cropf, Ph.D., MPA Director
McGannon Hall Rm. 154
Phone: 314.977.3936
Email: cropfra@slu.edu

Program Policies

Department of Political Science Policy on Academic Progress and Retention (approved 12-7-12)

Expected Academic Progress

All students matriculating in the MPA program are expected to demonstrate appropriate and continuing progress toward the completion of their MPA degree. The principal indicators of appropriate and continuing progress are:

Maintaining at least a 3.0 GPA with no more than one grade of “C”. If a grade of C is in a required course, the course must be repeated. Any course with a grade of F must be repeated or replaced with an acceptable course substitution;

Carrying no more than one “I” (incomplete) grade or missing grade into a new semester;

If full-time, successfully completing at least 12 graded credit hours per year until one’s course work requirements have been met, and being on track to complete all requirements for the degree within three years; and if part-time, being on track to complete all requirements for the degree within 6 years;

Students’ progress in meeting these expectations will be monitored on at least an annual basis, and those failing to meet expectations are subject to being placed on academic probation, a condition which, if not remedied within the terms specified by the Department’s Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of the MPA program, subjects the student to dismissal from the program.
Academic Dismissal

When the Department believes that a student warrants dismissal from his/her academic program, the Chairperson makes that recommendation to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education in the College of Arts and Sciences. It is also possible for a student’s dismissal to be initiated by the College’s Associate Dean when, for example, that administrative officer does not recommend approval of a student’s appeal for an extension of time to complete the degree.

Procedures for Academic Appeals

As a general policy, a student desiring to appeal any academic decision should direct her appeal to the most immediate source of the decision being appealed (e.g., a faculty member who has awarded a grade, the Director of Graduate Studies who has established conditions of program continuation, the chairperson who has recommended dismissal, or the Associate Dean for Graduate Education who has recommended dismissal). In turn, appeals may be continued along the administrative chain (Chairperson, Associate Dean), culminating in the College Dean. Should the student wish to pursue an additional level of appeal, he/she may take the case to the Associate Vice President for Graduate Education, who reviews the file to determine if the unit’s processes were followed. The Associate Vice President does not overturn a decision, but may send the case back to the College if it is determined that a unit’s processes were not followed.

Guidelines for Graduate Assistantships

Preamble

As stated in the Department Policies and Procedures Manual for Appointing Graduate Assistants and Fellows (2008), “The primary goal of an assistantship is to augment the student’s educational objectives and to assist in the prompt and successful completion of the student’s degree program” (p. 1). Within the department of political science, our fundamental objectives for these assistantships are three-fold:

1) For graduate assistants to provide support for faculty research and teaching in tasks of mutual intellectual value for students and faculty, as well as to carry out administrative duties of a professional nature for the department.

2) For faculty mentors to assign tasks that offer learning experiences through the improvement of existing or the development of new research skills and substantive areas of knowledge and expertise. The teaching tasks should acquaint students with some of the various professional activities of teaching.

3) To create a culture of shared research in the department.
Administrative Mechanics

Graduate assistantships come with a work requirement of 20 hours per week during the academic year. There are no time sheets turned in for these hours. It is the responsibility of the graduate assistants to keep track of their hours and to work the allotted number of hours per week. If the demands of their own schoolwork make it useful for assistants to work less on some weeks, they should plan to make up the work in other weeks.

Faculty mentors will be assigned by the MPA Director in consultation with the graduate committee and the department chair every semester. Just before every semester, graduate assistants will submit to the director of the MPA program (hereafter DMPA) a list of skills and knowledge areas, and MPA faculty will submit a list of projects for which they would like help, and the duration and time required for the projects. The graduate committee will review proposals and suggest assignments, making every effort to ensure good professional and intellectual matches. Because faculty development is the responsibility of the department chair, the assignment of graduate assistants will be made by the DMPA, director of Graduate Studies and department chair working together.

Graduate assistants should expect to work with more than one faculty mentor during a semester. How time is allocated will depend on faculty needs; at the same time, an effort will be made to ensure that graduate student efforts are divided over a manageable number of projects. Both faculty members and graduate assistants should make sure that the 20 hour per week work assignment is not exceeded. If graduate assistants feel that they are being asked to exceed that time commitment, they should raise the matter with the DMPA, the director of Graduate Studies, other members of the graduate committee, or the department chair.

Appropriate Activities and Projects

What follows are lists of some appropriate activities in the areas of teaching, research, and administration. These lists are by no means exhaustive but exemplify the type of activities representative of the four fundamental objectives set forth in the Preamble. In the Department of Political Science, the primary activity for graduate assistants is to assist in faculty research, but sometimes the biggest contribution to faculty research can be made by having an assistant taking on some tasks related to teaching. Appropriate teaching activities for a graduate assistantship should normally be confined to course preparation and not to teaching itself (conducting discussion sections, teaching occasional class sessions, and the preparing/grading/proctoring of exams). These latter activities include:

Teaching:

Syllabus preparation
Help with bibliographies—by various subjects, possibly annotated
Best practices research—how courses are taught elsewhere, gathering syllabi, interviewing other professors by e-mail or phone
Book summaries—written and/or oral
Text book evaluations
Supplemental research for class lectures

Research:

Development of bibliographies
Book/article summaries
Literature reviews
Data gathering
Data coding
Statistical computation and analysis
Preparation of tables
Assisting in discovering grant resources and preparation of such grant applications/proposals.
Research “trouble-shooting”—chasing down pesky footnotes, fact-checking.
Assessing readability of faculty manuscripts and other tasks related to the preparation of manuscripts for publication.

