

# LSU MPA Student Handbook

## I. Guidelines for Pursuing the MPA Degree

### A. Program Goals

The Master of Public Administration prepares students to work in government, nonprofit organizations, and private entities that deal with governmental agencies and public entities and public policy issues. It is a 36-hour program that includes 27 hours of core courses and nine hours of electives. Classes on both public policy and public management are offered.

Core courses include studies in economics, budgeting, finance, organizational behavior, data analytics, and human resource management. Additionally, students link coursework to real-world experience through an internship. Students already working in public service will complete a practicum through their employer. Pre-service students will find and complete an internship.

### B. Admission

1. [LSU Graduate School Admissions Requirements](#) – LSU Graduate School regular admission requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, a 3.0 GPA on all undergraduate work, and a resume with a complete chronological outline. Students who do not qualify for regular admission may qualify for probationary or provisional admission.
2. [Department of Public Administration Admissions Requirements](#) –

The MPA Program evaluates applicants based on the following items:

- Undergraduate academic performance
- GRE scores
- Three letters of recommendation
- Statement of purpose
- Work experience
- Activities indicating an interest in public management/public policy
- Other experiences that may indicate the ability to complete a professional program

### C. Transfer of Credit

1. Three hours of elective credit can be transferred into the MPA program.
2. Core curriculum cannot be transferred into the MPA program.
3. Non-matriculating students can transfer in up to 12 PADM courses (with approval from graduate advisor and program director).
4. [LSU Catalog – Transfer of Credit](#)

### D. Registration

1. Specific registration dates for each semester or summer term are listed on the LSU academic calendar. Registration procedures are published in the semester schedule of classes at the website of the University Registrar.
2. [How to schedule & drop classes](#)
3. [How to pay fee bill](#)
4. How to complete registration
  - Go to MyLSU
  - Fee bill

- Registration services
  - View fee bill
  - Pay fees, if needed or if paid fees with a ZERO balance
  - Click “Complete Registration” button
- E. [Time limitation to complete the degree](#) – The MPA must be completed within five years from entrance into the program. Details of this requirement are available in the current catalog for the LSU Graduate School.
- F. [Minimum GPA Requirements](#) – The minimum GPA that is required for students to maintain good academic standing in the MPA program is a 3.0. A student whose GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on [probation](#). A student whose GPA falls below a 2.75 may be dismissed from the LSU Graduate School and from the MPA program.
- G. [Scholastic Reinstatement](#)- Scholastic reinstatement is a process that allows graduate students who have been academically dismissed from LSU to become eligible for readmission and reenrollment. In order to be considered for reinstatement, you must meet eligibility criteria.
- H. [LSU Graduate School Forms](#) – Additional graduate forms can be found here.

## II. MPA Program Requirements

- A. The MPA program is a 36-hour program that includes 27 hours of core courses and nine hours of electives. A required practicum is included in the core coursework.
- B. Core courses
1. **PADM 7910 Public Administration Theory and Practice (3)** – Focuses on contents and boundaries of public administration as discipline. Topics include historical development of public administration as a field of study; organizational theory; professional ethics; policy development; management techniques to enhance productivity and performance; leadership; diversity; and other relevant issues for public managers. Case studies are intensively used.
  2. **PADM 7912 Public Human Resource Management (3)** - Explores human resource policy, including procedures and principles of personnel administration; traditional aspects of personnel administration including recruiting, job classification, evaluation, and compensation and dynamic topics include workforce diversity, drug abuse, whistle blowing, sexual discrimination, labor relations and other relevant issues.
  3. **PADM 7009 Data Analytics for Public Administration I (3)** - Introduces students to the development of a research question and the procedures of using empirical observations and data, describing the practical and technical issues of sampling, surveying, measurement, research design, analysis, and preparation of research reports.
  4. **PADM 7914 Public Budgeting and Financial Management (3)** - Introduction to public budgeting; study of budget techniques; importance of budgeting in policymaking; and understanding the budget process.
  5. **PADM 7902 Seminar in Public Policy (3)** - Policymaking and administration in the American political system with an emphasis on the institutions of governance including their constitutional foundations; the political process of formulating, implementing, and evaluating public policy; and the public-private, intergovernmental, and international dynamics of policy.
  6. **PADM 5600 Microeconomic Theory for Policy Analysis (3)** - *Open only to students in the MPA program or by consent of instructor.* Concepts and analytical tools of microeconomics; their relevance for decision and policy making in public and nonprofit sectors; theories of demand, production, cost, market structures and distribution; analysis of economic problems and policies, efficiency criteria, social impacts and limitations of the market system.
  7. **PADM 7010 Data Analytics for Public Administration II (3)** - *Prereq.: PADM 7009.* *Open only to students in the MPA program.* Descriptive measures for populations and samples; basic probability theory; distributions of discrete and continuous random variables; hypothesis testing and estimation for means,

variances, and proportions; measures of association; regression analysis; index numbers; applications in public administration and policy evaluation.

