NC STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
MPA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
(*Revised Fall 2013*)

CONTENTS

Welcome to the Master of Public Administration Program!

The Public Administration (PA) faculty welcomes you to the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. Throughout your MPA studies, the program will strive to provide you with a sound education in the principles and practices associated with effective public service.

To benefit from the time you are investing in your MPA, the faculty urges you to become familiar with the program and university's policies and to take advantage of the resources that both the program and university offer. This handbook summarizes the policies that the MPA faculty considers the most important. Throughout the academic year, news and announcements will be posted on the program's website and/or emailed to all students. The faculty welcomes your ideas about the program, including ways we can make this handbook more useful to you.

I.   MPA Program Mission and Goals

The mission[1] of NC State's MPA program is

> **"To develop principled and skilled public service professionals who fulfill leadership roles within governmental and nonprofit organizations. Our focus is on practical and problem-solving skills and emphasizes public service values including efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and accountability."**

Stemming from this mission, the goals of the MPA program are to:

1. Provide a generalist management education that develops mission-relevant competencies[2] enabling graduates

   - To lead and manage in public governance
   - To participate in and contribute to the public policy process
   - To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions
   - To articulate a public service perspective
   - To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry

2. Recruit and serve a diverse set of talented students committed to public service careers, including

   - Pre-service and in-service students
   - Students from historically underrepresented groups
   - Students with interests in the public (local, state, federal) and/or nonprofit sectors

3. Provide opportunities for students to tailor public service specialties consistent with their interests and abilities, the university's strengths, and labor market needs

4. Provide internships for pre-service students that use and extend the skills they have developed in the MPA program and prepare them for the professional job market

5. Prepare students to be successful in competition for post-graduate internships and public service jobs

6. Prepare in-service students to advance in the public or nonprofit sector

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[1] Following a multi-year review, the PA faculty adopted a draft MPA mission statement in October 2012; following additional stakeholder input, the final version was adopted in April 2013.

[2] These are the five universal required competency domains from the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration's (NASPAA) accreditation standards for MPA programs. The standards are available on-line at: http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/naspaastandards.asp. NC State's MPA program developed operational definitions for each of these five domains in the form of expected student learning outcomes, as specified in the program's assessment plan.

II.   ADVISING AND INFORMATION

Graduate Secretary

One of the first people students get to know in the MPA program is the graduate secretary, Mac McGee. Mac is a valuable source of information for a variety of program and university-related questions. He often sends out messages regarding deadlines (registration, applications for graduation, etc.), school or program events, and course schedules—for issues such as these, he should be your first point of contact (wlmcgee@ncsu.edu or 919-515-5159).

Responsibilities of the Faculty Advisor

Newly admitted students are assigned an advisor who shares their areas of interest. The advisor is ready to help with information and suggestions about courses, course schedules, and career opportunities. You should contact your assigned advisor upon admission to the program to begin program planning with your advisor**. *At your first meeting*** you should discuss your career objectives (and at subsequent meetings since it is likely that those objectives may change over the course of your studies). You should expect your advisor to help identify appropriate courses and when to take them. Normally new faculty members do not serve as advisors during their first semester.

Changing Advisors

You may decide that another faculty advisor will better serve your needs. You should not hesitate to ask another faculty member to serve as you advisor. If the faculty member agrees, you should notify the Graduate Secretary who will make the change in department records.

When to Consult Your Advisor

Answers to many routine program questions can be found in this handbook, on the MPA webpage, or by contacting the PA graduate secretary. For other questions or concerns, your advisor is likely your best source of information.

Students are strongly encouraged to see their advisor at least once each year for academic and professional advising. The Student Information System (SIS) automatically places holds on students' registration each semester. In your first semester, you need to make contact with your advisor before the hold is lifted. Thereafter, students and advisors should meet at least annually.

By the time you complete 20 credit hours, you should submit a Plan of Work—a semester-by-semester outline of all courses needed to complete the MPA degree. Students consult with their advisor to develop the plan of work, then students enter their Plan of Work in SIS (*discussed in more detail below*). Once submitted, the advisor and director of graduate programs (DGP) will review the Plan of Work and either approve it or return it to the student for modification.

Responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Programs (DGP)
For matters that cannot be addressed by the graduate secretary or your advisor, the PA director of graduate programs (DGP) should be able to help. The Graduate School specifies the following

responsibilities for the DGP (which offers an indication of the types of issues the DGP can assist with). The PA DGP:

1. Handles all correspondence between Graduate School and the graduate program;
2. Initiates program-related proposals to the Administrative Board, either informally through contact with Graduate Deans or formally through written proposals to be considered at Administrative Board meetings; seeks approval of College Graduate Studies Committee and College Associate Dean for Academic Affairs prior to submitting to ABGS.
3. Student recruitment;
4. Conducts orientation of new graduate students;
5. Advises students requesting admission to graduate program;
6. Recommends admission or denial of graduate applicants;
7. Conducts the daily administration of departmental graduate programs;
8. Serves as temporary advisor to new graduate students, providing them information and advice including but not limited to course selection and scheduling, faculty interests, procedural matters, and University resources;
9. Appoints graduate students to assistantships and fellowships;
10. Approves students' plans of work after approval by Graduate Committee; submit plan to Graduate School;
11. Submits requests for scheduling preliminary and final oral examinations and graduation checkouts;
12. Transmits information from Graduate School to students
13. Monitors graduate students' progress and graduation credits
14. Advises students;
15. Assists new students in selecting major advisor;
16. Nominates eligible students for individual fellowships and transmits their applications to Graduate School;
17. Assists Graduate School in conducting the 10-year review of the graduate program, by initiating process of self-study upon notification by Graduate Dean;
18. Assists Graduate School in developing fellowship proposals, including recruitment of Graduate Faculty to draft proposals and participate in proposed fellowship project;
19. Assists Graduate School in managing fellowship awards to the program's graduate students.

Faculty/Staff Office Hours and Availability for Advising

Faculty members, including the PA Chair, have diverse responsibilities that include teaching, advising, research, writing, committee service, public outreach, and other professional responsibilities, often conducted outside their offices. PA faculty post their office hours outside their offices and on their course syllabi. Most faculty members will schedule appointments outside of their office hours and make concerted efforts to accommodate the schedule limitations of in-service MPA students. You are encouraged to leave a phone message, e-mail message, or written message on the faculty member's message board to ensure prompt attention from that faculty member.

Student Mailboxes

All currently enrolled MPA students are provided mailboxes in the cabinet outside Caldwell 212 and the PA Office. A list of PA students and their mailbox numbers is located adjacent to the mailboxes. Since evening classes are scheduled in Caldwell 212 the mailboxes are normally accessible on Monday through Thursday evenings.

MPA Publications

The MPA Office provides up-to-date course and curriculum information to advisors, students, and staff. MPA publications do not attempt to duplicate the information available to students and faculty from the publications of Registration and Records (e.g., course schedules and registration information http://www.ncsu.edu/registrar/courses/index.html), the Graduate School (e.g., the Graduate Catalog http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/catalog/index.php), and other relevant University offices.

The key MPA publication is this **MPA Policies and Procedures** handbook. Other important materials produced by the MPA office include and posted on the PA website and/or emailed to students are:

PA courses descriptions at: http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/reg_records/crs_cat/dir_PA.html A sampling of MPA course syllabi are posted on the "Current Students" portion of the MPA website: http://spia.ncsu.edu/pa/current-students/mpa/courses.html

SPIA and PA Newsletters. The School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) produces a Fall newsletter and the Department of Public Administration produces one in the Spring. These publications may report recent changes in program policies as well as announcements of special events and dates and deadlines for program activities. MPA students, alums, and faculty are encouraged to provide news for these publications by giving information to the Graduate Secretary concerning jobs, internship placements, personal announcements, etc. Students can access the newsletter on the SPIA and PA websites or receive them via e-mail.

The MPA Directory is published in September and January of each academic year. The directory lists the names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of currently enrolled students, staff, and faculty. (Students not wishing to have their information included in the PA Directory should contact the graduate secretary. Also, the university publishes an on-line student directory—you can set your privacy settings in MyPack Portal).

