

# 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.radiusbycampusgmt.com/ssc/iform/x77a42d6703Nx6700kzC771.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.

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## 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 and nonprofit settings;
- 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; and
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

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## Admissions Requirements

Your application for the MSU MPA Program must be submitted through MSU's Graduate School (<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
- Beginning in the admissions cycle for Fall 2021, submission of scores from the Graduate Record Exams will no longer be required. Applicants may, if they choose, voluntarily submit scores (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 to submit a TOEFL, IELTS or other accepted English proficiency exam score. Please see Graduate School for other documents needed for admission, such as a Financial Certificate: [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/admissions\\_intl.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/admissions_intl.html)

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

- An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better
- 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 is expected; 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 15<sup>th</sup>, and by November 15<sup>th</sup> for those who want to begin classes in the Spring semester.

We will, in some circumstances, consider admitting students for the Summer semester. Prospective students interested in starting during the Summer should contact the MPA Graduate Coordinator for additional information.

**Applicants interested in being considered for Graduate Teaching or Research positions should complete and submit the application cover sheet and other required materials by April 15th if applying for the Fall semester, and November 15th if applying for the Spring. The application and additional information can be found on the MPA program website: <http://www.montana.edu/politicalscience/graduate/>**

## Admissions Outcomes

**Full graduate status:** Full graduate admission 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.

**Provisional Admission:** Provisional admission may be granted to a student whose application shows reasonable potential for effective graduate work even though the applicant's record may be deficient in some area. We encourage prospective students who believe they have the skills and competencies necessary to be a successful graduate student, to consider applying for admission, and to utilize the required Personal Statement or explain their objectives and abilities. A decision to recommend provisional admission to The Graduate School for an applicant may be based on prior work experience, success in another academic field, completion of supplemental course work, or other criteria pertinent to academic success. A provisionally admitted student will be informed of any special requirements that must be met in order to be granted full graduate status. Upon meeting the specified requirements, recommendations of the Political Science Department, and with approval of the Dean of Graduate Education, a student on provisional status may be advanced to full graduate standing. Full graduate standing is usually considered only after completion of nine or more credits of satisfactory graduate work.

**Non-degree Status:** Students who desire to take courses of interest but who do not wish to pursue a graduate degree, or those who have not yet been accepted into the program by the Graduate School, may enroll with non-degree graduate status. Graduate credits earned while in non-degree status will not automatically be applied toward graduate degree requirements if the student later applies for and is admitted into the MPA program. Montana State University will allow no more than nine credits of non-degree course work to apply toward a graduate degree. Furthermore, these credits may only be applied toward the degree if the student would have met all the criteria for admission into full graduate status at the time of entering as a non-degree student.

### Out of State Students

Prospective students who are not Montana residents should be aware that MSU's MPA program is a Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). This program allows students from select western states to pay 150% of resident tuition instead of full out of state tuition. To find out more about the program and to see if your state qualifies, please visit the WICHE website (<https://www.wiche.edu/>) for more information.

### Degree Requirements

The degree requirements given below are effective for students admitted to the program in the Fall Semester of 2021 or after. Students who began the program prior to Fall 2021 can opt into this set of requirements with the approval of their advisor or chair. The curriculum is structured so that full time students (those taking 9 credits per semester) should be able to graduate in two academic years. Students taking 6 credits per semester can graduate in three years.

The MPA degree requires completion of 36 credits.

### 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.

### Master of Public Administration (MPA) Track

The degree requirements given below are effective for students admitted to the program in the Fall Semester of 2021 or later. Students who began the program prior to Fall 2021 can opt into this set of requirements with the approval of their advisor or chair. The curriculum is structured so that

full time students (those taking nine credits per semester) should be able to graduate in two academic years. Students taking six credits per semester can graduate in three years.

The MPA degree requires completion of 36 credits.

### Core Required Courses:

PSCI 520	Government Leadership & Ethics	3
PSCI 551	Quantitative Research Methods	3
PSCI 552	Public Policy Processes	3
PSCI 553	Qualitative Research Methods	3
PSCI 554	Foundations of Public Administration	3
PSCI 558	Public Organization Dynamics	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>18</b>

### Typical Two Year Plan:

Year 1	Credits	
	Fall	Spring
PSCI 554 - Foundations of Public Administration	3	
PSCI 558 - Public Organization Dynamics	3	
PSCI 553 - Qualitative Research Methods	3	
PSCI 552 - Public Policy Processes		3
PSCI 520 - Government Leadership & Ethics		3
PSCI 551 - Quantitative Research Methods		3
Year Total:	9	9
Year 2	Credits	
	Fall	Spring
Elective	3	
Elective	3	
Elective	3	
Comprehensive Exam		
Elective		3
Elective		3
Choose One		3
PSCI 575 Directed Professional Research Project		
or		
PSCI 595 Capstone Professional Portfolio		
Year Total:	9	9
<b>Total Program Credits:</b>		<b>36</b>

### Capstone Professional Project or Portfolio (3-6 credits)

PSCI 595	Capstone Professional Portfolio	3
or		
PSCI 575	Directed Professional Research Project	3

One of two Capstone Project courses (either PSCI 575 or PSCI 595) will be taken during the student's last semester of course work. The purpose of the capstone project 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 capstone project. Both options are typically three credits, unless additional credits are approved by the student's Committee Chair.

