



# School of Public Affairs

*Master of Public Administration  
(MPA)*

*Program Guide*

**777 W. Harrisburg Pike, 157W Olmsted Building  
Middletown, PA. 17057**

**Phone: (717) 948-6773**

**Fax: (717) 948-6320**

<https://harrisburg.psu.edu/public-affairs/public-administration/master-public-administration>

<http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/public-administration-masters/overview>

# Welcome to the MPA program!

We have written this program guide to assist you during your studies in our graduate program. Our objective is to state as clearly as possible what we expect of you and what you can expect of us. We are pleased and proud of our program and our alumni. As in any good educational program, we hope to learn from our students as they learn from us. We are glad you have decided to join us and will work to make your experience rewarding and challenging.

This program guide has been prepared by the faculty and staff of the School of Public Affairs. We have tried our best to provide accurate and up-to-date information; however, we understand that some information may have changed since the time of this printing.

Please also visit the Student Activities Office at SEC for the Student Handbook which details more general information. World Campus [student policies](#) and [orientation for new students](#) are available online. The Student Program guide is designed as a practical guide to rules, information, and activities at Penn State Harrisburg.

Course schedules for the current and upcoming semesters are available [here](#) for Harrisburg students; [here](#) for World Campus students.

MPA

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# MPA

## Introduction

### About the School of Public Affairs

The School of Public Affairs (SPA) at Penn State Harrisburg is a comprehensive unit. We offer programs ranging from bachelor's degrees in criminal justice (also offered online), political science, and public policy, to master's degrees in public administration (also offered online), health administration, homeland security, and criminal justice, to a Ph.D. in public administration. We also offer the base program in a multi-college online program, a Master of Professional Studies in Homeland Security, and an online graduate certificate in homeland security and defense. The school also offers several post-baccalaureate certificate programs, in non-profit management, long-term care, public sector human resource management, and public budgeting and financial management, as well as an online undergraduate minor in homeland security.

The master's program in Public Administration has consistently been ranked in the top quarter of MPA programs in the US. It is the sole program in public administration for Penn State, one of the largest and most widely recognized institutions in the nation. Our students work and study side-by-side with nationally respected faculty and in productive internship opportunities. Residential instruction offers proximity to the state capital and the region's hub of business and commerce; online instruction allows students from around the nation and the world to build a vibrant learning community.

### MPA Mission

- Mission: The Master of Public Administration program prepares individuals to assume leadership positions in public service careers and strengthens their professional skills to successfully work in government and non-profit organizations.
- Goal: The MPA develops ethical and skilled leaders and professionals able to work effectively in an increasingly globalized and diverse world, who are competent as managers and analysts skilled in oral and written communications, and who share a commitment to public service values and democratic processes.

### About the MPA Program

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program is a NASPAA accredited program, that is intended for those persons with career interests in public management, government, health and human services, and other public service and nonprofit organizations. The curriculum blends theoretical and applied concepts with real-world experiences.

An important goal of the MPA program is to assist students in developing their abilities to understand, analyze, and control their organizational environments to

manage more effectively and to promote positive change in the public and nonprofit sectors. Courses are offered in residence and online. Students have the option of taking elective courses in the following focus areas: government administration, human resources management, policy analysis and evaluation, homeland security and nonprofit organization management and policy.

The Dickinson School of Law of the Pennsylvania State University and the School of Public Affairs of Penn State Harrisburg offer a cooperative program leading to the dual degrees of Juris Doctor, to be granted by Dickinson, and Master of Public Administration, to be granted by PSH. This program is only open to matriculated Dickinson students approved by the Dickinson School of Law. Penn State Harrisburg also offers a Ph.D. program in Public Administration.

## **Accreditation**

The MPA program is accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), which is a professional education association dedicated to the advancement of education, training, and research in public policy and administration. The Association's membership consists of nearly 300 member institutions. The PSH program is one of 179 accredited programs that are members of NASPAA, and one of only four in Pennsylvania.

## **Program Requirements for Admission**

### **Admission Prerequisites**

Note: In addition to the general prerequisites for admission to the Graduate School, the following is required by this degree program:

### **GPA**

A successful undergraduate record with a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (either as the cumulative GPA or for the last 60 hours of relevant course work)

### **Supporting Materials**

A statement of career and educational goals

Three names of references willing to provide recommendations

A resume

Satisfactory scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), or Law School Admission Test (LSAT) are required if the GPA is less than 3.0

## Application Deadline

This program has rolling admission, that is, no specific deadline. Note that it may take 4-6 weeks to receive transcripts and process an application.

## Website Link

<https://harrisburg.psu.edu/public-affairs/public-administration/master-public-administration/program-requirements-for-admission>

<https://harrisburg.psu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions>

## Additional International Student Requirements

1. Completed International application materials must be submitted by the following deadlines. Applications received after the deadlines will be processed for the following semester.

| Semester | Deadline     |
|----------|--------------|
| Fall     | May 31       |
| Spring   | September 30 |
| Summer   | February 28  |

2. Complete an application for Visa Document.
3. International applicants must scan and upload copies of all official attested transcripts and attested diplomas in both English and the language of original, official documents.
4. Carefully review TOEFL score information and follow the Graduate School's requirements regarding English proficiency.  
<http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/new-applicants/requirements-for-graduate-admission/>

## Instructions for submitting standardized test results

Many standardized test results can be submitted electronically and directly from the testing agency by using the codes shown in the table below. For test results where only a hard copy is available, please request that the testing agency mail the results to:

*Penn State Harrisburg  
Graduate Admissions  
Swatara Building  
Middletown, PA 17057*

| Test name                             | Test abbreviation | Code    |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Graduate Record Examination           | GRE               | 2660    |
| Graduate Management Admission Test    | GMAT              | BN6F487 |
| Miller Analogies Test                 | MAT               | 2609    |
| Test of English as a Foreign Language | TOEFL             | 2660    |

### Acceptable Test Scores

The minimum acceptable score for the TOEFL is 550 for the paper-based test, or a total score of 80 with a 19 on the speaking section for the internet-based test (iBT). Applicants with iBT speaking scores between 15 and 18 may be considered for provisional admission, which requires completion of specified remedial English courses ESL 114G (American Oral English for Academic Purposes) and-or ESL 116G (ESL-Composition for Academic Disciplines) and attainment of a grade of B or higher. The minimum acceptable composite score for the IELTS is 6.5. Graduate programs may have more stringent requirements.

### Exemptions from English Proficiency Testing

International applicants are exempt from the TOEFL-IELTS requirement who have received a baccalaureate or a graduate degree from a college-university-institution in any of the following: Australia, Belize, British Caribbean and British West Indies, Canada (except Quebec), England, Guyana, Republic of Ireland, Liberia, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, the United States, and Wales.

### Student Scheduling

**Full-time Students:** Full-time students usually begin with the fall semester; however, they may begin in spring or summer as well. A student is considered full-time if he or she takes nine credits a semester. A student enrolled on a full-time basis should expect to complete the program in 18 months to 2 years. The actual time required to complete the program varies depending on (1) whether a student takes courses during the summer, and (2) whether the student is required to do an internship. Most of the core courses are offered each semester.

**Part-time Students:** Part-time students may begin the program in any semester. Part-time students typically take one or two 3-credit course(s) each semester, including summer, and complete the program in 3-5 years of study.

**Non-Degree Students:** A few students, returning to school after years of working full-time, start the program as non-degree students. This provides time for the student to re-acclimate to class work and the additional stress on family and work schedules, while once again becoming a student. The new student may take up to 15 credits of public administration courses in a non-degree mode to decide if this is the right time to return to school. After that time, the student must apply to and be formally accepted



into the program. If the student is accepted, the non-degree credits will be transferred into the degree program provided the student earned a grade of B or better in the courses.

