



Master of Public Administration & Related Degree Programs

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2022-2023



Table of Contents

Master of Public Administration.....	1
Welcome Message from MPA Coordinator	4
Guidelines for Pursuing the MPA Degree.....	5
Purpose, Mission Statement, Public Service Values, and MPA Competencies	5
Expected Course Load	6
Time Required to Complete the MPA Program	6
NAU Email	6
Advising	6
Readmission/Reentry	6
Leave of Absence Policy	6
Students seeking to take a semester off from their degree program, must complete a leave of absence form, submitting to the MPA Coordinator before the start of a given semester using this form.....	6
Transfer Credit	6
Graduation	6
In order to graduate from a certificate or MPA program, students must follow policies and procedures listed here. A student’s program of study must be completed at least one full semester prior to graduation, signed by MPA coordinator and Department chair. Once signatures are obtained, upload your program of study in Louie.....	6
Tuition & Fees	6
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)	7
MPA Degree Requirements	7
MPA Core Coursework (21 Credits)	7
MPA Core Course Descriptions	8
Electives (12 units required)	8
Length of Classes	9
MPA Capstone	9
Sample Sequence of Classes	9
Grade Point Average	10
Independent Study Requirements	10
Provisional Acceptance	10
Academic Probation	10
Incompletes and Withdrawals	10
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS RELATED TO MPA	10
Graduate Certificate in Public Management	11
Indigenous and Tribal Nation-Building Graduate Certificate	11

ACADEMIC ADVISING.....	11
MPA Advisory Council.....	11
Financial Assistance	11
ACADEMIC STANDARDS	12
Academic Integrity Policy	12
Student Code of Conduct.....	12
Grading System.....	12
Other University Policies can be found through the University Policy Library.....	12
OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION.....	12
Enroll in Classes via “LOUIE”: Student Information System used to Enroll, Make a Payment, and line up your Textbooks.....	12
Textbooks: Many program classes still use hard copy texts, which you can purchase through	12
Tools and Resources: Take advantage of these Tools and Resources to help ensure academic success.	13
Public Administration Faculty within PIA	13

Welcome Message from MPA Coordinator

Welcome to the Department of Politics and International Affairs (PIA) Master of Public Administration Program. We offer a learning space with cutting edge training and curriculum for the next generation of students interested in public service. We are one of the few accredited Master of Public Administration (MPA) programs in Arizona. We are also proud to be part of faculty committed to personalized learning, offering flexible degree opportunities.

To date, we have thousands of alumni in local, state, federal, tribal, and international positions. We support students through coursework online and in a hybrid format both in Arizona and internationally. To make graduate coursework more accessible for our distance students, we have a required orientation each semester to ensure student success through our onboarding processes.

In addition to a supportive and award-winning faculty, the MPA program offers student support through our extensive alumni network, career advisement, and MPA mentor program. MPA students also have opportunities to be involved with public sector training, professional development, and statewide services, to name a few.

The MPA Program is a unique and exciting place to study. We are glad you are here and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,
Dr. Sara Rinfret
Professor and MPA Coordinator

Guidelines for Pursuing the MPA Degree

Purpose, Mission Statement, Public Service Values, and MPA Competencies

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) at Northern Arizona University prepares pre-service and mid-career professionals for leadership and management roles in public and nonprofit organizations. As the preeminent public MPA program in Northern Arizona, we play a unique role in serving the people and public institutions of this region at the county, municipal, state, tribal and federal levels. In addition to this regional focus, the program serves students throughout Arizona, the nation, and internationally. The curriculum of the NAU Master of Public Administration builds a strong foundation in the theoretical and practical dimensions of public administration and educates students within a program of study that facilitates intellectual development, promotes scholarship, and integrates the theory and practice of public administration with the promotion of public service values.

Our public service values serve as guideposts that inform how we apply our MPA mission to inform decisionmaking:

Diversity and Equity: Equity goes beyond simply treating everyone the same, to understanding that fairness often requires recognizing the diversity of individuals and populations. Government must be accessible and responsive to a diverse citizenry. Our graduates should understand that the public is not always adequately served by the uniform application of procedures and policies. Respect for the equal rights of individuals and the public good requires understanding the principle of equity and engaging thoughtfully with the reality of diversity.