8. **PADM 7911 Organizational Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (3)** - Analyzing elements of effective organizational functioning in the public and nonprofit sectors, and the development of diagnostic skills to improve performance; incorporates organizational behavior and theory in the study of achieving effectiveness, efficiency and growth.
9. **PADM 7852 MPA Practicum (1)** - *Prereq.: PADM 7009, PADM 5600, PADM 7902, PADM 7910, PADM 7912, PADM 7914, PADM 7010, PADM 7911.* MPA Practicum is required of all MPA students. Enrollees will have an approved internship or other relevant position. Assignments will be designed around the work of the position and include letters of appointment from an employer.
10. **PADM 7901 MPA Capstone (2)** – *Prereq.: PADM 7009, PADM 5600, PADM 7902, PADM 7910, PADM 7912, PADM 7914, PADM 7010, PADM 7911, PADM 7852.* Enrollment by permission of the department. The MPA Capstone course covers major components of public administration through guest lectures. The areas include budgeting, policy, management, organizational behavior, and economics. The course is taken at the conclusion of a student’s path to the MPA. A final exam will be comprehensive.

#### C. Electives

1. Nine hours of electives are required for MPA students. Electives are selected with the guidance of program faculty. The Department of Public Administration offers a variety of electives (PADM courses). Students who wish to pursue their electives in other departments must have the elective course approved by the Department of Public Administration. The elective approval form must be submitted prior to registration and be approved.
2. Students who wish to pursue independent research under supervision of a research faculty member in the department may apply for an Independent Study (PADM 7800). The Independent Study form must be approved by the chair of the department.
3. At least one-half of the minimum required credit in the student’s master’s program, whether thesis or non-thesis, must be in courses [at or above the 7000-level](#).

D. [MPA / JD requirements](#) – The Department of Public Administration offers a joint program with the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center for students to complete an MPA and a JD in a four-year program. Students interested in this joint program should meet with a Department of Public Administration advisor to establish an academic plan.

E. Recommended Schedules – The MPA is offered to both full-time and part-time enrollees. The recommended schedules for students are outlined below. **It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the student fulfills all course requirements.**

1. [Full-Time MPA Recommended Schedule](#)
2. [Part-Time MPA Recommended Schedule](#)

### III. Practicum

- A. PADM 7852 MPA Practicum – The MPA practicum is required of all MPA students. Enrollees will have an approved internship or other relevant position. Assignments will be designed around the work of the position and include letters of appointment from an employer.
- B. Students will link coursework to real world experience through a practicum. If you are currently working in the public sector, you'll complete the practicum coursework using your current job. Pre-service students will acquire and complete an internship.
- C. Pre-requisites: MPA students must have completed PADM 7009, PADM 7010, PADM 5600, PADM 7902, PADM 7910, PADM 7911, PADM 7912, and PADM 7914 before enrolling in PADM 7852.
- D. Application and approval
  1. Complete the [Practicum approval form](#).
  2. Provide letter from employer or internship offer letter.
  3. Provide position description, including description of duties.

## IV. Exit Exam

- A. In addition, each student will be given a comprehensive examination during their enrollment in the MPA Capstone (PADM 7901—see course list above). The comprehensive examination is evaluated by the professor of the MPA Capstone and two other faculty members.
- B. To qualify for taking the comprehensive examination, a student must have completed *all* of the required, core courses for the MPA degree. If a student follows the recommended schedule for both full-time and part-time students, then the comprehensive exam is taken in the semester of graduation alongside elective courses.

## V. Financial Assistance

- A. Graduate Assistantships
  1. Graduate assistantships within the Department of Public Administration are available to MPA students. Fill out the Department of Public Administration application form to apply.
  2. Graduate assistantships outside of MPA that are available to students are announced by the LSU Graduate School (see LSU Graduate School weekly announcements).
  3. Graduate assistants are contractually required to devote full time to their graduate programs and to the responsibilities of their graduate assistantships. A GA may accept additional employment only with the approval of the chair or graduate advisor of the student's department and the Dean of the LSU Graduate School. Please see [Policy Statement 21](#) for details about the responsibilities of a graduate assistant.
- B. Conference Travel Support
  1. The department offers a limited number of travel awards to students who attend widely recognized academic conferences to present research works. Each student can receive a maximum of \$500 per academic year to cover conference and travel-related costs, such as registration fee, airfare, lodging, and food.
  2. Award eligibility:
    - i. Submit the [PA Conference Travel Support form](#) .
    - ii. Submit a formal letter or email to prove the acceptance of the conference proposal.
    - iii. Complete the conference paper and present the work to the department faculty before the conference.
    - iv. Submit all the receipts and documents for reimbursement after the conference.
  3. Students are encouraged to apply conference-sponsored financial aid such as registration fee waiver or discount, scholarships, fellowships, and travel stipends. LSU also provides travel awards to qualified graduate students
  4. [Graduate Student Association Travel Award](#)
- C. Campus-wide financial aid opportunities can be found on the [LSU Financial Aid & Scholarships website](#) .
- D. Campus-wide scholarships can be found at [lsu.academicworks.com](http://lsu.academicworks.com) .