## **Degree Requirements**

The MPA degree program requires 36 graduate credits (3 credits per course): 18 in core courses, 15 in electives and 3 for a capstone course. Up to 6 credits of 400-level courses may be taken as electives, with the approval of an advisor. In addition, a 3-credit, 300 hour internship is required of students who do not have at least two years of full-time relevant work experience, which consists of supervisory, managerial or professional administrative work relevant to public service. The internship is waived for students with this experience before they enter the program or who gain it by working full-time during their enrollment in the program. If this occurs, students must apply for the waiver. All course work and requirements must be completed within an eight-year period from the time of first enrollment in the program.

## **Core Courses**

The following 21 credits are required of all students:

PADM 500 Public Organization and Management  
PADM 502 Government Fiscal Decision-Making  
PADM 503 Research Methods  
PADM 505 Human Resources in the Public and Nonprofit Sector  
PADM 507 Introduction to Public Policy Analysis  
PADM 510 Organizational Behavior  
PADM 594 Capstone Course

<http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/public-administration-masters/overview>

## **CITI Training**

The Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) requirements for the Master's in Public Administration program requires students in this program to complete the following two training courses and submit the completion report to the department as a record for their graduation file. This is a graduation requirement for every student and must be completed.

1. Social and Behavioral Human Subjects Research (IRB) Course
2. Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course

These courses are offered through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program. This training is included in the PADM 503 course. Students who are enrolled in the PADM 503 course will complete this training as a part of the course work.

## Capstone Course

PADM 594 is the capstone course for Master's degree students in the MPA Program. The course builds on the knowledge components and skills students have gained in prior courses. The purpose of PADM 594 is to enhance competencies in problem identification, problem solving, professional writing, oral presentation, and group research and presentation skills.

## Electives

With assistance from their faculty advisors, students select 15 credits of elective courses. These electives may be chosen to obtain a broad base in general public administration or to concentrate in one of the following focus areas offered by the MPA.

Students are not required to select a focus area and may choose courses that are of special interest to their career. The focus area does not appear on a transcript; however, it can be noted on a resume. Possible focus areas with relevant course selections are provided below:

- Human resources
- Nonprofit management
- Policy analysis and evaluation
- Public budgeting and financial management
- State-local government and administration

### Human Resources

This focus area provides professional development for students interested in human resources. Topics covered include management, planning, policy analysis, and consulting. Possible relevant courses are suggested below:

PADM 512     Issues in Human Resources  
PADM 514     Public Organization and Managerial Consultation  
PADM 515     Labor Management Relations  
MNGMT 570   Leadership Development

### Nonprofit management

This focus area is designed to provide professional development opportunities to students interested in management and leadership positions in the nonprofit sector. It aims at developing an understanding of the functioning of the nonprofit sector for social and economic development in collaboration with government agencies and local community. Possible relevant courses are suggested below:

PADM 517 Nonprofit Organizations: History and Evolution  
PADM 518 Nonprofit Organizations: Management and Leadership  
PADM 519 Nonprofit Organizations: Resource Development and Management  
PADM 523 Government and Nonprofit Accounting  
PADM 534 Managing Economic Development  
PADM 550 Policy and Program Evaluation

PADM 516 Strategic Planning  
HADM 543 Long-Term Care Administration and Policy

### **Policy Analysis and Evaluation**

The focus area is designed to provide students with an understanding of the policy process and the politics of that process and the skills of conducting policy analysis and evaluation. Possible relevant courses are suggested below:

PADM 531 Environmental Policy  
PADM 534 Managing Economic Development  
PADM 535 Policy Analysis and Planning  
HADM 541 Health Economics and Policy  
HADM 542 Health Care Politics and Policy  
HADM 543 Long-Term Care Administration and Policy  
PADM 550 Policy and Program Evaluation  
CRIMJ 564 Administration & Legal Aspects of Corrections  
CRIMJ 502 Public Policy & the Criminal Justice System

### **Public Budgeting and Financial Management**

This focus area is designed to provide professional development opportunities to students interested in government and nonprofit budgeting, financial management and accounting. Possible relevant courses are suggested below:

PADM 522 Government Financial Management  
PADM 523 Government and Nonprofit Accounting  
HADM 545 Health Financial Management  
FINAN 518 Financial Markets and the Economy  
FINAN 531 Managing Financial Operations  
ACCT 532 Accounting Information and Decision Systems

### **Government Administration at National-State-Local Government Level**

This focus area provides professional development for students interested in management, planning, policy analysis, and consulting at the local, regional, state, and-or national levels, and professional development in private firms and associations emphasizing governmental relations. Possible relevant courses are suggested below:

|          |                                            |
|----------|--------------------------------------------|
| PADM 511 | Organizational Change and Development      |
| PADM 516 | Strategic Planning                         |
| PADM 524 | Administrative Law                         |
| PADM 531 | Environmental Policy                       |
| PADM 532 | Urban Government                           |
| PADM 533 | Local Planning Law and Administration      |
| PADM 534 | Managing Economic Development              |
| PADM 556 | State Government Administration            |
| PADM 557 | Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations |
| PADM 558 | Legislative Processes                      |

### **Independent Study**

Independent Study (PADM 596) provides students the opportunity to obtain recorded credit for academic achievement beyond that recognized through the formal, approved course offerings.

An Independent Study course should not be used in place of an established catalog course. If an established course is to be given independently, even if only to one student, it should be offered under the official course name and number. At the discretion of the instructor, two or more students may participate in a cooperative independent study project.

A petition for Independent Study must be completed and returned to the Program Office for the necessary signatures. Jurisdiction for an Independent Study course lies with the School Director of the Program in which the course resides. The signature of the appropriate School Director indicates approval of the Independent Study offering within his or her jurisdiction and of the instructor. The signature of the instructor serving as the study director indicates an agreement to be involved in the Independent Study. The signature of the student's assigned advisor indicates approval of the student's participation. Once all signatures are acquired, the form will be forwarded to Enrollment Services. Registration cannot be processed without a completed form.

### **Graduation Procedures**

After completion of all requirements for the MPA Degree (see the [Matriculation Form](#)), it is your responsibility to notify the University of your intent to graduate. This should be done by using the [Graduating this Semester](#) eLion application at the beginning of the semester in which you plan to graduate. Check the semester calendar for the dates when you can activate your intent to graduate. After the graduation activation period expires, you must contact the office of your major to request any changes to your graduation status. Check the following website for more details:

<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/academicprocedures/procedures8>

## Transfer of Credits

It is possible to transfer graduate course credits to the program and have the credits applied toward an MPA. With your advisor's, the program's and Graduate School approval, you may transfer up to ten credits: (1) if you earned an A or B (B- will not transfer) in graduate level courses; (2) if the courses were from an accredited university and they appear on a graduate transcript; and (3) if you completed them within five years of the time you first registered in the PSH MPA program. Courses taken as part of an earned degree or certificate program may not be transferred. Check graduate Bulletin website for more details:

<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/degreerequirements/masters>

The forms can be found here: <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/faculty-and-staff/forms/ges/>

## Time Limitation

All requirements for a master's degree (including acceptance of a thesis, paper, or project report as may be specified), whether satisfied on the University Park campus or elsewhere, must be met within eight years of admission to degree status. Individual programs may set shorter time limits. Extensions may be granted by the Director of Graduate Enrollment Services in appropriate circumstances. Check the following website for more details:

<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/academicprocedures/procedures8>

## Resume Study

If you drop out of the program for more than one semester, you must complete a "Permission to Resume Graduate Study" form for the semester you wish to return. This form can be found at <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/faculty-and-staff/forms/ges/>.