Professional Competence: Our graduates receive training in organizational management (POS 543), budgeting (POS 644), policy analysis (POS 571) and human resource management (POS 642). Students also learn to perform research and present ideas objectively and clearly (POS 501 and POS 591). Students have opportunities to develop and test these skills through experiential learning and internship opportunities. Professional competence is essential to the effective and efficient pursuit of the public good.

Participation, Transparency, Accountability: Current and future administrators spend a great deal of time on community relations. Our program strives to teach ways to engage the community in a proactive and constructive way. Our program encourages students to understand how community participation can be an asset to be cultivated, not simply an obstacle to be overcome. We reinforce this participatory ethos, and our commitment to including community engagement and experiential learning across the core curriculum (POS 527, 543, 541, 501, 644, 591).

Upon completion of the MPA Program, graduates should be able to:

1. Lead and manage in public governance.
2. Participate and contribute to the policy process.
3. Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.
4. Articulate and apply a public service perspective.
5. Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Expected Course Load

Full-time graduate students at Northern Arizona University register for at least six credits (2 classes) in the fall and spring semesters. However, many graduate students can take up to nine credits (3 classes). Meet with the MPA coordinator to discuss how to effectively manage working and taking coursework. Registering for fewer credits may affect financial aid, visa status, or graduate award eligibility. Please make sure to check with [financial aid](#).

Time Required to Complete the MPA Program

The MPA program can be completed across 4 semesters, but it can take students working full-time, 5-6 total semesters. Most students complete the program on this schedule. For students who wish to extend their studies this also a possibility.

NAU Email

Students must use their NAU email account in all correspondence with NAU faculty and staff. This is a requirement by FERPA. Students receive their NAU email account upon acceptance into the program.

Advising

After your entry meeting with the MPA Coordinator (Dr. Sara Rinfret), the MPA Faculty mentor (Dr. Eric Otenyo) also serves as the advisor for MPA students and will assist in academic program planning.

Readmission/Reentry

Students who step out of their graduate programs and who do not maintain continuous registration could be dropped from their program's roster and will need to petition their program and the Graduate College for readmission. The petition for readmission will require an evaluation of the student's progress and a plan with timetable for completing the degree. Not all students will be readmitted and must use this [form to re-apply](#).

Leave of Absence Policy

Students seeking to take a semester off from their degree program, must complete a leave of absence form, submitting to the MPA Coordinator before the start of a given semester using this [form](#).

Transfer Credit

Up to 9 credits of A or B coursework earned at another recognized institution may be transferred to the MPA if the course(s) do not contribute to an earned degree. This is upon approval of the MPA Coordinator and the Graduate College. The petition form is found [here](#).

Graduation

In order to graduate from a certificate or MPA program, students must follow policies and procedures listed [here](#). A student's program of study must be completed at least one full semester prior to graduation, signed by MPA coordinator and Department chair. Once signatures are obtained, upload your program of study in Louie.

Tuition & Fees

Tuition and fee costs are set by the university and can be found [here](#). The MPA degree also carries a \$1,500 program fee in addition to normal tuition costs. In each of their first two semesters of enrollment, MPA students will be charged \$750 toward the program fee. This fee helps toward the maintenance of the program, additional support for students, and logistical support for faculty coordination across the State of Arizona. For information regarding financial aid or scholarships, please contact the [Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid](#).

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)

In a society facing complex problems, there is a great need for skilled public servants. The Master of Public Administration (MPA) educates current and future leaders to address public sector problems by developing practical skills through our coursework.

The NAU's MPA program has been in existence since 1980. Our 39-credit professional degree is designed principally, but not exclusively, for those who plan to pursue careers in the public and not-for-profit sectors. The degree prepares individuals for careers such as public sector managers, nonprofit executive directors, budget analysis, tribal liaison, and policy analysts, to name a few. Our coursework is designed for students to excel in government and nonprofit agencies. The MPA degree advances learning opportunities that lead to mastery in skills and knowledge essential to public service careers. These include: (1) formulating, implementing, and evaluating policy; (2) leading and managing organizations with diverse stakeholders; and (3) applying rigorous, evidence-based analysis to decision making. This ensures that all graduates: (1) can apply qualitative and quantitative methods of research and analysis to public policy issues; (2) achieve substantial competency in organizational design and analysis, management and administration, and tools and practices; and (3) understand the political, economic, and social context of public administration.

