Master of Public Administration Program
Student Handbook
January 2020
Welcome letter from MPA Director

Welcome to the Department of Public Administration and Policy, a place on the cutting edge for training the next generation of students interested in law, policy, and public service. We are the only accredited Masters of Public Administration (MPA) program in Montana, as well as the only MPA program in the nation that is housed in a law school. We’re also proud to be part of the Max Baucus Institute, an extension of the important consensus-building work of Senator Baucus.

To date, we have over 1,000 alumni in local, state, federal, and international positions. We support students through coursework online, in person, and in a hybrid format. To make graduate coursework more accessible for our distance students, we have several “robots” that allow students to virtually attend in-person classes.

In addition to a supportive and award-winning faculty, DPAP offers student support through the MPA mentor program, which pairs students with alumni to provide career advice. MPA students also have opportunities to be involved with the Baucus Leaders program, China Study Abroad, the Big Sky Poll, and the UM chapter of Pi Alpha Alpha, the national honor society for students of public administration, to name a few.

The Department of Public Administration and Policy is a unique and exciting place to study. We’re glad you’re here and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sara Rinfret
Associate Professor & Chair
MPA Director
University of Montana
Department of Public Administration & Policy
Sara.rinfret@umontana.edu
Table of Contents

Guidelines for Pursuing the MPA Degree
  Mission Statement & Public Service Values ........................................... 5
  Nonprofit Specialization ................................................................. 5
  MPA Competencies ........................................................................... 5
  Registration for Courses .................................................................. 6
  UM Email ......................................................................................... 6
  Advising .......................................................................................... 6
  Transfer Credits ................................................................................ 6
  Time Limitations ............................................................................... 6
  Readmission/Reentry ....................................................................... 6
  Academic Integrity ............................................................................ 7
  Leave Policy ..................................................................................... 7

Student Classifications
  Master of Public Administration Program & Degree Requirements .......... 8
    MPA Core Course Descriptions ......................................................... 8
  Master of Public Administration Program with Nonprofit Concentration Degree
    Requirements .................................................................................. 9

Joint Degrees and Graduate Certificates
  Joint Master of Public Administration and Law Degree ......................... 10
  Joint Master of Public Administration and Public Health Degree ............ 10
  Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Administration .................................. 11
  Graduate Certificate in Public Policy .................................................... 12
  Graduate Certificate in Public Administration ....................................... 12
  Use of Robots ................................................................................... 13
  BA and MPA Degrees ....................................................................... 13

MPA Portfolio and Exit Interview .......................................................... 14
Elective Courses Outside of the Department of Public Administration and Policy .... 16
Sample Sequence for Completing the MPA Program ................................ 16
Grade Point Average ........................................................................... 16
Students Transferring from PA, PP, Nonprofit Certificate to MPA ............... 16
Graduation Requirements ..................................................................... 17
Internship Requirements ..................................................................... 17
Independent Study Requirements ......................................................... 17
Provisional Acceptance ..................................................................... 18
Academic Probation .......................................................................... 18
Incompletes and Withdrawals ............................................................. 18
Disability Assistance ......................................................................... 18
Student Code of Conduct .................................................................... 18

Financial Assistance
  Teaching Assistantships ................................................................. 20
Department Scholarships .................................................. 20
Financial Aid ...................................................................... 20

Awards and Honors
Pi Alpha Alpha (UMMPA) .................................................. 20
Department Public Service Awards ................................. 20
Baucus Leaders Program ............................................... 21

Department of Public Administration and Policy Faculty .......................... 21
Guidelines for Pursuing the MPA Degree

Mission Statement & Public Service Values
The University of Montana MPA program prepares pre-career and mid-career professionals for dynamic and impactful work in the public and nonprofit sectors by developing a core set of skills, scholarly knowledge, applied, and basic research.

Asserting public service values is at the core of the University of Montana's mission and thus, carried out by our curriculum. In all of our core classes, we emphasize the need for integrity, ethical conduct, serving the public interest, fairness, accountability, and transparency in public service. ASPAs ethical code is used in many of our classes given that it is the primary professional organization for those in the practice of public administration.