Credits earned more than five years before resuming study will not be considered for graduation requirements.

## Student GPA Requirement

**A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at the University is required for graduation and to maintain good academic standing.** Students falling below a 3.0 GPA will be notified. If you are below the required 3.0, you must bring up your GPA to 3.0 or higher the following semester or be terminated from the program. This is a requirement for the entirety of the program. Students falling below the required GPA in their last semester of the program will also have one semester to bring up their GPA or they will be terminated as well. See the details at the graduate bulletin website: <http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/degreerequirements/masters>

## Graduate Internship

Every student who does not have at least two years of relevant professional or managerial experience is required to complete a three -credit internship (PADM 595) of 300 hours of service. The internship experience provides students with a dynamic, professional forum in which to apply the analytical and managerial knowledge they acquired in the MPA program. During the internship, may also students develop a professional network important to their career. The purpose of the internship requirement is to provide students who lack real-world professional experience in public service organizations with: (1) opportunities for career exploration; and (2) a realistic exposure to the environment, management systems, and internal operations of public service organizations.

Students who have the relevant professional or managerial experience when they apply for admission usually are granted an internship waiver upon admission. Students who gain the experience through working full-time while enrolled in the program can request a waiver by describing the details of their experiences in a resume and letter addressed to the Program Coordinator. A student requiring an internship must complete 18 hours of credit with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher before he or she is eligible for an internship.

Optimally, an internship should be taken during the course of a single semester. Generally a 15-week semester on a half-time basis meets the time requirement as well as the total credits (3) required. However, a full-time internship (40 hours per week, 300 hours for the semester) over the course of 8 weeks satisfies the requirement. This may be most useful for summer placements.

Locating an internship is the responsibility of the student with assistance from the Internship Advisor. The balance and degree of academic and administrative supervision varies greatly depending upon the nature of the assignment, prior training of the student, the location of the internship, and other factors. The student has the primary responsibility for maximizing the educational experience of the internship, while the Internship Advisor and agency supervisor are expected to guide and assist throughout the entire internship.

MPA students have had internships with agencies of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including the Governor's Office of Administration-Office of Information Technology, Office of the Budget, Department of Treasury, and the Department of Transportation. Students have also interned with Highmark, Inc. (PA Blue Shield), Pennsylvania Transportation Institute, the House of Representatives, including the Majority Whip's Office, as well as many local and county government offices, and a variety of nonprofit organizations as well as federal agencies in Washington, DC.

## Certificate Programs

Five certificate programs are offered to degree and non-degree students:

1. [Public Budgeting and Financial Management;](#)
2. [Public Sector Human Resources Management;](#)
3. [Long-Term Care Administration;](#)
4. [Nonprofit Administration;](#)
5. [Homeland Security and Defense \(offered through the World Campus\).](#)

Detailed information on these programs may be found online at [https://harrisburg.psu.edu/public-affairs/programs#Graduate or Postbaccalaureate Certificate](https://harrisburg.psu.edu/public-affairs/programs#Graduate_or_Postbaccalaureate_Certificate)

Tuition for the certificate programs may be reimbursed by your employer - check with your Human Resources office.

## Financial Assistance

The MPA Program offers financial assistance to a limited number of full-time graduate students each year. Descriptions of the types of financial assistance available appear below. Additional information and applications can be obtained in the Office of Public Affairs, W153 Olmsted Building, or by calling 717-948-6058.

## World Campus Scholarships

A number of scholarships are available for World Campus students. Information on these are available online.

<http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/tuition-and-financial-aid/scholarships>

## Penn State Harrisburg Scholarships

A number of scholarships are available for Penn State Harrisburg students. For each upcoming academic year, all incoming and current students with a 3.0 GPA or higher will automatically be considered for the majority of the scholarships listed on the site below. Information on these are available online.

<https://harrisburg.psu.edu/financial-aid/scholarships>

## Blue Shield Fellowship

A Blue Shield Fellowship is awarded to full-time or part-time students in either the Master of Health Administration, Master of Public Administration, or Ph.D. in Public Administration program at Penn State Harrisburg who demonstrate strong interest and potential for success in the health care field, who have achieved positive academic

records, and who have exhibited a strong commitment to a career in health care. Application deadline is April 9.

### **HealthAmerica Fellowship**

A HealthAmerica Fellowship is awarded to full-time or part-time students in either the Part time or Full time graduate students for Master of Health Administration or Master of or Doctorate in Public Administration with a concentration in health care at Penn State Harrisburg. The purpose of the HealthAmerica Fellowship is to recognize and support outstanding graduate students enrolled or planning to enroll in the School of Public Affairs, concentrating in health care. The fellowship will be awarded for 12 credits per academic year, includes a paid internship with HealthAmerica and includes a tuition scholarship. Application deadline is April 9.

### **Graduate Assistantships**

General graduate assistantships (research) may be available to students. Assistantships consist of a stipend plus payment of tuition. Sometimes, pending availability of funding and satisfactory academic performance, these can be continued for an additional semester(s). Appointments are made subject to the student's admission to the MPA program as a full-time degree student. GRE scores are also required. Application deadline: January 30.

### **Irving and Mildred Hand State, Urban, and Regional Affairs Award**

The Irving and Mildred Hand State, Urban, and Regional Affairs Award is to honor and recognize the achievement of a graduate student at the Penn State Harrisburg. Annually, a full- or part-time graduate student, living in Dauphin, Cumberland, Lancaster, York, or Lebanon County, who has displayed interest and excellence in the study of state, regional, and local affairs is selected by the School of Public Affairs as the recipient of this endowed award.

### **University Awards**

Several academic scholarships are available for Penn State Harrisburg students through the Financial Aid Office. Applicants must complete an Academic Scholarship Application (obtained from the Financial Aid Office), as well as a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and furnish a personal biographical essay. FAFSA forms are available on the Internet at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). The deadline for the FAFSA form is February 15. Note: Applications are not considered unless the results of the FAFSA have been received at Penn State by April 1st. Students receive an award notification during the month of May.

A 3.0 cumulative grade point average is the absolute minimum for consideration. In addition to grade point average and demonstrated financial need, the scholarship committee considers the student's service to college and-or community. Call the



Financial Aid Office at (717) 948-6307 or visit the appropriate financial aid web site – [Harrisburg](#) or [World Campus](#) with questions.

## **Professional and Student Organizations**

### **Pi Alpha Alpha**

Pi Alpha Alpha is a national honor society for the field of public affairs and public administration. The purpose of the society is to encourage and recognize outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in public affairs and administration.

The society seeks to promote the advancement of quality in education and practice of the art and science of public affairs and administration. The objectives foster integrity, professionalism, and effective performance in the conduct of government and related public service activities. Membership identifies those with the highest performance levels in educational programs preparing them for public service careers. Students with a minimum 3.7 GPA are notified of acceptance into Pi Alpha Alpha. A one-time fee is required of students.

### **MPA Club**

The MPA Student Club at Penn State Harrisburg is a student run organization that provides students of Public Affairs and other community members with a venue to engage in discussions, exchange ideas, and participate in activities that nurture their academic, personal, and professional development.

The MPA Club designs exciting activities for its members promoting interaction and networking opportunities through academic and research symposium, guest speakers, social events, community service, and fundraising activities. Explore topics, career pathways, and trends in Public Administration, Public Affairs, and Nonprofit Management by joining the MPA Club.