MPA Degree Requirements

The MPA degree requires 39 credits of graduate coursework, including 21 credits of required coursework, 12 credits of elective courses, and the MPA capstone (6 units). Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Students must complete the degree within a period of six years from initial enrollment and upon enrollment work on a program of study with the MPA coordinator.

Note: cohorts at our Chinese and Tempe locations must complete the degree according to their cohort timeline.

MPA Core Coursework (21 Credits)

POS 501	Research Methods and Analysis
POS 527	Ethics of Public Administration and Ethics
POS 541	Public Management
POS 543	Organizational Management
POS 571	Policy Analysis and Evaluation
POS 642	Human Resources Administration
POS 644	Government Budgeting

Note: work with MPA Program Coordinator on sequencing of coursework prior to taking electives Generally, students are recommended to take POS 527, 571, POS 541, and POS 543

early on in their course of study, as these are foundational for the program, building a skill set that will serve throughout the rest of their MPA studies. POS 501 should be taken as preparation for the capstone POS 591.

MPA Core Course Descriptions

- POS 501 Research Methods and Analysis: This course is an introduction to the practice of social research, including the design of scientific research and the analysis of information.
- POS 527 Ethics of Public Administration: This course examines alternative approaches to ethics in the context of public administration and management, and at the level of individuals, organizations, society, culture, and politics
- POS 541 Public Management: Introduces major contemporary and classical concepts relating to management of the public sector.
- POS 543 Organizational Management: Examines dynamics of modern complex organizations, including structure of bureaucratic organizations, incremental and rational approaches to decision-making, influences of bureaucratic routines, and strategies for increasing organizational effectiveness
- POS 571 Policy Analysis and Evaluation: Explore, learn, and practice methods of policy analysis and evaluation of real-world problems, as a means of better understanding the range of effects of public policies.
- POS 591 Combines theory and practice in an overview of public administration theory with a simultaneous, practical field experience.
- POS 642 Human Resources Administration: In-depth analysis of the administration of human resources in public organizations. Personnel processes from recruitment to retirement and administration of human resources for increased efficiency and effectiveness in public sector output.
- POS 644 Government Budgeting: Comprehensive examination of how governments use fiscal resources to plan their activities. Major topics include taxation, budgets, programs, management, and fiscal transfer payments

Electives (12 units required)

Upon completion of the MPA core classes, students must complete 12 units (four courses) of electives. These courses are selected in partnership with the MPA Program Coordinator/Advisor to match the interests of the student. Courses can be selected from within or outside the department upon conversation with the MPA Coordinator. *Courses cannot be taken at the 400-level and be counted toward the degree.* Given that the MPA core courses tend not to be offered during the summer months, this could be a good time to take outside electives (and when more classes are available online from other departments). Students may select electives to achieve mastery in the following areas of Public Administration if they desire.

Criminal Justice Administration
Educational Administration
Tribal Government
Public Health

Environmental Management
Applied Sociology
Public & Nonprofit Organizations
Parks, Tourism, and Recreation

Length of Classes

POS 501, POS 571, and the Capstone course POS 591 are normally taught in a 16-week format because of their content and/or the requirement of a research project. The other courses offered online are normally offered in an 8-week format to meet the needs of working professionals.

MPA Capstone

After you have completed all the Public Administration coursework, you are required to take POS 591 Master of Public Administration Capstone, with a grade of “B” or higher. The capstone is the culminating course and is a 6-unit combined fieldwork and project course.

This course is offered in Fall and Spring and should be taken during the final or semester of a student’s degree program. Students who do not currently work in the public or non-profit sector must secure a 10 hour/week or more internship for their capstone experience. Their final project may be a standalone research project or a detailed reflection on their work experience and how it reflects what they have learned about the theoretical and practical elements of public or non-profit sector work. Students currently working in the field may substitute the capstone requirements with an unpaid project at work that is not part of their regular duties. Students must complete a research project or work product that is useful to their agency and results in a substantial contribution to their understanding of an organizational duty they had not previously experienced. Within this framework, there is considerable flexibility and discuss with the MPA coordinator or capstone instructor.

Registration into the capstone class POS 591 requires a permission obtained from the capstone instructor and materials that students must complete before receiving the permission number. This includes a contract with the work or internship supervisor and a project proposal.

