NAU NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Master of Public Administration & Related Degree Programs

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

NASPAA ACCREDITED
The Commission on Peer
Review & Accreditation

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Welcome Message from MPA Director

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. Udaya Wagale
Professor and MPA Director

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 programming is fully online (not hybrid or in person) and we believe 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 public administration (POS 541), organizational behavior (POS 543), budgeting (POS 544), policy analysis (POS 571) and human resource management (POS 542). Students also learn to perform research and present ideas objectively and clearly (POS 501). Students have opportunities to develop and test these skills through a culminating experience – portfolio/exit interview at the end of their degree program (POS 596).

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, 544, 542, 596).

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 Director 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.

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 Director (Dr. Udaya Wagale) for all advising support for the MPA and PA certificate.

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 Director 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 Director and the Graduate College. The petition form is found here.

Graduation

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 Director 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. This fee is expected to increase in the 2024 academic year.

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.

NAU's MPA program has been in existence since 1980. Our 36-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 36 credits of graduate coursework, including 21 credits of required coursework, 12 credits of elective courses, and the MPA portfolio/exit interview (3 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 Director.
Note: designated cohorts 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 542   Human Resources Administration
POS 544   Government Budgeting
Note: work with MPA Program Director 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, POS 544, and POS 542 should be taken as preparation for the capstone POS 596

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 Administration: Introduces major contemporary and classical concepts relating to management of the public sector.

POS 543   Organizational Behavior: 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 596   Combines theory and practice in an overview of public administration theory, a culminating experience for students.

POS 542   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 544   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. The list of MPA elective courses include:
POS 528, Democracy & Public Administration
POS 542, Human Resource Management
POS 544, Budgeting & Finance
POS 530, Managing State & Local Government
POS 531, Intro to Nonprofit Orgs
POS 532, Data Visualization
POS 534, Performance Measurement
POS 535, Regulatory Process
POS 536, Women, Policy, and PA
POS 537, Public Policy Ethics
POS 538, Comparative Public Administration
POS 539, Homeland Security
POS 585, Public Service Leadership

Elected courses can also be selected in partnership with the MPA Program Director/Advisor to match the interests of the student. Courses can be selected from within or outside the department upon conversation with the MPA Director. *Courses cannot be taken at the 400-level and be counted toward the degree – students that started the program prior to 2022, these can be grandfathered into degree completion, but must be signed by the MPA Director.* The MPA Program attempts to offer at least 1-2 classes per summer. Students may select electives to achieve mastery in the following areas of Public Administration if they desire.

Criminal Justice Administration	Environmental Management
Educational Administration	Applied Sociology
Tribal Government	Public & Nonprofit Organizations
Public Health	Parks, Tourism, and Recreation

Length of Classes

POS 501, POS 571, POS 596, POS 544 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. Summer session courses are 5 weeks.

MPA Portfolio & Exit Interview

After you have completed all the Public Administration coursework, you are required to take POS 596 Master of Public Administration Portfolio & Exit Interview, with a grade of "B" or higher. This is a 3-credit course and led by the MPA Director.

This course is offered in Fall and Spring and should be taken during the final semester of a student's degree program.

Registration into the capstone class POS 596 requires permission obtained from the MPA Director.

MPA Portfolio & Exit Interview Instructions

In a student's final semester of the MPA program, they sign up for 3 credits and must complete a portfolio project.
Students are required to directly e-mail the MPA Director their portfolio by a designated time at the end of the Fall or Spring semester via email (5p.m.). **This must be an electronic pdf file.** The written portfolio is **required** to contain each component (listed below) and organized in the following order:
1. A title page with a title, student's name, and year submitted.
2. A table of contents that identifies the materials listed in the portfolio.
3. A 2-3 page single-spaced personal essay in which the student describes professional growth during the MPA program, including areas of strength and areas needing continued development. Your personal essay must clearly reflect how you have applied theory to practice; cultural awareness (e.g. ability to define and understand

diversity); what you have learned through your own conceptualizations of the pillars of public administration (transparency, equity, accountability, .

4. Four public administration-related research course-related papers (**not** outlines, case write-ups, short assignments, or more than one assignment from a particular class) that are individual (not group) projects that demonstrate the student's ability to design, conduct, and analyze research; have been completed for the requirements of an independent study, internship (not a reflection, but project), or traditional course; and **have received a grade of at least an B or higher, which grades are affixed/feedback at the end of each example. For professors that use contract grading, students must demonstrate expectations have been exceeded (preferred) or met (e.g. "met expectations").**

Students will receive feedback on their written portfolio. Upon completion of this written feedback (end of the semester), the students engage in an exit interview with the MPA Director and other students in POS 596.

A grade of high pass, pass, or fail will be used to evaluate the student's portfolio project. A student must receive an average score of high pass or pass. Students who fail the portfolio project have a right to resubmit their work to the MPA Director. Students that fail the portfolio project a second time can submit an appeal for further consideration to the MPA Director. The MPA Director will meet with the MPA Committee to determine the outcome.

	Written Work Rubric
High Pass (9-10 points, A)	Student follows instructions, provides a clearly organized/well documented portfolio/written portfolio, clear mastery of a variety of public administration courses, clear and well written description of professional growth.
Pass (7-8 points, B)	Student follows instructions, professional growth is somewhat unclear, organization could be enhance, but student demonstrates overall mastery of coursework and professional growth.
Fail (6 or below, C/D/F)	Unorganized, instructions are not followed, does not demonstrate professional growth, and does not include evidence of passing level work from course curriculum.

Passing average score (written and oral) needed = 7-10
Failing average score = if a student receives a score of 6 or lower

Sample Sequence of Classes

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
POS 541: Public Management	POS 542: Human Resource Management	MPA Elective
POS 543: Organization Behavior	POS 544: Government Budgeting	MPA Elective
POS 571: Policy Analysis	POS 527: Ethics	

Fall Semester POS 501: Research Methods MPA Elective MPA Elective Turn in program of study; complete graduation paperwork	Spring Semester Portfolio (3 credits) Graduation	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 Director 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 Director 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 Director in your final semester for consideration.

Graduate Certificate in Public Administration

The Graduate Certificate in Public Management is a 12-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 Director, 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 can use these classes to count as their elective credits towards the MPA. This degree program is to benefit students with career goals in Tribal government or administration. This certificate program is taught online and students apply for both programs.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Students will be assigned the MPA Director, Dr. Udaya Wagale as their academic advisor upon matriculation into the graduate program. 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. Make sure to check your NAU email for more information.

Possible paid internships are often available for students not currently employed 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](#)

- 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.

- 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
- 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.
- 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)
- 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.

- 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)*

- 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*

- 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.
- DEADLINE CALENDAR: Please bookmark our Important Dates and Deadlines website for future reference.
- CLINE LIBRARY: NAU's Cline Library has a helpfulwebsite, providing a wealth of online resources and services- including the Ask a Librarian chat tool.
- LYNDA.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. Udaya Wagale, (MPA Director, Advising, Accreditation, Program Issues), Udaya.Wagle@nau.edu
Dr. Eric Otenyo, Eric.otenyon@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

Dr. Sara Rinfret, sara.rinfret@nau.edu
Dr. Aleskey Kolpakov, aleskey.kolpakov@nau.edu
Dr. Andrew Dzeguze, Andrew.dzeguze@nau.edu
Dr. Paul Lenze (Tempe cohort), Paul.lenze@nau.edu