### **Alumni Society**

The Penn State Harrisburg Alumni Society is part of the University-wide Penn State Alumni Association. The purpose of the society is to support the University and the College by promoting Penn State in the community and by fostering alumni participation, interest and support in related activities and events. The society sponsors such events as Alumni Fellow-Awards Dinners, TV tailgates, a mentor program, and service projects for National Service Week. Membership in the Alumni Society is open to all those who are members of the Penn State Alumni Association. For more information, contact Associate Director of Alumni Relations, Laurie Dobrosky at (717) 948-6106, email [hbgalumni@psu.edu](mailto:hbgalumni@psu.edu). The Society also has a web site: <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/alumni-relations>

## Central PA ASPA Chapter

Penn State Harrisburg students are eligible for membership in the Central Pennsylvania chapter of the American Society for Public Administration ([ASPA](#)). The chapter brings together students, practitioners and academics, organizing a range of professional development activities. Additionally, the chapter sponsors several awards recognizing student achievement.

## General Information

### Academic Integrity

The Capital College academic integrity policy is consistent with the existing policies, practices, and procedures of The Pennsylvania State University as explained in the [University Faculty Senate Policy 49-20](#) and the [Academic Administrative Policies Manual, Section G-9](#).

In August 2000, the Council of Academic Deans stated that Penn State is an academic community that values integrity, promotes the highest levels of personal honesty, respect for the rights, property and dignity of others, and fosters an environment in which students and scholars can enjoy the fruits of their efforts. Academic integrity includes a commitment neither to engage in acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception, nor to tolerate such acts by other members of the community. The Deans agreed that the individual colleges will provide all faculty members and teaching assistants' information about appropriate ways to promote academic integrity and handle dishonesty cases.

Penn State Harrisburg faculty, academic administration, staff, and student body, share the values expressed by the Deans and believe that integrity is the cornerstone of all academic activities.

Faculty are expected to demand high standards of integrity, protect the rights of honest students, and insure that acts of dishonesty are deterred. The individual course instructor is responsible for providing students with a statement explaining the behaviors that are academically inappropriate for the particular course.

All students are expected to act with personal integrity in order to create and sustain an atmosphere where all can succeed through their own honest efforts. While it is expected that students will maintain the highest academic standards and submit only work they have produced honestly, others may violate the academic integrity policies. For further information on academic integrity, please visit the web site at <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/policy/academic-integrity-policy>

## Campus Outreach-Economic Development

- The Institute of State and Regional Affairs (ISRA) has been a vital force in Pennsylvania since it was established at Penn State Harrisburg in 1973. The primary role of ISRA is to further the University's public service mission by using Penn State's interdisciplinary resources and approaches in undertaking projects that serve the public interest.
  - [The Pennsylvania State Data Center](#) (PaSDC), established in 1981 by Executive Order of the Governor, is Pennsylvania's official source of population and economic statistics and services.
  - [The Center for Survey Research](#) (CSR) is Penn State Harrisburg's primary resource for public and private organizations, faculty, and students undertaking survey research.
  - [The Economic Development Research and Training Center](#) (EDRTC) has made available a range of community and economic development planning, research and training activities for practitioners and small businesses in Pennsylvania.
  - [The Center for Geographic Information Services](#) (CGIS) provides support for research, education, and outreach efforts in the use and analysis of spatial information.
- Continuing and Distance Education's primary responsibility is to engage individuals, businesses, and community organizations with the University's resources to enhance personal, professional, and economic development in a competitive environment. To accomplish this mission, Continuing Education focuses its effort on four key audiences: adult learners in credit programming, incumbent workers and their employers, youth, and communities.
- International Programs and External Relations supports and encourages all members of the Penn State community to pursue a global perspective in their education and in their workplace.

## School of Public Affairs Faculty

Upon admission to the program, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. One way to make academic life run smoother is by getting to know your Advisor. Your Advisor is likely to be your best resource in academic and career planning (**see page 32 of this program guide for answers to frequently asked questions about the MPA Program**).

To prevent problems, obtain approval in advance for anything you wish to do in our program that is out of the ordinary (transfer credits, non-public administrative electives, etc.). You will want to contact your Advisor to discuss your course selections before registering.

## School Director

**Patricia de Lancer Julnes, Professor of Public Administration**, earned her Ph.D. in public administration at Rutgers University. Her academic and professional expertise is in performance measurement, accountability, innovation in government, corruption in government, and citizen-driven governance. She has consulted with government and nonprofit organizations in the United States and abroad to develop effective performance management systems that help to improve the outcome of their programs. An award winning scholar, her articles have appeared in *Public Administration Review*, *Public Performance and Management Review*, *Evaluation*, and *Reforma y Democracia*, among other peer-reviewed journals. She is the lead author of the article, *Promoting the Utilization of Performance Measures in Public Organizations: An Empirical study of Factors Affecting Adoption and Implementation*, which was designated as one of *Public Administration Review*'s 75 most influential articles appearing in the journal since its inception in 1940.

She is the author of the book *Performance-Based Management Systems. Effective Implementation and Maintenance* (CRC Press), and lead co-editor of *Innovation In the Public And Nonprofit Sectors: A Public Solutions Handbook*, Routledge, *International Handbook of Practice-Based Performance Management* (Sage Publications), and *Performance Measurement: Building Theory, Supporting Practice* (M.E. Sharpe). She has served as managing editor of the *International Review of Public Administration* and has held numerous leadership roles in the American Society for Public Administration including serving on the national Council and as co-chair of the Center for Accountability and Performance. She was named one of Maryland's 2013 Top 100 Women by the Maryland Daily Record. She also received in 2013 the Officer's Cross of the Order of Isabelle the Catholic from the government of Spain for her work in promoting the relationships between the United States and Spain and for her work to improve the status of Hispanics in the United States.

## MPA Faculty Profiles

**Steven A. Peterson, Professor of Politics and Public Affairs** (Ph.D. Political Science, State University of New York at Buffalo). His research interests include political behavior, politics of the legal system, the linkage between biology and politics, and public policy areas (AIDS and education). He has authored or coauthored over 20 books and over 100 publications in professional journals and chapters in books. He has published articles in journals such as *Administration & Society*, *The Gerontologist*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Western Political Quarterly*, *Journal of Politics*, *Politics and the Life Sciences*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, *Political Psychology*, *Journal of Aging Studies*, *Women & Politics*, and so on. He has served as President of the New York State Political Science Association and the Northeastern Political Science Association, as well as the Pennsylvania Political Science Association. He has been an officer in the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences as well as Research Committee # 12 (Biology and Politics) of the International Political Science Association. He has served on editorial

boards for a number of journals, including *Women & Politics*, *Polity*, *Commonwealth*, and *Politics and the Life Sciences*.

**Jane Beckett-Camarata, Ph.D., MPA, Senior Lecturer**, specializes in operating and capital budgeting, financial reporting, and debt management. Her current research is in municipal bankruptcy. She was a recipient of a Lilly Foundation Scholar Award for the advancement of teaching excellence. She has taught government finance courses at three Russian universities, and was a Fulbright Scholar at Kharhiv National University in Ukraine where she taught Economic Development Finance. She has authored many articles and book chapters which have been published in the *Public Productivity and Management Review*, *Journal of Budgeting, Accounting and Financial Management*, *Municipal Finance Journal*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, *American Review of Public Administration*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Handbook of Public Sector Economics and Handbook of Globalization, Governance and Public Administration*. She was the recipient of the Baruch College, CUNY distinguished Municipal Leadership and Finance Award which funded her 2005 summer research on changes in New York City's pension fund assets during fiscal crisis. Dr. Beckett-Camarata is a former Chief Financial Officer in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where she managed operating and capital budgets, financial accounting and reporting, and revenue forecasting. She was instrumental in integrating the strategic plan into the budget and accounting system, and establishing and integrating financial performance measures. She received a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University (1998); Master of Public Administration from the American University (1989) and Bachelor of Science Degree in Finance from Syracuse University (1983).