Sample Sequence of Classes

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>Spring Semester</u>	<u>Summer Semester</u>
POS 541: Public Management POS 543: Organization Management POS 571: Policy Analysis	POS 642: Human Resource Management POS 644: Government Budgeting POS 527: Ethics	Outside Elective Outside Elective
<u>Fall Semester</u> POS 501: Research Methods POS Elective POS Elective Turn in program of study; complete graduation paperwork	<u>Spring Semester</u> Capstone (6 credits) Graduation paperwork	N/A

Grade Point Average

Students must maintain a B average in courses taken for graduate credit at Northern Arizona University. The student is automatically on academic probation if the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0. A student on academic probation has one semester to maintain a 3.0 and must complete the [improvement plan](#). Additional, important policies listed [here](#). If a student does not maintain a 3.0, the student will be removed from the program. Students seeking to appeal, must follow University [policy](#).

Independent Study Requirements

Independent studies are for students interested in delving deeper into a research topic or applied project. Students can take up to 3 credits to count towards their 39 credits required for degree completion. Independent studies can be used to complete a larger work project to apply theory to practice to advance skills in the MPA program. Meet with the MPA coordinator who oversees independent study projects for assistance.

Provisional Acceptance

The academic program may recommend a student for provisional admission. Provisional admission is given when the student might not be competitive in one or more admission criteria, but nevertheless shows promise. The provisional status provides a trial period of one semester wherein the student can demonstrate they can perform in the graduate program. The academic program may determine there are certain deficiencies or prerequisite courses that the student must take during the provisional period. The provisional status must be removed by the MPA Program/Graduate College on the recommendation of the academic program any time after the first term. If the student does not maintain a 3.0 after their first semester, admission is denied, and student cannot re-apply, with the graduate status revoked.

Academic Probation

A student is automatically on academic probation if the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0. A student has one semester to improve their grade point average to a 3.0 and must complete an improvement plan with the MPA coordinator and Graduate College. If the student fails to improve their grade point average to a 3.0, the student is dismissed from the program and cannot re-apply.

Incompletes and Withdrawals

Faculty within the Department list in their course syllabus whether an incomplete can be considered. If allowable, students can request, in writing, an incomplete directly with their professor. It is up to the professor to determine if an incomplete is granted. If granted, the MPA Program only allows a student one semester to complete the work. If assignments are not completed on time, the student will receive a failing grade. Additional policies listed [here](#).

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS RELATED TO MPA

Students enrolled in one of our graduate level certificate programs can transfer into the MPA program with a B or higher. Contact the MPA Coordinator in your final semester for consideration.

Graduate Certificate in Public Management

The Graduate Certificate in Public Management is a 15-credit program that includes three courses from the MPA core curriculum (9-units total) with six credits of elective courses from within the department's offerings. All courses for the certificate are taken online. Credits from the Certificate may be applied to the MPA program. The certificate is a good way to begin a program if a student is not sure whether to complete the full MPA degree program. A student wanting to transfer from the certificate into the MPA program should notify the MPA coordinator, one semester in advance and be in good academic standing (B average or higher).

Indigenous and Tribal Nation-Building Graduate Certificate

The Indigenous and Tribal Nation-Building, Leadership, Management and Administration Graduate Certificate is offered by the Department of Applied Indigenous Studies. It can be taken concurrently with the MPA program and have credits count toward both. Specifically, students may substitute AIS 530 Tribal Administration for the core class POS 541 Public Management in either program. Students may also substitute AIS 550 Tribal Financial Management for POS 644 Government Budgeting. This degree program is to benefit students with career goals in Tribal government or administration. This certificate program is taught online.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Students will be assigned the MPA coordinator, Dr. Sara Rinfret as their academic advisor upon matriculation into the graduate program. The secondary advisor is the faculty mentor, Dr. Eric Otenyo, if the coordinator is not available. The function of this advisor is to be an initial person with whom the student can interact to address questions and develop first-semester course schedules.

MPA Advisory Council

The department has formally instituted a Master of Public Administration Advisory Council. The council has several functions. For example, the council reviews the program's relevance to industry needs. It determines if the program meets professional standards. The council advises on curriculum needs and skills and assesses program requirements. The members have been effective advocates of the program and have also been generous in providing internships and fieldwork experiences for several students. Advisory members have also offered referrals and positions to NAU's MPA students. In addition, the advisory council has helped link NAU's MPA program to the local communities. In the past, some members of the Advisory Council have occasionally made presentations to classes and worked with alumni.