Career Services information (e.g., internship procedures, job opportunities, and other program areas are posted at the department's Career Services webpage http://spia.ncsu.edu/pa/current-students/careers/index.html)

The MPA Competency Guide and sample exam questions are sent to students who have indicated that they plan to take the comprehensive examinations in a given exam period. The guide covers major theoretical and applied competencies required of degree candidates, developed through the core courses. (See: http://spia.ncsu.edu/pa/current-students/mpa/exams.html)

III.   DESCRIPTION OF THE MPA PROGRAM

NC State's MPA degree is a 40-hour program designed to provide an integrated and interdisciplinary academic experience. Begun in 1968, the program has over 1100 alumni who hold professional positions in public and nonprofit agencies throughout the state of North Carolina and beyond.

The program consists of several overlapping components: 1) economics, statistics, and American government requirements; 2) a core curriculum of 18 credit hours; 3) 22 hours of elective coursework where students develop an individualized specialty; and 4) an internship requirement for all except those degree candidates with public sector work experience.

Statistics, Economics, and American Government Requirements

MPA program students are expected to have completed two courses in American government or public policy, a microeconomics course, and course in statistics equivalent to ST 311. Students who do not have this "prerequisite coursework" may take appropriate courses as they begin their MPA coursework. Students who do not meet the American government prerequisite should take either PA508: Government and Public Administration (1 credit hour) or PA 507: The Public Policy Process (3 credits). Similarly, students who do not meet the microeconomics requirement should take PA 509: Applied Political Economy (3 credits), and those not meeting the statistics requirement should take ST 507: Statistics for Behavioral Sciences I (3 credits), offered through NC State's Department of Statistics (in traditional and on-line formats). All of these courses meet the respective prerequisite and can be included on the graduate Plan of Work. (Students wishing to meet the program prerequisites through undergraduate coursework—which cannot be included on the graduate Plan of Work— should consult their advisor about taking appropriate courses.)

Core Courses

The core curriculum offers a comprehensive public management education, developed in conformance with the professional standards developed by the Network of Schools of Public Affairs, Policy, and Administration (NASPAA), the sole source of academic accreditation in the field of public administration. The core courses are designed to ensure students' mastery of NASPAA's universal required competencies.

There are 18 hours of required core courses that introduce the major aspects of public service management. PA510 and PA601 should be taken in the first semester (part-time students make take these courses in the first or second semester). The faculty recommends that PA511 be taken in the first semester. Full-time students with limited work experience should take PA514 in their third semester.

The core courses are:
   • PA 510 Ethics and Professional Practice (1.5 cr.)[3]
   • PA 511 Public Policy Analysis (3 cr.)
   • PA 512 Budgetary Process (3 cr.)
   • PA 513 Public Organization Behavior (3 cr.)

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[3] PA 510 and PA 601 are taken co-currently; PA601 meets during the first half (7 weeks) of the semester and PA510 during the second half (7 weeks).

• PA 514 Management Systems (3 cr.)
• PA 515 Research Methods and Analysis (3 cr.)
• PA 601 Effective Public Communications (1.5 cr.)

Specializations and Concentrations

In addition to the generalist management education, which is the core of the MPA program, the curriculum is designed to enable students to pursue more specialized courses in areas of interest to their professional public service careers. Students work with their advisor to tailor an administrative or subject area specialization, geared to their academic interests and career objectives. Students are encouraged to develop a specialty by taking electives in PA, other departments and colleges at NC State, and/or at UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Greensboro, or Duke through the Inter-Institutional Registration program (see below). The MPA program offers elective coursework in nonprofit management, urban/local government management, the administration of justice, budget and financial management, public policy, environmental policy, human resource management, and geographic information systems.

MPA students who want to develop a content-area specialty may take electives in other departments and disciplines. A few students decide to pursue the MPA and another master's degree simultaneously as "multiple masters" students.

Electives In Other Departments Or Universities (through Inter-Institutional Registration)

Students may include up to 15 credit hours of graduate-level, non-PA electives on their plan of study. To count towards the MPA degree, an outside course must directly relate to some aspect of public/nonprofit management or public policy. Under the Inter-institutional Registration agreement, NCSU graduate students are permitted to register for classes at other campuses upon recommendation of their advisor. For more information, see http://www.ncsu.edu/registrar/inter-institutional/index.html

Multiple Masters

MPA students may be able to count selected graduate courses on the Plans of Work for more than one degree. The policy governing transferring courses from one degree to another are spelled out in the Graduate Administrative Handbook (http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/handbook/sections/3.11-awarding-multiple-masters.html#A). Students must fulfill all requirements of each degree, including being admitted by each program. University policy is that 18 credit hours of the 30 credit hour minimums for each degree program must be unique to that degree program. The remaining credit hours may be part of more than one degree program. The MPA program further requires that at least 25 of the 40 credit hours included on the MPA Plan of Work be from PA-designated courses (i.e., the 18 hour core plus at least 7 additional PA credit hours).