**Göktuğ Morçöl, Professor of Public Policy and Administration**, areas of his research interests are metropolitan governance, with a particular focus on business improvement districts, complexity theory applications in public policy and policy analysis, and research methods. He has authored, edited, and co-edited seven books: *Challenges to Democratic Governance in Developing Countries* (Springer, 2014), *A Complexity Theory for Public Policy* (Routledge, 2012), *Business Improvement Districts: Research Theory and Controversies* (CRC Press, 2008), *Complexity and Policy Analysis: Tools and Methods for Designing Robust Policies in a Complex World* (ISCE Publishing, 2008), *Handbook of Decision Making* (CRC Press, 2007), *A New Mind for Policy Analysis: Toward a Post-Newtonian and Postpositivist Epistemology and Methodology* (Praeger, 2002), and *New Sciences for Public Administration and Policy: Connections and Reflections* (Chatelaine Press, 2000). His articles have appeared in journals such as *Public Administration Review*, *Administration and Society*, *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, *Policy Sciences*, *Public Administration Quarterly*, *Politics and Policy*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, and *Emergence*. He is the coordinator of the Ph.D. program in public administration.

**Bing Ran, Associate Professor of Public Administration**, researches the dynamic interactions between society's complex infrastructures and human behavior, focusing on topics such as innovation and creativity, organizational identity construction, knowledge

integration and management, leadership, social entrepreneurship, and the behavioral effects of the socio-technical interactions in traditional and virtual organizations. He is the editor of the book series *Contemporary Perspectives on Technological Innovation, Management and Policy* (IAP), the co-editor of the book series *Contemporary Perspectives on Human Capital and Development* (IAP), the associate editor of *Organizational Communication and Information Systems Division* (Academy of Management 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013). He is an active member of the Academy of Management (AOM) and the Administrative Science Association of Canada (ASAC). From 2001 to the present, he has been a frequent reviewer, presenter, session chair, and mentor for their annual conferences. He was the chair of the membership committee, Public and Non-profit Division, AOM, in 2012-2013; and the division editor, Organizational Theory Division, ASAC, in 2013 – 2014 (will be division coordinator in 2014 – 2015, and division chair in 2015 – 2016). He was the senator (2009 – 2011) at Penn State Harrisburg Faculty Senate, and currently serves as the Chair, the Strategic Planning Committee at Penn State Harrisburg Senate, and Co-Chair, Penn State Harrisburg Strategic Steering Committee (2011 – 2014). He also serves as the Program Coordinator of the Certificate Program in Public Sector Human Resource Management.

**Odd Stalebrink, Associate Professor of Public Administration**, is active in the Association for Budgeting and Financial Management; ASPA; the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management; and the European Accounting Association. He has consulting experience in areas of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Transportation Asset Management and has been a research associate at the Center for Transport Policy and Logistics at George Mason University. His service efforts have covered a broad range of activities, including, but not limited to, involvement in several continuing education workshops targeting state and local government officials; serve as president-elect of a state ASPA chapter; and served the academic community as a referee for a large number of peer-reviewed academic journals. He has also served on the Transportation Research Boards Task Force on Asset Management and has been Workshop Coordinator and Co-developer for programs of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments, the Virginia Department of Transportation Technology Transfer Center, the Maryland Technology Transfer Center, and the District of Columbia Department of Public Works Office of Transportation.

**Triparna Vasavada, Associate Professor of Public Administration**, has research interests in disaster management, nonprofit management, gender and leadership, and social network analysis. She has published in various national and international journals such as *Administration & Society*, *Public Administration Review* and *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. She has presented her work at numerous national and international conferences, including the Association for Research in Nonprofit and Voluntary Association (ARNOVA), Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), American Society of Public Administration (ASPA) and International Society of Third Sector Research (ISTR). As a Ford Foundation Fellow, she has worked as co-managing editor for a leading journal in women studies—'Gender

& Society'. She was assistant editor for Book News section in Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly News Letter. She has received numerous grants and awards including ARNOVA's emerging scholar award. She has served as session chair, panel coordinator, and a reviewer for various journals and conferences. She also serves as the Program Coordinator, Certificate Program in Nonprofit Administration, School of Public Affairs, Penn State Harrisburg.

**Glenn L. Silverstein, Lecturer in Public Administration**, is the recipient of the Dan Rich Prize for Difference for Delawareans and his areas of expertise are education policy, education leadership and decision making, public policy and human resource management. He has presented at the Pennsylvania Educational Research Association and published in *Public Performance & Management Review*, the *Encyclopedia of the City* and the *Journal of Urban Affairs*. Dr. Silverstein has the unique experience of having taught in every level of education from middle school to graduate school.

**Younhee Kim, Associate Professor of Public Administration**, has her research interests in the areas of public and performance management, focusing on performance measurement, public entrepreneurship, e-governance, information technology, and citizen participation. Her recent work has appeared in numerous journals, including *Administration & Society*, *International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, *Public Performance & Management Review*, *Public Money & Management*, and *Journal of Technology Transfer*. Dr. Kim has served as a managing editor of *International Journal of eGovernance and Networks*, a symposium editor of *Public Performance & Management Review* and *International Journal of Public Administration*, and an editorial board member of numerous academic journals and edited books. She is very active in service to the profession y being involved in national and international outreach as a treasurer, a member of various committees, and an advisory board member for the American Society for Public Administration and other professional associations in the U.S. and Korea.

**Michele Tantardini, Assistant Professor of Public Administration**, earned his Ph.D. in Public Affairs at Florida International University (Miami, FL) with a dissertation topic on the relationship between performance information use and organizational social capital. He earned his master degree in economics and management of public administration at Bocconi University (Milan, Italy). His professional experience started by working for the Treasury Department of the Italian Republic (Rome, Italy). He then started working as a young researcher both at the Scuola di Direzione Aziendale Bocconi School of Management and Bocconi University in Milan, Italy. His academic career has been focused on the management of public sector institutions and organizations, and the delivery of public services. His present research interests include public management, performance management, organizational theory and behavior, and human resource management.

## School of Public Affairs Faculty & Staff Directory

Patricia de Lancer Julnes  
School Director, Professor of Public Administration  
[PDD10@PSU.EDU](mailto:PDD10@PSU.EDU)

717-948-6058

### Staff

Jordyn McCrady  
Administrative Support Assistant, School of Public Affairs.  
[JAM5497@PSU.EDU](mailto:JAM5497@PSU.EDU)  
717-948-6058

### MPA Faculty

Jane Beckett-Camarata, Senior Lecturer of Public Administration (W131)  
[EJB27@PSU.EDU](mailto:EJB27@PSU.EDU)  
717-948-6206

Younhee Kim, Associate Professor of Public Administration (W157)  
[YZK46@PSU.EDU](mailto:YZK46@PSU.EDU)  
717-948-6649

Göktuğ Morçöl , Professor of Policy and Public Administration (W160)  
[GXM27@PSU.EDU](mailto:GXM27@PSU.EDU)  
717-948-6126

Bing Ran, Associate Professor of Public Administration (W160)  
[BUR12@PSU.EDU](mailto:BUR12@PSU.EDU)  
717-948-6057

Glenn Silverstein, Lecturer of Public Administration (W157)  
[GLS31@PSU.EDU](mailto:GLS31@PSU.EDU)  
717-948-6757

Odd Stalebrink, Associate Professor of Public Administration (W157)  
[OJS10@PSU.EDU](mailto:OJS10@PSU.EDU)  
717-948-6319

Michele Tantardini, Assistant Professor of Public Administration (W157)  
[MUT98@PSU.EDU](mailto:MUT98@PSU.EDU)  
717-948-6350



Triparna Vasavada, Associate Professor of Public Administration (W160)

[TBV1@PSU.EDU](mailto:TBV1@PSU.EDU)

717-948-6363

## Fax Number

School of Public Affairs

717-948-6320

## Course Descriptions

*Includes the course number followed by number of credits, description, and prerequisites if applicable*

**PADM 500 Public Organization and Management** (3) Development of basic concepts and issues in public administration; administrative theory and public policy processes.