Financial Assistance

The University offers financial assistance and the information listed [here](#).

Tuition and Fees: Northern Arizona University's tuition and fees are listed [here](#).

Forthcoming in 2023 will be public service specific scholarships and/or competition available for the students in our public administration related program.

Possible paid internships are often available, and students will be notified on our email listserve when opportunities arise.

Discounted Tuition Rate: We have discounted partnerships for many state agencies in Arizona, please review this [website](#) to see if your organization is a partner.

Arizona Teachers Academy: Arizona Teachers Academy (ATA) website, <https://nau.edu/coe/arizona-teachers-academy/> and from there you can go to the dual enrollment pathway link, <https://nau.edu/coe/arizona-teachers-academy/dual-enrollment>

If you click on the “More Information” button from the home page, you can click on the FAQs document,

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11BxEpEBWpW1IongdC2DGOCEMG_myA9N-2IJ3G0rfDjI/edit and again, the presentation is also on the home page.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

These policies from the Department, the Graduate College, and the University should help guide you during your graduate studies. Links to applicable university-level policies can be found below.

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Grading System](#)

Other University Policies can be found through the [University Policy Library](#).

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

Enroll in Classes via “LOUIE”: Student Information System used to Enroll, Make a Payment, and line up your Textbooks.

- o [ENROLL - Search and Add classes.](#)
 - Always double-check your class and payment date in LOUIE. (See PAYMENT below)
 - If you encounter enrollment issues, just send me an email with your classes per term for assistance
- o PAYMENT - [Check your balance and due date, and Make a Payment](#)
- o OTHER - Click [here](#) to keyword search LOUIE tutorials for other important functions such as to view your Unofficial Transcripts

Textbooks: Many program classes still use hard copy texts, which you can purchase through NAU or independently online, new or used.

- o The [View Required Textbooks](#) link in your LOUIE Class Details will direct you to the NAU Bookstore for a list of your required/recommended textbooks
- o Given the accelerated nature of these 8-week classes, it is best to have your book in hand a week out so you can hit the ground running.
- o If you do not see them listed in a timely fashion, email your instructor directly to request text requirements and, preferably, a syllabus. (Note: Instructors' may not release their syllabus early)
- o After identifying your instructor in your LOUIE Student Center, you can find their email using [Directory Search](#).

Tools and Resources: Take advantage of these Tools and Resources to help ensure academic success.

- o MYNAU: "Portal" website where you access all your student accounts (NAU email, LOUIE, Blackboard Learn) as well as quick links to other student resources. *Log in to [MyNAU Portal](#) (my.nau.edu)*
- o NAU EMAIL: Note that all future correspondence will be sent to your NAU webmail account to respect FERPA regulations, our student privacy law. *Log in to your [MyNAU Portal](#)*
- o BBLEARN: Blackboard Learn (Bb Learn) is our web platform where you access and take your classes. (Note: Access begins the first day of class when you will receive your syllabus.) *Log in to [MyNAU Portal](#). View Bb Learn FAQ tutorials [here](#).*
- o DEADLINE CALENDAR: Please bookmark our [Important Dates and Deadlines website](#) for future reference.
- o CLINE LIBRARY: NAU's Cline Library has a helpful [website](#), providing a wealth of online resources and services- including the Ask a Librarian chat tool.
- o LYND.COM: [View an](#) online library that teaches the latest software tools and skills through high-quality instructional videos taught by recognized industry experts. Free access for the NAU community.

Public Administration Faculty within PIA

A full list of [faculty](#) can be found on the departmental website. MPA Core faculty are listed below.

Dr. Sara Rinfret (MPA Coordinator, Advising, Accreditation, Program Issues)

Sara.rinfret@nau.edu

Dr. Eric Otenyo (Faculty Mentor, MPA Capstone)

Eric.otenyon@nau.edu

Dr. Zachary Smith

Zachary.smith@nau.edu

Dr. Minzi Su

Minzi.su@nau.edu

Dr. Alan Wood

Alan.wood@nau.edu

Dr. Jill Young (public administration undergraduate programming)

Jill.Young@nau.edu

Kurt Fenske

Kurt.fenske@nau.edu

Dr. Paul Lenze (Tempe and China Cohorts)

Paul.lenze@nau.edu