Nonprofit Specialization
The MPA program offers one specific specialization/concentration in nonprofit administration. Students (with the MPA Director's approval) can create an individualized specialization or simply take outside electives upon completion of required core courses (18 credits). Please see our website for a list of current nonprofit administration courses.

MPA Competencies
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.

Upon completion of the MPA Program's nonprofit concentration, 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.
6. Understand the role of the nonprofit sector and effective management.
7. Critically think, manage, and provide solutions for social problems effecting nonprofit organizations.
Registration for Courses
Upon acceptance into the program, you will receive a NetID which starts with 790. Meet with the MPA Director to discuss degree planning. All MPA students register for courses online using Cyberbear. Courses fill up quickly, so please plan accordingly.

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

Advising
The department chair/MPA director serves as the advisor to all MPA students and will assist in academic program planning. Nonprofit concentration students should consult with nonprofit program lead. JD/MPA students should consult with academic liaison.

Transfer Credits
Students may transfer up to nine graduate/graduate non-degree semester credits or a full semester of graduate work on the recommendation of the program, after a semester of satisfactory work at UM. The transfer credits must meet the following requirements:

1.) The courses must have been taken for graduate credit. This information is verified by the Graduate School when the student submits a transcript of the transfer coursework.
2.) Grades must be either an A or a B.
3.) Credits must be earned at an institution that offers a graduate degree in the discipline of the course being transferred.
4.) Credits must be applicable to the degree being sought.

Credits that cannot be transferred into a UM graduate program:
1.) Thesis or correspondence credits.
2.) Extension credits outside the Montana university system.
3.) Credits earned at the undergraduate level.
4.) Credits taken in undergraduate or post-baccalaureate status.
5.) Credits already used in completing a graduate degree program.

Time Limitations
All degree requirements for the master's degree, including the use of transfer and non-degree credits, must be completed within five years. Courses that fall outside this time limit must be recertified for currency of knowledge and can be addressed with the MPA Director.

Readmission/Reentry
To ensure that costs for services are covered for continuing graduate students, a continuous registration requirement of three credits per semester is mandatory, except in documented and approved instances such as the following and for which registration of at least one credit is required. This policy applies to the regular academic year (fall and spring semesters) and to those students whose academic year may be an exception such as spring-summer or summer-fall). It does not apply to online, off-campus only programs.
Students who step out of their graduate programs and who do not maintain continuous registration will be dropped from their program’s roster and will need to petition their program and the Graduate School for readmission. The petition for readmission will require an evaluation of the student’s progress and a plan with time-table for completing the degree. Not all students will be readmitted.

**Academic Integrity**
Students at the University of Montana are expected to practice academic honesty at all times. Academic misconduct is subject to academic penalty (or penalties) by the course instructor and/or university sanctions. Refer to the general catalog or UM website for information about the Student Conduct Code.

**Leave Policy**
Students who need to take a leave-of-absence with no penalty for a semester (e.g. for parental, major illness, or personal need) should petition the MPA Director using the appropriate form, available on the Graduate School website. The leave is granted for one semester, and additional request must be discussed with MPA Director.

Because a leave-of-absence presumes the student is off-campus and not engaged in university activities, no university resources (except those available to the general public) are available during the leave-of-absence.
Student Classifications

Master of Public Administration Program & Degree Requirements
The University of Montana MPA program prepares pre-career and mid-career professionals for dynamic and impactful work in the public and nonprofit sectors by developing a core set of skills, scholarly knowledge, applied, and basic research.

The MPA degree requires completing 36 credits of course work and a portfolio project/exit interview. The MPA program offers one specific specialization/concentration in nonprofit administration. Students (with the MPA director’s approval) can create an individualized specialization or simply take outside electives upon completion of required core courses (18 credits).

MPA Core Course Descriptions

PUAD 501 - Public Administration
Advanced analysis of processes of public management; examination of public administrators’ involvement in policymaking.

PUAD 503 - Policy Analysis
The role of public administrators in the policymaking process with emphasis on methods of policy analysis and program evaluation.

PUAD 504 - Organization Theory
Concepts and theories relevant to the administration of complex organizations, including administrative structure, behavior, process and functions.