**PADM 502 Governmental Fiscal Decision Making** (3) Nature, function, and technique of governmental budgeting viewed as mechanism for allocating resources among alternative public uses.

**PADM 503 (H ADM 503) Research Methods** (1-3) Examination of research methodologies relevant to administration, planning, and public policy.

**PADM 505 Human Resources in the Public and Nonprofit Sectors** (3) Concepts and approaches contributing to effective use of human resources in public and non-profit organizations; legal issues and requirements.

**PADM 507 Introduction to Public Policy Analysis** (3) Introduction to the analysis of public policy within its organizational and political contexts, including an emphasis on an economic perspective.

**PADM 510 (H ADM 510) Organizational Behavior** (3) Examination of concepts of human behavior in formal organizations, systems analysis, conceptual models, and decision processes.

**PADM 511 Organizational Change and Development** (3) Theory of organizational change and development; case analysis of applications in actual situations.

Prerequisite: [H ADM 510](#) or [PADM 510](#).

**PADM 512 Issues in Human Resources** (3) A survey of major human resource issues such as job stress, burnout, and the many forms of discrimination in organizations.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 505](#), and [H ADM 510](#) or [PADM 510](#)

**PADM 514 Public Organization and Managerial Consultation** (3) This course will review the theories, approaches, methods, and expected outcomes of organization and management consultation.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 500](#) or [H ADM 510](#) or [PADM 510](#)

**PADM 515 (MNGMT 515) Labor Management Relations** (3) Labor relations issues; collective bargaining agreement, negotiations, and administration; legal framework of collective bargaining; labor relations in larger social context.  
Prerequisite: admission to MBA-MSIS Program

**PADM 516 Strategic Planning** (3) A survey of strategic planning purposes, approaches and methods, and expected outcomes in small and large organizations.

**PADM 517 Nonprofit Organizations: History and Evolution** (3) A study of the history, development and current role of nonprofit organizations as a distinguishing feature of American society.

**PADM 518 Nonprofit Organizations: Management and Leadership** (3) A study of the theoretical and practical issues involved in management and leadership of nonprofit organizations.

**PADM 519 Nonprofit Organizations: Resource Development and Management** (3) Process by which nonprofit organizations assure that resources are obtained and used effectively and efficiently toward the achievement of objectives.

**PADM 522 Government Financial Management** (3) Theories and techniques of financial planning and control, with emphasis on their application in government and nonprofit agencies.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 502](#)

**PADM 523 Governmental and Nonprofit Accounting** (3) Accounting, reporting, and auditing principles and procedures for public sector agencies and nonprofit organizations.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 502](#)

**PADM 524 Administrative Law** (3) Statutory and judicial controls upon administrative discretion. Administration of rulemaking, rate setting, licensing, adjudication. Judicial review and citizen advocacy.

**PADM 532 Urban Government** (3) Administrative processes and policy problems associated with managing urban communities; political, intergovernmental, fiscal, structural, and analytical concepts in urban government.

**PADM 533 Local Planning Law and Administration** (3) Structure and function of local and regional government from perspective of local planning law and its administration.

**PADM 534 Managing Economic Development** (3) Theoretical and operational aspects of economic development emphasizing the role of local and regional government.

**PADM 535 Policy Analysis and Planning** (3) The course will cover the theoretical issues in and basic methods of policy analysis and planning (prospective policy analysis).

Prerequisite: [PADM 503](#)

**PADM 550 Policy and Program Evaluation** (3) The course will cover the theoretical issues in and basic methods of policy and program evaluation (retrospective policy analysis).

Prerequisite: [PADM 503](#)

**PADM 556 State Government Administration** (3) Study of structures, systems, processes, problems, and issues affecting state government administration; case studies, field observations, and research.

**PADM 557 Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations** (3) Study of the impact of a federal system of government on the administration of public functions. National-state-local dimensions.

**PADM 558 Legislative Processes** (3) Legislatures in American government, emphasizing comparative state legislatures: constitutional patterns; organization, administration; interaction with bureaucracy, constituencies, and organized interests.

**PADM 570 Scope and Methods of Public Administration** (3) Examination of theoretical approaches to public administration and the role of theory in the field.

Prerequisite: [PADM 500](#)

**PADM 571 Seminar in Organizational Theory** (3) Selected theories of organizations and their applications to the study of public organizations.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 510](#) or [PADM 570](#)

**PADM 573 Research and Theory in Public Policy and Governance** (3) An introduction to policy analysis, the stages of the policy process, key theoretical issues, and applications to real world problems.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 570](#) or permission of program

**PADM 574 Research and Theory in Public Management** (3) Theoretical and empirical bases for selected functions of public managers.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 570](#)

**PADM 575 Advanced Research Design** (3) Experimental, quasi-experimental, survey, aggregate, and other research designs applied to organizational, managerial, and policy analysis research problems.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 503](#)

**PADM 576 Multivariate Statistical Methods** (3) Multivariate statistical methods, with special emphasis on their use in organizational, managerial, and policy analysis research settings.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 575](#)

**PADM 579 Public Leadership and Ethics** (3) Examination of theory and research in leadership and public ethics, and their application to the field of Public Management.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 570](#)

**PADM 590 Colloquium** (1-3) Continuing seminars which consist of a series of individual lectures by faculty, students, or outside speakers.

**PADM 591 Readings in Public Administration** (3) Directed readings in selected areas of public administration.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 570](#) and permission of program

**PADM 594 Research Topics** (3) Supervised student activities on research projects identified on an individual or small-group basis.  
Prerequisite: [PADM 503](#)

**PADM 595 Internship** (3) Supervised off-campus, nongroup instruction, including field experiences, practicums, or internships. Written and oral critique of activity required. Prerequisite: **PADM 503**

**PADM 596 Individual Studies** (1-9) Creative projects, including nonthesis research, that are supervised on an individual basis and which fall outside the scope of formal courses.

**PADM 597 Special Topics** (1-9) Formal courses given on a topical or special interest subject which may be offered infrequently; several different topics may be taught in one year or term.

**PADM 600 Thesis Research** (1-15) No description.

**PADM 497 Special Topics** (1-9) Formal courses given infrequently to explore, in depth, a comparatively narrow subject that may be topical or of special interest.

**PADM 897 Special Topics** (1-9) Formal courses given on a topical or special interest subject which may be offered infrequently; several different topics may be taught in one year or term.

MMPA

Matriculation Policies and Advising Form



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
MASTERS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM
COURSE REQUIREMENT CHECK LIST

Name \_\_\_\_\_

REQUIRED COURSES (6) (Indicate Semester taken)

- \_\_\_ PADM 500 Public Organization and Management
\_\_\_ PADM 502 Governmental Fiscal Decision Making
\_\_\_ PADM 503 Research Methods \_\_\_ \*SARI Program/CITI Online Training
\_\_\_ PADM 505 Human Resources in the Public and Nonprofit Sectors
\_\_\_ PADM 507 Introduction to Public Policy Analysis (previously 506)
\_\_\_ PADM 510 Organizational Behavior

ELECTIVE COURSES (5) Two of these can be 400-level courses. The other three must be 500-level and above.
Courses outside of PADM must get advisor approval.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

MASTERS PROJECT/CAPSTONE COURSE (3 CREDITS)

- \_\_\_ PADM 594 (To be taken during the last semester in the program)

INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENT (3 CREDITS)

- \_\_\_ Waived
\_\_\_ PADM 595

Total Credits for MPA:
Waived Internship: 36 credits
Required Internship: 39 credits

## Frequently Asked Questions about the MPA Program

### **1. Must I take the GRE? What are the admission requirements?**

If you have a successful undergraduate record with a GPA of 3.0 or better (either as the cumulative GPA or for the last 60 hours of relevant course work), you do not have to take the GRE. However, GRE scores are required for some forms of financial aid, such as graduate assistantships, fellowships, etc. There is no fixed minimum score needed on the GRE. The Admissions Committee is looking for evidence that you are likely to be successful in a graduate program. A strong undergraduate transcript, along with strong letters of recommendation and statement of purpose, provides such evidence.