## VI. Activities, Awards and Honors

- A. Conferences and Professional Organizations – There are many opportunities for students to become involved in professional organizations affiliated with public affairs and administration programs. For students who are interested, please discuss these opportunities with an advisor or faculty member. Some of the organizations include the following:
  1. [American Society for Public Administration \(ASPA\)](#) – The American Society for Public Administration serves as the bridge between public administration scholarship and practitioners in the field. ASPA hosts an annual meeting in the spring and offers many opportunities to students for presenting their research, including the ASPA Founders' Fellows, which is open to graduate students and professionals in the first three years of their public service career.
  2. [Southeastern Conference for Public Administration \(SECoPA\)](#) - The Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA) is the gathering place of ideas for public service practitioners, researchers, and students in a ten-state region. The conference offers attendees the opportunity to

engage in scholarly discourse, discover the latest innovations in the field, share ideas from practitioners in the field, and network with other public service administrators across the region.

3. [International City/County Management Association](#) – ICMA formed in 1914 and is one of the oldest governmental management associations in the country. They host an annual meeting usually in the fall. It is one of the largest gatherings of local government officials each year.

#### B. Department Activities and Organizations

1. Public Administration Student Association (PASA) is a professional organization for students in the MPA program. PASA supports the department's work to prepare students for the working world by providing professional development, career counseling, and social activities for MPA students. The organization regularly organizes networking events where students and alumni can interact with senior-level public administrators and political leaders. PASA elects its officers annually. Any MPA student who has at least a 3.0 GPA and is in good standing with the university is eligible to run for office. For more information on PASA: e-mail [pasa.lsu@gmail.com](mailto:pasa.lsu@gmail.com) or follow the group on Facebook (@PASALSU).
2. Pi Alpha Alpha is the global honor society for public affairs and administration. There are more than 160 chapters located around the world at NASPAA member schools. Pi Alpha Alpha is run by NASPAA. The purpose of Pi Alpha Alpha is to encourage and recognize outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in public affairs and administration. Its objectives, such as fostering integrity, professionalism, and effective performance, and promoting the advancement of quality education and practice of the art and science of public affairs and administration. PAA membership identifies those with the highest performance levels in educational programs preparing them for public service careers. MPA graduates who excel in their scholarship and demonstrate a commitment to public service can be nominated to join Pi Alpha Alpha by members of the department faculty.
3. Department Awards
  - i. **MPA Alumni of the Year** is given annually to an alumnus of the LSU MPA program who has demonstrated outstanding service and leadership in the public sector and in his or her community.
  - ii. **Astrid Merget Award** is awarded annually to an MPA student who demonstrates a dedication to public service, citizenship, and community engagement.
  - iii. **David B. Johnson Award** is awarded annually to an MPA student in recognition of academic achievement for those entering the public sector, an inquiring mind about public policy issues, and a commitment to improving public management/policy.

## VII. Student Advisements

Students are responsible for scheduling their own classes, ensuring they meet all prerequisites, and meeting all the requirements set by the Department of Public Administration and the LSU Graduate School necessary to graduate. The Department of Public Administration offers courses in accordance with the schedules for full-time and part-time degree paths (see II(E) above). Deviations from these degree paths could result in a delay in graduation. It is strongly recommended that students follow the suggested schedules. Accommodations for students who deviate from the degree paths are rarely made.

Students are encouraged to seek advice on their schedules from the program manager or graduate advisor of the department. You can schedule a meeting by emailing [pa@lsu.edu](mailto:pa@lsu.edu).

## VIII. Campus resources

- A. [LSU Parking & Transportation Services](#)
  1. [How to purchase a parking permit](#)
  2. [Student Parking Permits](#)
  3. [Tiger Trails](#)
- B. Reserve a room
  1. [Reserve a room in the Business Education Complex](#)
  2. [Reserve a room on LSU's campus](#)

- C. Maps
  - 1. [Business Education Complex Map](#)
  - 2. [LSU Map](#)
- D. Get a Student ID ([Tiger Card](#))
- E. [Setup your MyLSU Account](#)