PUAD 505 - Budgeting and Finance
Seminar focusing on principles of public finance and analysis of budgeting as a primary tool of public sector management.

PUAD 522 - Human Resource Management
Study of the essential elements of human resource management, including analysis and evaluation of work, and the selection, management, and evaluation of public employees.

PUAD 506 - MPA Applied Research Methods
This course provides an overview of how research is approached in the public sector. In addition, this class is designed to elevate your skills as a social science researcher through the design and implementation of applied research projects

PUAD 529 - Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations (required only for nonprofit concentration)
This course is one of the core courses required for MPA students completing the Nonprofit Administration Track. The course provides an introduction to nonprofit organizations and the nonprofit sector within which they are embedded. It investigates such topics as the nature of the nonprofit sector, the diverse kinds of nonprofits in existence, the phenomenon of charitable giving, philanthropy, and volunteering, and the legal framework that establishes nonprofit organizations and regulates their activities. This course is appropriate for graduate students from many disciplines in addition to MPA students due to the diverse nature of the nonprofit sector in fields such as environmental studies, communication studies, sociology, social work and law.
NPAD 505 - Advocacy and Public Policy (2 credits) (required only for nonprofit concentration students)
Explores and reviews the role of nonprofit organizations in advocacy.

**Master of Public Administration Program with Nonprofit Concentration Degree Requirements**
Students on the Nonprofit Administration track must complete the 8 MPA Core Courses (see above) as well as 8 or more credits (4 courses) from the following (you can check with MPA Director for substitutes, however):

NPAD 501 - Nonprofit Human Resource Management
Addresses human resource needs specific to nonprofits, including payroll, employment law, and other legal issues.

NPAD 502 - Nonprofit Volunteer Management
Addresses the process of recruiting and retaining volunteers at a nonprofit organization, including case studies and hands-on projects.

NPAD 503 - Nonprofit Program Planning and Evaluation
Explores program planning for nonprofits from top-to-bottom, including needs assessment and evaluation.

NPAD 506 - Nonprofit Board Management
Explores policymaking and fundraising roles and responsibilities of the board; strategies for board recruitment, orientation, and evaluation; and executive director/board relationships.

NPAD 510 - Nonprofit Strategic Planning
This course explores the importance of visionary leadership and strategic planning to the success of nonprofit agencies.

NPAD 511 - Nonprofit Grantwriting
Students learn how to write the essential parts of a grant proposal and how to search for appropriate funding sources.

NPAD 512 - Nonprofit Fundraising
The course covers all major aspects of a fundraising plan including: annual fund, major gifts, capital campaigns, planned giving, grants and special events. The course will also give students the foundation and tools needed to implement these plans into action.

NPAD 513 - Nonprofit Financial Management
This course explores special issues related to nonprofit financials including accounting basics, budgeting, financial statement ratios, management controls and nonprofit income tax reporting processes.

NPAD 560 - Nonprofit Marketing and Social Media
This course provides students with an overview of basic marketing principles and social media strategies. Students will learn steps to create a Social Media Marketing Plan to further the mission of a nonprofit organization. Students will analyze and select appropriate communication channels and technologies according to relevant publics.
Joint Degrees and Graduate Certificates

Joint Master of Public Administration and Law Degree (MPA/JD)

Under the joint program in Law and Public Administration, a student may complete two separate degrees, the Juris Doctor and the Master of Public Administration, in a shorter period of time than would be required if the degrees were taken consecutively. The heart of the program is reciprocity between the Law School and the Graduate School involving a specific number of credit hours. The joint MPA/JD program is appropriate for those students who would find it helpful in their career objectives to be cross trained. This degree can be completed in three years.

In order to be admitted to the joint degree program, a student must separately apply and be admitted to both the School of Law and the Graduate School. It is possible for a student to be enrolled in one program and later seek enrollment in the complementary program. Application to the Law program requires taking the LSAT.

All requirements of both programs must be met. However, the School of Law accepts toward its 90-credit degree, six semester hours of approved credit earned in the Public Administration program, and the Public Administration program accepts a maximum of twelve semester hours of approved Law School credit toward the MPA degree.