### **2. Will any of the credits count toward my degree if I am later admitted?**

The graduate courses will count toward your MPA degree if you are admitted to the program. A student can take up to 15 credits of graduate courses at Penn State as a non-degree student and have them count toward a degree. Students may also petition for the transfer of up to 10 graduate credits from an accredited university. These credits may not have been counted towards an earned degree or certificate. Pre-admission screening of transfer credits is not possible.

### **3. When and where are classes delivered?**

Classes are offered in residence at Penn State Harrisburg as well as online through World Campus. All residential Penn State Harrisburg graduate classes are scheduled in the evening. Not all courses are offered on each campus every semester; please consult the course schedules for each campus.

### **4. How often is each course offered?**

All core courses are scheduled at least once every academic year, either in residence or online. Classes are also sometimes scheduled in the summer. Elective courses are given at most once a year, some are given once every three semesters, and some are given once every two years.

### **5. How often does each class meet?**

Residential classes meet one night per week (Monday-Thursday) from 6:00 – 8:45 p.m. in spring and fall. In summer session, classes meet two nights a week. Online courses follow Penn State's semester schedule, with weekly lessons. All online courses are asynchronous. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in class activities throughout the week.

### **6. I travel a lot, what happens if I miss a class?**

If you know ahead of time that you are going to be traveling, inform your instructor before you travel. If you will miss several classes in a given semester, meet with the instructor to see whether he or she would advise that you not take the course in that particular semester.

### **7. How many courses should I take in a semester?**

People who work full-time typically take one course or two courses at most in a semester. We advise students to start with just one course to see how it fits into their schedules. If they think they still have time to devote to a second course, then they can try two courses in a later semester. Full-time students typically take 3 courses per semester.

### **7. If I am a part-time student, how long will it take to finish the program?**

We encourage part-time students to take three to five courses per year, including summers. At this rate a student will take three to four years to complete the program. Taking one course per semester and no summer courses will mean six years to completion.

### **8. If I am a full-time student, how long will it take?**

Full-time students typically take 9-12 credits per semester and complete the program within 18 months to 2 years.

### **9. I'd like to take two courses a semester and two in the summer. How does that sound?**

Several of our students have taken a kind of fast track. A key consideration is whether your other responsibilities will allow you to spend the needed time on two courses in a semester.

### **10. I can take only one course a semester, and I can't take any summer courses because my spouse travels a lot. I don't want to spend forever getting a master's degree. What can I do to finish in two to three years?**

Penn State MPA students enjoy the flexibility of taking courses at either our Harrisburg campus or through World Campus. Online courses may offer you the ability to complete your degree in a timely manner.

### **11. Do you have any students who take six or seven years to complete the program?**

Some of our students do take six or seven years to complete the program. Because of other responsibilities--a change in a job, a promotion, or a family event--they sometimes have to discontinue their studies for a semester or two.

### **12. Who teaches the courses?**

Our regular, full-time public administration faculty teach most of our courses. We also invite well-prepared, practicing professionals to teach courses that require particular expertise outside faculty areas, or occasionally when regular faculty may not be available to teach a particular course.

### **13. What about papers and tests, etc. in the courses?**

Most courses require extensive papers, often more than one. Many have tests which may be in-class or out-of-class, open-book or closed-book. The process of testing



varies considerably from course to course, but you can anticipate that a course will require critical, thoughtful writing.

**14. Do you give credit for life experience?**

Penn State does not give graduate credit for life experience.

**15. How many credits are required for the program?**

The program requires 39 credits which includes a 3-credit internship. Students who have had at least two years of relevant professional experience are not required to take the internship, so the program for them requires just 36 credits.

**16. Is there a capstone course?**

Yes. The capstone course in PADM 594 which is offered in residence and on-line each semester, but not typically during the summer.

**17. How much flexibility is there in taking courses?**

The program requires six core courses, five elective courses, and the capstone course.

**18. Can I take courses outside the MPA program?**

With the approval of your Advisor, you may take some elective courses outside the MPA program.

**19. Is there a particular order in which I should be taking courses within the MPA program?**

All students are required to take PADM 500 first and PADM 594 last. It is recommended that you take core courses first. Please refer to the Course Road Map and course checklist to plan and track your progress (both are included with your welcome email from Dr. Peterson).

**20. May I take 400-level courses?**

The MPA program allows up to six credits at the 400-level, with advisor approval, but graduate courses are preferred.

**21. I took two graduate courses at a university before I moved here. Can I get credit for them?**

A maximum of 10 credits of graduate work done at an accredited institution may be applied toward the requirements for the master's degree, with the approval of your Advisor, and subject to these limitations: 1) work must have been completed within five years prior to the date of first degree registration at Penn State, 2) must be of at least B quality, and 3) must appear on an official graduate transcript.

**22. It's been 10 years since I took any course at all, and I am apprehensive about course work.**

We recognize that students may be concerned about returning to the discipline of studying and preparing papers. Many of our students have been away from courses for 10 years or more. After an initial adjustment period, most of them do quite well.

**23. I am not a young student anymore, I feel funny in with all these young people.**  
Not all of our students are what you might call young people. The average age is about 29 years. Many of our students are well into their 30s and 40s and some beyond. The experience that these people bring to the courses actually adds to the program quite substantially.

**24. Should I plan on taking the required courses in order and then take the electives?**

We recommend that you start with PADM 500 and PADM 510. After that it is all right to take a mixture of required courses and electives. Be sure to be attentive to prerequisites.

**25. Tell me about the capstone course.**

PADM 594 is the capstone course for Master's degree students in the MPA program. The course builds on the knowledge components and skills students have gained in prior courses. The purpose of PADM 594 is to enhance additional competencies in problem identification and problem solving, professional writing and oral presentation, and group research and presentation skills.

**26. When should I take PADM 594?**

A good time would be after you have completed 24 to 30 credits, including PADM 503.

**27. I'm a World Campus student. How do I register?**

You can enroll through LionPATH (<http://launch.lionpath.psu.edu/>).

**28. I'm a World Campus student. How do I drop a course?**

You can drop courses through LionPATH (<http://launch.lionpath.psu.edu/>).

**29. Will I get a refund if I drop a course?**

<http://student.worldcampus.psu.edu/courses/dropping-a-course#considerations>

### Important Financial Considerations

Changing your overall number of credits after your course begins can have financial implications. When you drop a course and change your overall number of credits during the drop/add period or the late drop period, it can impact your tuition, fees, student aid, and refunds. Additionally, during the late drop period, the University assesses a \$6 per course processing fee for any course dropped or added.

During the pre-semester period, you can add and drop courses as many times as needed to create a suitable schedule without financial implications.

After classes begin, if you drop and then add the same number of credits you still may be assessed a tuition penalty. Only if you drop and add the same number of credits on the same day before midnight Eastern Time, will you receive \$0 in tuition adjustments.