Department/Program Administration:

Discovering “best practices” on various matters both internally in other places at SLU and at other institutions.
Assisting in the preparation of program reports and record-keeping (course enrollments, numbers of majors).
Professional help in program searches, symposia, and outside speakers.
Help with Atlas as well as other campus committees/initiatives of department or program interest (like Social Justice) at the behest of the Department Chair or DMPA.
Assisting the DMPA or Department Chair in Alumni/Development outreach.
Assisting in Internship program communications/ mailings.

Acknowledgement and Authorship

It goes without saying that faculty mentors should provide praise and thanks for the support they received from Graduate Assistantships in all their published writings, journal articles, as well as books. Acknowledgements should be specific about what the graduate assistant contributed. Extensive assistance may raise questions about higher levels of recognition, including co-authorship. In cases of extensive assistance, faculty mentors and graduate assistants should discuss the situation with the DMPA.
Proprieties

Appropriate activities for graduate assistants are those that contribute to their professional and intellectual growth. Inappropriate activities are those that do not contribute to the professional and intellectual growth of the graduate assistants. Obviously, personal service of any kind is not appropriate. Clerical work should be kept to a minimum.

Graduate Assistantships are considered to be full-time occupations. According to the Office of Graduate Education’s Graduate Assistant Handbook (pg. 107), graduate assistants “may not engage in any concurrent employment without the expressed consent of the department or program and their dean or director.” In keeping with the letter and spirit of this requirement, graduate assistants are to be used to support the teaching and research activities of faculty members that are part of their university contracts. Hence, consulting and other faculty activities not a part of university-compensated activities cannot be supported by university-furnished and compensated graduate assistants.

Graduate assistants may help on sabbatical leave projects of faculty mentors. They also may work on grants that are part of a faculty mentor’s professional academic life. If, however, assistants are written into a grant proposal as a paid research member of the team, this may not count for Assistantship time. Furthermore, paid work on a faculty grant or research leave project requires prior permission from the Department and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education of the College.

Procedures for Capstones and Comprehensive Exams

The capstone process involves action research with an agency that the student is familiar with either through their internship or previous or current work experience. The purpose of the capstone is to provide the student with real world experience in program evaluation and to provide the agency with a data based plan for continuous improvement.

Student learning outcomes include the ability to:

• Develop a workable research design utilizing appropriate research methodology;
• Identify sources of data;
• Successfully gather relevant data;
• Analyze data and report findings;
• Make suggestions for improvement based on the evaluation.

The written part of the capstone (usually 35 to 45 pages) is submitted to a three member faculty committee usually late in the student’s final semester. Prior to submission of this document, the student works with his or her faculty mentor (usually the DMPA) to develop a capstone proposal that outlines the problem statement, the importance of the problem from a public policy or public
administration perspective, a review of the relevant literature, and the methodology to be used in gathering the data. The mentor continues to work with the student during the data gathering and analysis stage, reviewing drafts to make sure that the student is on track. Once the mentor has approved the completed capstone, the faculty reviews it in preparation for a student oral presentation and defense. The defense takes one hour. The student takes the first 30 minutes to present the data in PowerPoint. The faculty then discusses with the student the findings and suggests any final changes to the document before submission to the agency.

Student capstones must demonstrate the following:

An understanding of basic public administration concepts relevant to their coursework;
The ability to conceive and conduct an original research project based on either an internship or work-related experience;
The ability to analyze administrative, organizational or policy processes/procedures in a systematic fashion;
An awareness and appreciation of diverse viewpoints in their analysis of organizational decision making or the policy process;
The ability to examine the consequences of the choices made by administrators, leaders, and citizens;
An appreciation of the nature and importance of honesty in research and ethical action in the policy process.

Recent capstone projects have included an analysis of the education reforms in the St. Louis area, affordable housing programs in the City of St. Louis, Medicaid expansion, education reform in Missouri, therapeutic arts programs for the homeless, and a comparison of for-profit and non-profit organizations on organizational culture and leadership qualities.

Students should start thinking about their capstone projects as soon as possible, well before their final semester. All students must inform the DMPA of their capstone project by the beginning of their final semester.

Capstone defenses should be scheduled well before the end of the semester in which the student intends to graduate (by April 15 or November 15). It is the student’s responsibility to schedule the defense at a time that is acceptable to all committee members. Defenses must be completed before the end of the final exam period.