Joint Master of Public Administration and Public Health Degree (MPA/MPH)

Under the MPA/MPH joint degree program, a student may complete two separate degrees, the Master of Public Administration and the Master of Public Health, in a shorter period of time than would be required if the degrees were taken consecutively. For admission requirements, see the MPA Program Admissions page.

The MPA/MPH joint degree program requires satisfactory completion of 42 semester credits.

Students in the MPA/MPH track must complete 6 core courses (18 credits) from the MPH program:
- PUBH 510 Introduction to Epidemiology (3 credits)
- PUBH 520 Fundamentals of Biostatistics (3 credits)
- PUBH 540 Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health (3 credits)
- PUBH 560 Environmental and Rural Health (3 credits)
- Capstone 1 - PUBH 594 Integrative Learning Experience (3 credits)
- Capstone 2 - PUBH 595 Applied Practice Experience (3 credits)

Students must also complete 6 core courses from the MPA program (18 credits):
- PUAD 522 Human Resource Management (3 credits)
- PUAD 504 Organization Theory (3 credits)
- PUAD 505 Budgeting and Finance (3 credits)
- PUAD 503 Policy Analysis (3 credits)
- PUAD 501 Public Administration (3 credits)
Research Methods: PUAD 506 Applied Research Methods (3 credits)

An additional 2 classes of electives (6 credits) may be taken from either program:

Ethics: PUAD 561 Ethics and Public Administration or PUBH 570 Ethical Issues in Public Health (3 credits)
3 credit class from either program, approved by program advisors

In a student’s final semester, they send the MPA Director their portfolio and sign up for an exit interview.

**Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Administration**

The Certificate in Nonprofit Administration is designed for students wishing to develop professional competencies relating to nonprofit management. To earn a certificate the student must complete a minimum of 16 credits as follows (check with MPA Director for possible substitutes from PUAD classes):

**Online Courses**
12 credits from among the following online courses:
NPAD 501 Nonprofit Human Resource Management – 2 credits
NPAD 502 Nonprofit Volunteer Management – 2 credits
NPAD 503 Nonprofit Program Planning and Evaluation – 2 credits
NPAD 505 Nonprofit Advocacy and Public Policy – 2 credits
NPAD 506 Nonprofit Board Management – 2 credits
NPAD 510 Nonprofit Strategic Planning – 2 credits
NPAD 511 Nonprofit Grant Writing – 2 credits
NPAD 512 Nonprofit Fundraising – 2 credits
NPAD 513 Nonprofit Financial Management – 2 credits
NPAD 560 Nonprofit Marketing and Social media - 2 credits

Internship: 4 credits of NPAD 598 Internship [please meet with Department Internship advisor to maintain expectations and internship requirements).

All courses taken in pursuit of the certificate must be taken for graded credit, and a grade of C or above must be achieved in order to receive credit for any course.
**Graduate Certificate in Public Policy**
The Certificate in Public Policy offers public employees fundamental and advanced skills through a series of core courses. These classes provide basic knowledge and skills that enhance the level of data driven decision-making in public service organizations. Many public employees have bachelor degrees in many technical fields but lack the advanced skills in public policy. The Certificate in Public Policy uses existing courses in the Master of Public Administration Program to provide a more specialized opportunity for public service employees to gain skills, knowledge, and training by completing a short set of classes such as policy analysis, applied research methods, or performance measurement. These classes are critical for understanding and evaluating a deluge of information to provide solutions for public sector problems. To best meet the needs of a changing and diverse workforce, students can complete the degree online, in person, or a combination.