Students interested in pursuing two Masters simultaneously should meet with the PA DGP for more information on current university policies and procedures. Additional information can also be found at: http://spia.ncsu.edu/pa/current-students/mpa/multiple-masters.html

Dual Degree: MPA and Juris Doctor (JD) with Campbell University's Wiggins School of Law

Since 2010, NC State and Campbell University's Wiggins School of Law have partnered to offer a dual MPA/JD degree program. Students must be admitted to both programs, separately, and declare their

intention to pursue dual degrees. By allowing certain courses to satisfy requirements for both programs, students pursuing MPA/JD dual degrees can earn both degrees in as few as four years. For additional information, see: http://law.campbell.edu/page.cfm?id=393&n=tracks-dual-degree-programs

Internships (http://spia.ncsu.edu/pa/current-students/careers/internships.html)

Upon admission, students will be designated as in-service, pre-service, or pre-service with experience students. The internship (PA 650) is required for pre-service students to provide a bridge between academic education and professional practice. In designating pre-service or in-service status, the program will consider the duration, roles, and responsibilities of previous work experience. Students lacking at least one year of administrative or policy-related work will normally be designated as pre-service students. Those with some relevant public service work may be designated "pre-service with experience." Requests from pre-service or pre-service with experience students to be reclassified as in-service students and to have the internship requirement waived will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such requests may be granted in situations where, for example, a student's public service internship evolves into a permanent position during the course of their MPA studies and before the internship course has been taken or, in the case of a "pre-service with experience" student, the continuation of their public service employment warrants reclassification to "in-service" designation. All such requests should be submitted in writing to the student's faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will review the request, discuss it with the student, and make a recommendation to the PA DGP who, in turn, will make the final determination.

PA651, Advanced Practical Training, may be arranged for experienced and in-service students who wish to change fields of employment or who need administrative experience.

No more than 3 hours of academic credit for PA 650 (Internship) or PA651 (Advanced Practical Training) may be applied to the forty hours required for the degree, but additional internships may be taken. Per NASPAA accreditation standards, students completing a required internship (PA 650) must work the equivalent of 300 hours (e.g., 20 hours per week over the standard 15 week semester). To insure that students have an opportunity to apply what they have learned in the MPA program, they must have completed at least four of the core courses, PA511-515, before beginning the last 100 hours of their internship. Requirements include at least the following: signed contracts among students, agency supervisors, and faculty advisors; attendance at all meetings conducted by the internship director for MPA interns; submission of internship essays and projects for grading; and oral and written performance evaluations by the agency supervisor.

Students normally complete the equivalent of one year of full-time MPA study before registering for PA 650.

IV.   PLAN OF GRADUATE WORK

Overview

Each MPA degree candidate must file a Plan of Work in the automated Student Information System (SIS). This must be done upon completion of 20 graduate credit hours. Students cannot take comprehensive exams or graduate without having a fully updated Plan of Work submitted in SIS and approved by their advisor, PA program director, and the Graduate School. Information on how to access SIS through "My Pack Portal" and to submit a Plan of Work is available at:
http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/faculty-and-staff/docs/GRAD-SIS-training-manual-students.pdf

An acceptable Plan of Work for the MPA degree identifies the students' advisor as his only committee member, lists a minimum of 40 total credit hours, including all MPA core courses (18 credits), and a total of at least 25 credits of PA courses. If applicable (i.e., for pre-service students), the Plan of Work should also include three credits of internship. For students admitted with prerequisites, those courses that are eligible for graduate credit should be included.

Changes in Plan of Work

After discussing proposed changes with their advisor, students submit Plan of Work revisions in SIS for advisor, program, and Graduate School approval.