**Comprehensive Exam (for JD-MPA students only)**

JD-MPA students are the only MPA students who do not do a capstone. Instead they take a comprehensive exam, which consists of a written and oral part. The student will select a director and committee members from among the instructors of their MPA (not Law) classes.
The committee will devise questions for a day-long written exam. The questions will be tailored to the MPA core course work. In the comprehensive exams, students will have some choice as to which of the questions they answer. The exam will consist of one three-hour session in the morning and another three-hour session in the afternoon on the same day. During each session, the student will answer the questions. The oral exam, which takes place after the successful completion of the written part, may cover aspects of the core that were not included in the written part of the exam. If at least two of the three committee members consider that the student passed the defense, then a passing grade is warranted. Students who fail the written part are not advanced to the oral part of the exam. Students are permitted to retake the written part if they failed it once. If students fail the written part twice they are not permitted to take the exam again and they fail out of the program. Students who fail the oral part are also permitted to re-take it again. If they fail again they cannot graduate.

**Candidacy Procedures**

**Applying to Graduate for MPA Students:**

a) Register for Capstone course (POLS 5960) in the semester in which you intend to complete your capstone. You must also register for Special Study for Exams (POLS 5951) for zero credit hours.

b) Complete the online Application for Thesis Master’s Candidacy procedures (http://www.slu.edu/graduateeducation/current-students/masters-students).

c) The Degree Audit form is then sent to you via your SLU email from the Master’s Candidacy Advisor. Your Degree Audit form is used as a tool to communicate to you and the DMPA the remaining requirements for your degree completion.

d) Complete the Degree Audit form by:

   i. Verifying the required courses, as outlined by the Graduate Education Catalog, and make any corrections necessary. Include any course substitution or waivers in the appropriate section.
   
   ii. List your committee members for your final oral examination (if requested).
   
   iii. Obtain the signatures of the DMPA, chairperson, and Associate Dean or Director College/School/Center.

**Applying to Graduate for JD-MPA Students:**

a) Register for zero credit hours of Special Study for Exam (POLS 5951) in the Semester in which you intend to complete your final comprehensive oral examination.
b) Complete the online Application for Thesis Master’s Candidacy procedures (http://www.slu.edu/graduateeducation/current-students/masters-students).

c) The Degree Audit form is then sent to you via your SLU email from the Master’s Candidacy Advisor. Your Degree Audit form is used as a tool to communicate to the DMPA and you the remaining requirements for your degree completion.

Completing the Oral Exam and the Remaining Requirements:

a) The Candidacy Advisor sends the result form to the committee chairperson for your oral exam.
b) Your oral exam is completed no later than the deadline listed in Graduate Education’s Calendar of Deadlines and the committee chairperson returns the result form to the candidacy advisor.
c) The Associate Vice President of Graduate Education formally notifies you of the results of the examination.
d) All remaining requirements that had been listed on your Degree Audit Form and original email must be completed in order for your degree to be conferred by the conferral date for that semester.
e) Complete the Online Master’s Exit Questionnaire which will be sent to you at the end of the semester by email.

Admissions Policies and Procedures

Application Deadline for Beginning Term
Fall: April 15 (International: April 15)
Spring: Nov. 1 (International: Oct. 1)
Summer: April 1

Assistantship application deadline for the next academic year: January 30

The Application Package
Transcript(s); Three (3) Letters of Recommendation; GRE GMAT or LSAT scores; Resume; Writing sample; Statement of Purpose

Required Additional Application Materials for International Students
☐ A completed Declaration of Financial Support packet with all accompanying documents
☐ TOEFL or IELTS score

Check our English Proficiency Policy page for specific TOEFL and IELTS score requirements. You may also visit our international prospects, applicants and students page for more information about international application requirements.
Applicant Criteria

- The MPA committee examines and reviews the applicant and application wholly.
- A GPA of 3.0 (overall and in courses for the major)
- A review of GRE scores
- A review of TOEFL scores (for International applicants)

Tuition, Fees, and Deposits

Tuition, fees and deposits are determined by the SLU Administration. Information can be found at: http://www.slu.edu/student-financial-services/financing-a-slu-education/tuition-room-and-board-rates

Registration

Once admitted to the program and the student accepts the offer of admission, students are given an identification number for Banner, the self-service system that allows students to register for courses.

Academic Standards

For all the oral exams, committee members must decide whether students pass or pass with varying degrees of distinction. The Department of Political Science will use the following standards for the MPA program:

a) Passing with Great Distinction – The student was surprisingly well-prepared and showed greater knowledge than would have been expected for an MA student. It should be unusual that a student is awarded “great distinction,” which represents something of an A+ on the oral exam.

b) Passing with Distinction – The student exceeded expectations and showed excellent preparation and knowledge. “Distinction” represents an A or A- on the oral.

c) Passing – The student met expectations in most areas of the exam, meriting a B or B+.

d) Unsatisfactory – The student did not meet expectations. The exam represented work below the B level.

Graduation Requirements

All students must successfully complete 36 credit hours and a capstone project (or comprehensive exam if JD-MPA). In addition, students must complete the Application for Degree through Banner. Instructions for doing so may be found on the Master’s students page of the Graduate Education website.