To earn a certificate the student must complete classes as follows:

Complete both:
PUAD 531 Introduction to Public Policymaking (offered online and in person)
PUAD 503 Policy Analysis (offered online and in person)

Complete 2 of the following:
PUAD 527, Performance Measurement (offered online)
PUAD 506, MPA Applied Research Methods (offered online and in person)
PUAD 505, Public Budgeting & Finance (offered online and in person)
PUAD 507, Program Evaluation (offered online and in person)
PUAD 561, Ethics in Public Administration (offered online)
PUAD 595, Environmental Governance & Policy (offered online and in person)

**Graduate Certificate in Public Administration**
The Certificate in Public Administration offers public employees the fundamental skills through a series of core courses important for the profession of public administration. These classes provide basic knowledge and skills that enhance the level of professionalism in public service. Many public employees have bachelor and graduate degrees in many technical fields but lack the basic managerial areas of public administration. The Certificate in Public Administration provides a bridge for public service employees to gain skills, knowledge, and training by completing a short set of classes such as public administration, human resource management, budgeting, and organization theory. These classes are critical for understanding public organizations, and enhance the performance of public workers and the valuable services government agencies perform for our society.

To earn a certificate the student must complete classes as follows:

Complete 3 of the following:
PUAD 501, Public Administration
PUAD 503, Policy Analysis
PUAD 504, Organization Theory
PUAD 505, Budgeting & Finance
PUAD 506, MPA Applied Research Methods
PUAD 522, Human Resource Management
PUAD 529, Nonprofit Administration

Complete 1 of the following:
PUAD 507, Program Evaluation
PUAD 523, Administrative Law
PUAD 525, Strategic Planning & Leadership
PUAD 526, Issues State and Local Government
PUAD 527, Performance Measurement
PUAD 561, Ethics in Public Administration

Use of Robots
The Department of Public Administration and Policy is committed to student success and a national award winner in innovation. Distance only students have the option to complete an in-person core class as a robot. If a student participates in a class as a robot, the student must attend the required orientation, have a strong Wi-Fi connection and modem. The student is aware that the technology can fail and cannot expect the faculty member to be tech support. It is the student’s responsibility to log onto the robot prior to the class start time. The student cannot expect the faculty member to stop class and reboot the robot. The Department provides a backup robot in each class and students’ should be prepared to connect on their own if needed.

BA and MPA Degree with Carroll College (4+1) and UM Wildlife Biology
The University of Montana MPA Program has partnered with Carroll College’s Department of Political Science to offer the first-ever 4+1 of its kind in Montana. Students work with Dr. Rinfret (UM) and Dr. Street (Carroll College) to process their application. Additionally, UM students in wildlife biology can also pursue a 4+1 degree (contact Dr. Chad Bishop). This is a great opportunity for students interested in completing their BA and MPA in 5 years. Please contact the MPA Director, Sara Rinfret, for more information on how to apply.
MPA Portfolio and Exit Interview
This is required for MPA/MPH, MPA (nonprofit), MPA, and MPA JD students. Always check our website for the most up to date information regarding the MPA Portfolio since the handbook is revised 1-2 times per year.

In a student’s final semester of the MPA program, you must complete a portfolio project, which has written and oral components. The MPA Director will directly contact graduating students at the beginning of each semester about specific due dates for the portfolio and exit interview and how to sign up.

Students are required to directly e-mail Dr. Sara Rinfret (sara.rinfret@umontana.edu) their portfolio by the specified due date (generally a few weeks before the end of the semester and specified by the beginning of the semester). 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.
4. Three 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 A 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”). Separate from the 3 research papers, one artifact of the student’s ability to work cooperatively in a team setting/group project, which may stem from an independent study, internship, or traditional course and have received a grade of at least an A or higher, which grades are affixed at the end of each example. In instances where a student has a course using contract grading, student samples must demonstrate an assignment has “met expectations.”

Important Notes: The MPA portfolio/exit interview is required to graduate from the program. Students cannot submit exams or transferred credit work from a previous institution as part of their portfolio. If a student fails to keep track of their grades, they can contact the MPA Director to discuss appropriate next steps. Students cannot request for a Moodle shell to be re-opened after a semester is completed because of failure to keep track of their grades. If a student does not meet the criteria for Items 4 and 5 listed above, they
will not be able to complete their portfolio in their final semester and will be dismissed from the program.

Strongly suggested tips on preparing for your exit interview: Please review these concepts in preparation for your exit interview: Theme across core classes; What it means to work in a team; Examples of connecting theory to practice; Pillars of PA (what do they mean -- accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, responsiveness); Is public administration distinct; Your skills and ability to work in a diverse and changing workforce. Make sure to review the rubric listed below, too.