A formal presentation of the Capstone Project 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 capstone project must occur in the Fall or Spring semester, not during the Summer.

**Advising**

Incoming students will work with the MPA coordinator for advising on course selection and scheduling, identifying and establishing internship opportunities and other program-related or professional mentoring. Continuing students may elect to work with other core MPA faculty for both academic and professional advising, based on the availability and agreement of that faculty member.

**Comprehensive Exams**

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. The exam covers core MPA classes PSCI 520, PSCI 551, PSCI 552, PSCI 553, PSCI 554 and PSCI 558. To be eligible for the comprehensive exam, students must have completed these core MPA courses, and will sit for the exam no later than the semester prior to their anticipated graduation.

**Electives (15 credits)**

Students will select five 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 the MPA Director or the student’s designated advisor. 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 five elective courses. Elective courses may be taken in or outside of the Political Science Department, and may include up to three 400 level courses with the consent of the student’s advisor or committee chair.

PSCI 407	Public Policy Analysis	3
PSCI 414	Drug Trafficking and Governance in the Americas	3
PSCI 415	The Political Economy of Energy	3
PSCI 418	The Politics of War & Peace	3
PSCI 423	Politics of Development	3
PSCI 429	National Security Policy Decision-Making	3
PSCI 434	International Law	3
PSCI 436	Politics of Food & Hunger	3
PSCI 437	International Political Econ	3
PSCI 439	International Human Rights	3
PSCI 446	Congressional Campaign	3
PSCI 447	Politics of Community Development	3
PSCI 451	State and Local Government Policy Making	3
PSCI 454	Cinema and Political Theory	3
PSCI 455	Politics & Virtue	3
PSCI 461	Administrative Law	3
PSCI 465	Public Administration and Policy	3
PSCI 470	Rural Politics	3
PSCI 471	American Constitutional Law	3
PSCI 525	Non-Profit Management	3
PSCI 530	Tools of Public Administration	3
PSCI 559	Program Evaluation	3

PSCI 592	Independent Study	1-3
PSCI 598	Internship	3-12

**Accelerated BA/MPA Track**

The Accelerated BA/MPA Program allows Political Science students to complete the Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Master of Public Administration (MPA) within five years. After being accepted into the accelerated BA/MPA Program, a student at MSU may take up to 12 credits graduate level credits to reserve towards the MPA degree. The coursework used for reserved credits may not be counted toward the B.A. degree requirements. After receiving their BA degree, students will enroll in a summer internship (see Plan of Study Grid below) and receive graduate credits for that internship. Then, in their fifth year, students complete the remaining graduate courses and work on their professional paper or professional portfolio.

Students interested in the accelerated program are admitted provisionally by March 1 of their junior year. Students must have at least 90 credits upon entry and a GPA of 3.25. The Plan of Study for accelerated students looks as follows:

**Core Required Courses:**

PSCI 520	Government Leadership & Ethics	3
PSCI 551	Quantitative Research Methods	3
PSCI 552	Public Policy Processes	3
PSCI 553	Qualitative Research Methods	3
PSCI 554	Foundations of Public Administration	3
PSCI 558	Public Organization Dynamics	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>18</b>

**Typical Accelerated Course Plan :**

Senior Year	Credits		
	Fall	Spring	Summer
PSCI 554 - Foundations of Public Administration	3		
PSCI 552 - Public Policy Processes		3	
PSCI 598 - Internship			3
Elective			3
<b>Year Total:</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
Year 5	Credits		
	Fall	Spring	Summer
PSCI 558 - Public Organization Dynamics	3		
PSCI 553 - Qualitative Research Methods	3		
Electives	6		
Comprehensive Exams <sup>1</sup>			
PSCI 520 - Government Leadership & Ethics		3	
PSCI 551 - Quantitative Research Methods		3	
Elective		3	
Choose One:		3	
PSCI 575 Directed Professional Research Project			
OR			
PSCI 595 Capstone Professional Portfolio			

Year Total:	12	12
<b>Total Program Credits:</b>		<b>36</b>

<sup>1</sup> Students will take their comprehensive exams in the fall of year 5

### Capstone Professional Project or Portfolio (3-6 credits)

PSCI 575	Directed Professional Research Project	3-6
OR		
PSCI 595	Capstone Professional Portfolio	3-6

One of two Capstone Project courses (either PSCI 575 or PSCI 595) will be taken during the student's last semester of course work. The purpose of the capstone project 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 capstone project. Both options are typically three credits, unless additional credits are approved by the student's Committee Chair.

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PSCI 437	International Political Econ	3
PSCI 439	International Human Rights	3
PSCI 446	Congressional Campaign	3

PSCI 447	Politics of Community Development	3
PSCI 451	State and Local Government Policy Making	3
PSCI 454	Cinema and Political Theory	3
PSCI 455	Politics & Virtue	3
PSCI 461	Administrative Law	3
PSCI 465	Public Administration and Policy	3
PSCI 470	Rural Politics	3
PSCI 471	American Constitutional Law	3
PSCI 525	Non-Profit Management	3
PSCI 530	Tools of Public Administration	3
PSCI 559	Program Evaluation	3
PSCI 592	Independent Study	1-3
PSCI 598	Internship	3-12