Bursar Office: Monday-Friday 8a-5p EST Phone:814.863.8300  
Email: bfo@outreach.psu.edu

### **30. The semester hasn't started yet, how do I drop a course or change my Schedule?**

#### Course Drop Periods

Penn State maintains three periods relating to course drops: the pre-semester period, the drop/add period, and the late drop period. At any time you can discuss dropping a course with your Academic Adviser. The drop periods are always available on the academic calendar: [http://registrar.psu.edu/academic\\_calendar/calendar\\_](http://registrar.psu.edu/academic_calendar/calendar_)

#### Pre-Semester Drop Period

The pre-semester period for dropping a course begins on the first day of scheduling and ends the day before the semester starts. Students use the same Registration form to make changes to their schedule. Course registration form

### **31. I am taking too many courses and need a withdrawal form for one of them:**

Withdrawal will terminate enrollment in all instruction for current and future semesters. This scenario is a Course Drop. See #2 above. Many people confuse Withdrawal with Drop.

### **32. I have a change in schedule with my work or family and need to take a semester off but plan to return very soon (this prior to semester starting):**

You can simply refrain from registering for classes and you will become inactive. To start taking classes again, submit a Resume Study form.

<http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/forms-and-documents/ges-owned-forms-and-documents/reschg2pdf/>

### **33. I have a major crisis or change in my personal-professional-family life and must withdraw from the program. I am unsure if I will return:**

The Withdrawal Process for Graduate Students

The process of a withdrawal is defined as dropping all registered courses for the current semester or session. Officially withdrawing from the university will also cause a cancellation of scheduled and registered courses for any enrollment- readmission is not necessary.

Do not confuse withdrawal with

- Dropping courses – dropping SOME but not all of your currently enrolled courses.
- Not Returning next semester - finishing the current semester with no definite plans to return to the Penn State.
- Retroactive Withdrawal – initiating the withdrawal process after the last day of classes.

## When a Student May Withdraw

A withdrawal may be processed beginning with the first day of classes and through the last day of classes (before the final exam period begins). If the semester has not begun and you have decided that you will not be attending the University, you should cancel your registration. If the final exam period has begun, you will need to initiate a retroactive withdrawal request.

## What to Consider before Initiating the Withdrawal Process

A withdraw will delay normal degree progress, may affect academic programming and may have financial implications for students with loans or receiving assistantship, etc. Therefore, it is suggested that a degree seeking student contact his-her academic advisor to discuss alternatives to withdrawing before proceeding.

Indicating “Spring”, “Fall” or “Summer” as a effected semester on the withdrawal form will result in the student’s status changing to non-degree status (regardless of whether that student was attending as a degree student or a non-degree student) for the following and future semester. to return to degree status, a student who withdraws must seek readmission to the graduate degree program by submitting a complete Resume Study-Change of Graduate Degree or Major Form to Graduate Enrollment Service.

Indicating “Summer-only” as the effective semester on the withdrawal form will retain all courses a student as scheduled or registered for the upcoming fall semester.

Readmission is not required following a “summer-only” withdrawal.

Ph.D. candidates who have passed the comprehensive examination must registered continuously for each fall and spring semester (beginning with the first semester after passing the comprehensive examination and ending with the passing of the final oral defense) in order to comply with the Graduate School Policy of continuous registration.

## How to Withdraw

Graduate students must initiate a withdrawal by submitting a Withdrawal Form.

- Students attending other campuses should submit withdrawal form to their respective campus Registration’s office.

### Retroactive Withdrawal Requests

If the final exam period for the current semester has begun, or if you are seeking to withdraw from a previous semester, you will need to initiate a retroactive withdrawal request. **\*\*Please make the request as early as possible.\*\*** Follow the appropriate instructions below to do so.

Degree students – Contact your academic advisor of study to discuss the possibility of petitioning the office of Graduate Enrollment Services for a retroactive withdrawal.

Graduate Enrollment Services requires the following documentation in order to consider the request:

- A complete Withdrawal Form. Complete this online and print:  
[http://registrar.psu.edu/student\\_forms/withdrawal\\_form.cfm](http://registrar.psu.edu/student_forms/withdrawal_form.cfm)

- Strong, documentation justification from the department head-graduate officer supporting the request for retroactive withdrawal.
- Supporting documentation from each instructor of the course(s) from which you are withdrawing.
- The graduate program staff will staple this documentation together and send it to the office of Graduate Enrollment Services for consideration.

### **34. I'm a Harrisburg - Residential student, how do I register for courses or drop courses?**

First semester students should work with their Academic Advisor and/or or consult Roadmap, register via LionPATH. <http://launch.lionpath.psu.edu/>

Students drop courses through LionPATH and should also submit their intent to graduate early in the first month of their last semester. All students should consult with the Bursar's office prior to dropping a course to verify the financial implications with regard to financial aid and/or percentage of refund.

<http://harrisburg.psu.edu/bursar> [hgbursar@psu.edu](mailto:hgbursar@psu.edu)

Monday – Friday 8a-5 717.948.6009 This is especially critical for International Students!

### **35. I'd like to request to transfer in Graduate credits from another institution.**

Students must submit a request to the Graduate School. Not all credits will be considered. Transfer credits will only be reviewed once the student has a semester record-after their first completed semester PSU. This link is the helpful to Graduate students with regard to Transfer Credits, the rules pertaining to Transfer Credits and the policy of trimester and quarter credits vs. semester credits:

[www.gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/transfer-credits/](http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/transfer-credits/)

#### Transfer of Credits from an External Institution

- A maximum of 9 credits of high-quality graduate work done at a regionally accredited U.S institution or an officially recognized degree-granting international institution may be applied towards the requirements for a master's or doctoral degree. However, credits earned to complete a previous master's degree, whether at Penn State or elsewhere, may not be applied to a second master's or doctoral degree at Penn State.
- Approval to any transferred credits towards a degree program must be granted by the student's academic advisor, program head or graduate officer, and the Graduate School.
- Transfer credits must meet the following criteria:
  - Must have been eared at a regionally accredited U.S. institution or an officially recognized degree- granting international institution;
  - Must be of "A" or "B" grade value ("B"-grades are not acceptable; pass-fail grades are not transferable unless substantiated by the former institution as having at least "B" quality); must appear on an official graduate transcript;
  - Must be earned within five years prior to the date of registration to a degree program at Penn State.

- If transferring credits from a university-college that is on quarter hours, you must convert the quarter hours to semester hours. In order to convert quarter hours to equivalent semester hours credit, multiple the number of quarter hours by two thirds.

**36. Can you look at my transcripts and see if I have taken all the core courses?**

Please refer to the MPA course checklist that you have received with your offer letter. If you do not have the copy of the course checklist, please email Ms. Jordyn McCrady at jam5497@psu.edu. Your advisor can also help you determine if you have met the program requirements.

**37. I am interested in Financial Aid, who should I contact?**

Students should contact the World Campus Bursar's office. The MPA program is not in any way affiliated with tuition payments, aid applications or disbursement, financial holds on account or tuition refunds.

Bursar office: Monday-Friday 8a-5p EST Phone: 814.863.8300

Email: bfo@outreach.psu.edu

Fax: 814.863.1385

**38. When will I receive my tuition bill?**

Bursar office: Monday-Friday 8a-5p EST Phone: 814.863.8300

Email: bfo@outreach.psu.edu

Fax: 814.863.1385

**39. How long do I have to pay my tuition bill?**

Bursar office: Monday-Friday 8a-5p EST Phone: 814.863.8300

Email: bfo@outreach.psu.edu

Fax: 814.863.1385

**40. Is there a particular order in which I should be taking courses within the MPA program?**

All students are required to take PADM 500 first and PADM 594 last. It is recommended that you take core courses first. Please refer to the Course Road Map and course checklist to plan and track your progress (both are included with your welcome email from Dr. Peterson).