Students will receive feedback on their written portfolio before the oral portion. The oral portion of the portfolio will occur during the final week of classes or earlier, during the semester in which students plans to graduate. Two MPA faculty members will meet with each student for 30 minute review to assess the portfolio and discuss the students experience in the program (an exit interview). At the meeting broader questions pertaining to MPA core courses will be asked. For campus students this will be a formal meeting on campus; for online students the meeting will use video conferencing programs, such as Skype, Zoom, or robots. Students will sign up with the MPA Director directly for a scheduled time slot to complete the oral portion.

A grade of high pass, pass, or fail will be used to evaluate the student’s written and oral portions of the portfolio project. A student must receive an average score of high pass or pass on the written and oral components of the project. Students who fail the portfolio project have a right to resubmit their work to the MPA Director and repeat the exit interview one time. 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.

**Evaluation Criteria**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written Work</th>
<th>Oral Work</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High Pass (9-10 points)</strong></td>
<td>Student is well versed in MPA core coursework, ability to apply theory to practice, strong demonstration of professional growth and ability to explain why content was included in written portion of the portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass (7-8 points)</strong></td>
<td>Student can make some major connections in MPA core coursework,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student follows instructions, professional growth is somewhat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Evaluation Criteria

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>The organization could be enhanced, but the student demonstrates overall mastery of coursework and professional growth. Theory to practice connections are acceptable, and the student attempts to explain why elements were included in written portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail (6 or below)</td>
<td>Unorganized, instructions are not followed, does not demonstrate professional growth, and does not include evidence of passing level work from course curriculum. Student presents information in an unprofessional manner, cannot apply theory to practice, does not understand core theories in MPA core courses, professional growth is not demonstrated, and student cannot explain why elements of written portion of portfolio were included.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Elective Courses Outside of the Department of Public Administration and Policy

Students may select electives from other graduate programs at the University of Montana. These courses must be approved by the MPA Director. Students wishing to take courses with the Alexander Blewett School of Law or Public Health can count toward the fulfillment of MPA degree elective requirements.

### Sample Sequence for Completing the MPA Program if 9 credits for semester (meet with MPA Director to complete an individualized plan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
<th>Summer Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PUAD 501: Public Administration  
PUAD 504: Organization Theory  
PUAD 522 Human Resource Management | PUAD 506: Applied Research Methods OR Elective | Optional (always two online core classes offered)  
Summer Indian Law courses (optional) |
| PUAD Elective  
PUAD Elective | PUAD Elective | PUAD Elective |
| N/A | N/A | N/A |
Grade Point Average
Students must maintain a B average in courses taken for graduate credit at The University of Montana; no grade below C will be accepted toward any degree requirement. The student is automatically on academic probation if the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0, and the program or the Graduate School may place limits on the time for the student to remediate the academic problem. Students who wish to appeal a grade, must follow University policy.

Students Transferring from PA, PP, Nonprofit Certificate to MPA
Graduate students may take MPA courses prior to their admission to the MPA program by applying for graduate nondegree status. Up to nine (9) credit hours taken in nondegree status may be counted toward the degree with the approval of the MPA program director. To apply for graduate nondegree status, go to www.umt.edu/grad/. If you have been admitted to the School of Law, please work with the Registrar’s Office to transfer materials to the Graduate College.

Graduation Requirements
MPA Students who plan to complete their program requirements during a given semester must submit a graduation application to the MPA Director/Graduate College, pay fee, and successfully complete degree requirements (portfolio, coursework, exit interview). Students who do not apply for graduation by the deadline will be charged an additional fee.

Internship Requirements
MPA students that currently work in public and nonprofit organizations are not required to complete an internship, but can pursue an internship outside their organization. Students cannot complete an internship with their current place of employment. However, pre-career MPA students are strongly suggested to work with the MPA Internship Coordinator, Dr. Adam Brewer (adam.brewer@umontana.edu) to complete an internship. Students can complete up to 6 credits of internship credit. These count as electives towards the 36 credits required to complete the MPA degree. Students that complete an internship enroll in PUAD or NPAD 598 and complete a learning agreement with the University's Office of Academic Enrichment. The student is also expected to follow expectations in our department’s internship syllabus, in addition to completing projects/work for internship supervisor. To receive credit, students are expected to perform satisfactorily. Students can pursue an internship after a year of MPA coursework and should have completed at least 4 out of the 6 MPA core classes.

