Department of Political Science

Master of Public Administration

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in the Master of Public Administration Program at Montana State University. Our program has a long and rich history, and our graduates have gone on to distinguished careers at all levels of government and in a wide range of public, non-profit and private organizations. We are proud to have built a program that focuses on smaller, live and in-person classes where students have the opportunity for rich interaction with our faculty and each other. We have created a strong community of learning and a culture of collaboration among the students and faculty, with explicit attention to the development of skills necessary for immediate professional success, and the normative awareness for career and professional development well into the future. We’re excited about the opportunities here at MSU’s MPA program, and we hope you will be too.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me with any inquiries about the program or, fill out our inquiry form (https://msubozeman.radiusbysitemgmt.com/ssc/iForm/x77a426703N66700k2zC771.ssc)

Sincerely,
Dr. Eric K. Austin
MPA Coordinator
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Mission Statement

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at MSU provides students with professionally relevant, and theoretically grounded training, enabling them to become effective and ethically reflective practitioners, guided by values of integrity and service, as they pursue careers in the diverse settings of democratic governance.

Program Description

The MPA degree is a professional degree designed to prepare both pre- and mid-career professionals and administrators for supervisory, analytical support and policy-making positions in public sector agencies, and non-profit organizations, at local, state and federal levels. The program stresses sound preparation in a wide range of administrative competencies. MPA coursework includes studies in public administration theory, human resource management, public budgeting, leadership, ethics, organization dynamics, and research methods for public administrators. Available courses support specialization in local government, non-profit management, administration of Native American affairs, education leadership, planning and other subspecialties. For early career students, practical experience is gained through a supervised internship with an agency of the student's choosing. Note: this is a WRGP approved program. To learn more, see the WRGP/WICHI (https://www.wiche.edu/wrgp/) page.

Upon graduation, MPA students are expected to have built their capacities in the following areas:

• To lead and manage in public governance;
• To participate in and contribute to the 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.

Admissions Requirements

Note: Until further notice, GRE scores are no longer required for admission to the MPA program. If applicants have scores, they are encouraged to submit them, but because the exam is not currently being administered because of the COVID-19 outbreak, we are not currently requiring applicants to submit GRE scores to be considered for admission.

Your application for the MSU MPA Program must be submitted through MSU’s Graduate School (http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/admissions/apply.html) (http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/admissions/apply.html) and must include:

• An Application for Graduate Admission (with application fee; http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html)
• Official transcripts from all undergraduate and post-baccalaureate studies (MSU alumni do not need to submit transcripts)
• Three letters of reference from individuals who can attest to the applicant's ability to be successful as a graduate student
• A personal statement that describes personal and professional objectives, research interests, applicable experience or any other information relevant to the admissions review
• Graduate Record Exams (GRE; use code 4488; information about the GRE can be found at MSU’s testing Service http://www.montana.edu/ehhd/testing/index.html (http://www.montana.edu/ehhd/testing/))
• For international students, you will need a TOEFL or IELTS. Please see Graduate School for other documents needed for admission, such as a Financial Certificate: http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/admissions_intl.html

Admission standards for full admission to MSU’s MPA Program are:

• Completion of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university
• A sum of at least 844 from the following formula: (GRE X 4) + (Undergraduate GPA X 80)
• For International students who are not native English speakers, an English proficiency test such as the TOEFL or IELTS is required. For the TOEFL a score of 80; for the IELTS a score of 7.

Application Deadlines

Applications for the MPA program are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. Applicants wanting to begin classes in the Fall semester should submit all materials by July 15th, and by November 15th for those who want to begin classes in the Spring semester.

Prospective students interested in starting during the Summer should contact the MPA Graduate Coordinator for additional information.

Admissions Outcomes

Full graduate status: is granted to students who have demonstrated a high quality of performance in prior academic preparation and have otherwise met university and departmental standards on the criteria listed above.
The MPA degree requires completion of 36 credits.

**Core Required Courses (15 credits):**

- PSCI 520  Government Leadership & Ethics  3
- PSCI 551  Research Methods for Public Administrators  3
- PSCI 552  Public Policy Processes  3
- PSCI 554  Foundations of Public Administration  3
- PSCI 558  Organization Dynamics  3

Total Credits 15

**Electives (18 credits)**

Students will select six elective courses that support both their intellectual interests as well as their professional and career objectives. We encourage students to explore the Political Science course catalog as well as course offerings from other departments to identify potential electives. Elective courses will be selected in cooperation with either the MPA Director or the student’s Professional Paper Chairperson.

Pre-career students (those entering the program with fewer than two years of progressively responsible professional work experience) will be required to complete a 3 credit, 300 work-hour internship as one of the six elective courses. Elective courses may be taken in our Political Science Department, and may include up to three 400 level courses with the consent of the student’s advisor or committee chair.

**Course Options in Political Science**

- PSCI 406  The Political Economy of Energy  3
- PSCI 407  Public Policy Analysis  3
- PSCI 423  Politics of Development  3
- PSCI 429  National Security Policy Decision-Making  3
- PSCI 451  State and Local Government  3
- PSCI 461  Administrative Law  3
- PSCI 525  Non-Profit Management  3
- PSCI 530  Tools of Public Administration  3
- PSCI 553  Research Methods II: Data Analysis  3
- PSCI 559  Program Evaluation  3
- PSCI 598  Internship  3-12

**Professional Paper (3 credits)**

The Professional Paper course (PSCI 575 Directed Professional Research Project) is taken during the student's last semester of course work. The purpose of the Professional Paper is to allow MPA students an opportunity to effectively integrate underlying theories, concepts, themes, and patterns found throughout the program's course work into a final original research project. A formal presentation of the Professional Paper will be given to Public Administration and Political Science faculty, student peers, and other interested parties. All MPA students in the program are expected to attend these presentations. Completion of the Professional Papers must occur in the Fall or Spring semester, not during the summer.

**Comprehensive Exams**

Comprehensive Exams are administered the semester before the student graduates, (e.g., If graduating in the spring, comprehensive exams are taken in the fall. Comprehensive exams are not administered in the summer). The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to verify the student's mastery of the general concepts derived from the course of study, the integration of those concepts across course topics and the ability to apply the material to real-world administrative problems.

**Transfer of Credits**

Acceptance/transfer of up to nine credit hours of academic course work performed at other institutions is possible by The Graduate School upon recommendation by the Political Science Department. All such credits must have been earned while in graduate status at an accredited college or university.

**Financial Assistance**

Applicants interested in Graduate Assistantships, or departmentally awarded financial aid must apply by April 15th. A supplemental application for Departmental aid can be obtained from [http://www.montana.edu/politicalscience/graduate/](http://www.montana.edu/politicalscience/graduate/).
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Adobe Garamond Pro.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.