Independent Study Requirements
Independent studies are for students interested in delving deeper into a research topic or applied project. Students can take up to 6 credits to count towards their 36 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. However, if a student opts for an internship and independent study only a total of 6 credits apply towards degree completion. Meet with the MPA Director who oversees independent study projects for assistance.

**Note about Independent Study and Internship Requirements**
Students cannot exceed a total 6 credits for internships and independent study credits. Simply put, a student has the following options: 6 total internship credits; 6 total independent study credits; or 3 independent study credits and 3 internship credits. Under extenuating circumstances, a student can petition the MPA director to exceed a total of 6 credits.

**Provisional Acceptance**
The academic program may recommend a student for provisional admission to the Graduate School for either a single term or an academic year. 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 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 Graduate School on the recommendation of the academic program any time after the first term, but no later than the day before the beginning of the third term. Except for the assignment of teaching assistantships by some departments, provisional admission carries no restrictions regarding financial aid, credit loads, course selection, or other special limitations.

**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. 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 of Public Administration and Policy list in their course syllabus whether or not 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 Department of Public Administration and Policy only allows a student one semester to complete the work. If assignments are not completed on time, the student will receive a failing grade.

Students who withdraw from the University while a semester is in progress must complete withdrawal forms which are obtained from the Office of the Registrar in Lommasson 201. Drop/add forms cannot be used to withdraw from school and students are not allowed to drop all their courses on the Internet. International students must first contact the Foreign
Student Advisor before withdrawing as visa status will be affected. Medical withdrawals are granted only for a student’s significant health problems and must be documented by a healthcare provider. When withdrawal forms are completed in the Office of the Registrar in Lommasson 201 before the last two weeks of the semester, grades of W (withdrawal) are assigned. Beginning two weeks from the end of the term, students may not withdraw from the University except for very unusual circumstances. Such late withdrawals are to be approved by the student’s academic dean before the end of the semester. However, in exceptional cases, a student’s academic dean may approve retroactive withdrawal for the last semester in attendance, provided the request is approved before the end of the student’s next semester of enrollment. For complete academic policies, please view the UM Catalog: http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/.

Disability Assistance
Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction for students with disabilities in collaboration with instructors and Disability Services for Students, which is located in Lommasson Center 154. The University does not permit fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.

Student Code of Conduct
The Student Conduct Code at the University of Montana embodies and promotes honesty, integrity, accountability, rights, and responsibilities associated with constructive citizenship in our academic community. This Code describes expected standards of behavior for all students, including academic conduct and general conduct, and it outlines students’ rights, responsibilities, and the campus processes for adjudicating alleged violations.

Financial Assistance

Teaching Assistantships
A limited number of Teaching Assistantships are awarded each year. Applicants are evaluated by the department’s scholarship committee. Teaching assistants are required to work 20 hours per week, and duties may include assisting a professor with a class, teaching an online or in-person undergraduate nonprofit class, or providing research assistance. A student must be fully admitted to the program to apply. Renewal of a TAship is not guaranteed, and a performance review is completed by faculty supervisor(s) and will remain on file with the MPA Director. Contingent upon funding, every March students will receive an email from the Department Chair to apply for available positions.

Department Scholarships
The Department of Public Administration & Policy offers a limited number of scholarships each academic year. To apply, a student must be a fully admitted MPA student with a 3.3 or higher GPA. If a student is newly admitted, they must have a 3.3 or higher undergraduate GPA. Scholarship applications are open to MPA/JD, MPA/MPH, MPA (general), and MPA/nonprofit tracks. All online and in person students are encouraged to apply. If
awarded, a student must be registered for 6 credits. Scholarships are applied to a student’s tuition bill.

Additionally, the University offers graduate-level fellowships and scholarships. Please see [www.umt.edu/grad/](http://www.umt.edu/grad/) for a current list of opportunities.

**Financial Aid**

There are two categories of financial assistance available to graduate students at the University of Montana. The first category, teaching and research assistantships, are awarded by the University and are given on the basis of academic merit or the ability to perform specific services. The second category is loans. Student loans are administered through the Financial Aid Office and are based on demonstrated financial need.

To be sure you have the funds to attend Graduate School, we advise students to fill out the online Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early in the year as possible.

Completing all the necessary paperwork to receive federal financial aid is a time-consuming process both for students and the University. Students who do not send in FAFSA forms early risk arriving on campus at the beginning of the semester only to find that their financial aid is going to be delayed a month or more. It is for this reason that we suggest students arrive on campus with enough funds to support themselves for at least one month.

Once the University receives the aid report from the federal government, the Financial Aid Office will evaluate your file and send you an estimation of aid and requests for any documents that may be missing. Once everything has been received, you will receive an award letter from the University and a promissory note for loans if you have requested them.

**Awards and Honors**

**Pi Alpha Alpha (UMMPA)**

University of Montana’s Chapter of Pi Alpha Alpha (UMPAA) fosters innovative applied learning experiences and scholarship in public administration, policy, and affairs. This is facilitated through the assertion of public service values, which are at the core of the University of Montana's MPA program. By serving the students, alumni, and associates of the University of Montana, UMPAA strives to enhance the experiences of its members and community by providing opportunities for professional development, applied learning, and networking through academic and professional support.

Qualifications for membership:

- Fully admitted MPA student
- Completed 18 MPA approved credits (electives or core classes)
- Maintain a 3.7 GPA or higher
- Alumni with a 3.7 GPA or higher are also eligible to apply for membership. If you cannot locate your unofficial transcript, contact the MPA Director.
Applications for membership are accepted on a rolling basis with seasonal application deadlines. Please see www.umt.edu/law/mpa/pasa for current deadlines and dues.

**Department Public Service Awards**
Each year, department faculty nominate students who maintain a high GPA and promote a public service ethic. A student from each of the following areas is selected annually: MPA (general), MPA (nonprofit), MPA/MPH, MPA/JD. These students are recognized during our annual Celebrating Students Event. The annual internship of the year award is determined by nomination by internship supervisors and faculty vote.

**Baucus Leaders Program**
The Max S. Baucus Institute invites applications from University of Montana undergraduate and graduate students for an opportunity to be part of the second class of Baucus Leaders each summer. The Institute recognizes that, much like Ambassador Baucus’s own life experiences, it is the public service experiences that we can provide to students that will inspire them to engage in meaningful work to benefit society. The Institute seeks ten exceptional Montana college students to make up our second class of Baucus Leaders.

Baucus Leaders are placed as interns in Washington D.C.-based legislative, committee, or agency offices. In the past, these have included:

- Senator Steve Daines (R-MT)
- Senator Jon Tester (D-MT)
- Representative Greg Gianforte (R-MT)
- United States Senate Finance Committee
- United States Department of Transportation (2 positions)
- Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA)
- Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
- Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY)
- Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
- Department of Transportation

Usually each internship starts on or around June 1 and ends on or around August 1. Baucus Leaders are given a stipend to defray the costs of airfare to and from Washington, D.C., housing, and food during the two-month internship. The Baucus Leader will be solely responsible for any expenses incurred during the internship period over and above this amount.

Baucus Leaders will be selected based on academic performance, commitment to public service, and interest in the political process. The program is open to all current University of Montana undergraduate and graduate students who are in good academic standing at the time of applying and who will are enrolled as full-time students at a Montana public college or university during the fall semester after their summer internship.
The Department of Public Administration and Policy are committed to your success. We look forward to working with you!

Dr. Sara Rinfret, Professor and Chair, MPA Director

Professor Anthony Johnstone, Professor of Law, MPA/JD Liaison

Dr. Andrea Vernon, Clinical Professor, Director, Civic Engagement, Nonprofit Career Advisor

Professor Sam Panarella, Professor of Law, Baucus Institute Director

Dr. Adam Brewer, Assistant Professor, Internship Coordinator

Dr. Christina Barsky, Assistant Professor, Pi Alpha Alpha Advisor