Concerns Relating To Plans of Work

Completing MPA with less than 40 credit hours. Students completing certain public or nonprofit certification programs may be eligible to complete the MPA with fewer than 40 credits. For example: students who have completed the North Carolina Certified Public Managers (CPM) Program are only required to complete 34 hours in the MPA program; students who have completed Duke University's Certificate in Nonprofit Management Program within three years of starting the MPA can receive their MPA degree after completing 37 credit hours of course work; and students completing UNC School of Government's Municipal and County Administrators course can complete the MPA with 36 credit hours. Graduates of the Administrative Officers Management Program (AOMP) can transfer six graduate credit hours (earned in PBS status) into the MPA program and must complete a minimum of 31 additional graduate hours, including the 18-hour core curriculum, to satisfy the MPA degree hour requirement. AOMP graduates admitted to the MPA program are not required to take PA 508; however, all other prerequisite course requirements must be met. Other certification programs may be eligible for similar credit toward the MPA. In determining if such coursework/certification is appropriate for outside credit, the MPA program uses the following criteria:

1. Are the courses clearly oriented to public/nonprofit management or to specific public/nonprofit policy areas?
2. Do the courses provide broader *analytic* tools and concepts rather than just practical applications?
3. Are the courses clearly at the gradu*ate leve*l? Among the aspects considered in making this overall determination are:
   a. How many hours of classroom teaching?
   b. Do the courses clearly require graduate-level work assignments, including a graduate-level reading load?

c. Is student performance evaluated rigorously, based on meaningful research assignments or tests?
d. Are the courses already granted academic credit by other universities

When submitting the Plan of Work through SIS, students who have approved outside coursework should list the appropriate number of transfer credits and a comment on the POW (using the "comment" field) indicating that the credits derive from having attained a recognized certification.

400-Level Courses From Other Disciplines on Your Plan of Work

Graduate credit is granted only for 500 and above level courses in the major; up to six credit hours of 400-level courses from other disciplines are permissible, per Graduate School policy.

In order to receive graduate degree credit, a grade of "C" (2.0) or higher is required. Courses in which you receive unacceptable grades (D, F, or U, for example) must not be on the original Plan of Work and must be formally deleted before taking written comprehensives. If grades of "B-" or lower have been received, remember that an overall 3.0 grade point average is needed to graduate.

Designating Your "Committee Chair"

The MPA is an "option B" (no thesis) masters degree, so there no advisory "committee" like there is for thesis-option programs. So when entering your plan of work, you should list your faculty advisor as your committee "chair"—you do not need to and should not list additional faculty (committee) members.

Time Limits for Degree Completion

All requirements for the MPA degree must be completed within six calendar years from the date students take their first graduate course applicable to the MPA degree. Students who are transferring courses from another graduate degree may complete all requirements within 8 calendar years. Courses transferred from another master's degree must meet the criteria outlined in the transfer credit section below.

PBS Course Work

Under normal circumstances, up to nine semester credits taken as a post-baccalaureate studies (PBS) student prior to admission to the MPA program may be applied toward degree requirements.

Transfer Credit

At least 27 credit hours must be taken after the student is enrolled in the NC State MPA program. Normally, a maximum of nine semester hours of graduate course work, including work taken for another master's degree, may be transferred to the MPA degree. Courses can transferred only if: 1) they were completed in a graduate classification at a graduate school accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or equivalent regional accrediting body; 2) grades of "B"' (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or better were earned; and 3) they are related to public administration, public policy, or consistent with the student's area of professional interest.

V.   WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

MPA students are required to complete comprehensive written exams. Competency-based study guides are available at: http://spia.ncsu.edu/pa/current-students/mpa/exams.html

Policies and Procedures

1. Students eligible to take the written comprehensive exams must have: a graduate GPA of at least 3.0; completed all of their required core courses and prerequisite (i.e., statistics, microeconomics, and/or PA 507 or 508); filed a plan of graduate Plan of Work in SIS; and notified the PA Graduate Secretary of their intent to take the exam by the specified filing date.

2. The written comprehensive examination is administered in January, May, and August. At the beginning of each academic year the exam dates for the next 12 months are announced. Review session dates for the January exams are announced in September, and the for the May and August exams in February.

3. The written exam is administered from 1-5 pm on two consecutive days (see above). Calculators are permitted and should be brought. However, no notes are allowed. The first day covers policy analysis, management systems, and organizational theory. The second day covers budgeting, research methods, and ethics. There are no break periods. Students are not permitted to use electronic devices (iPods, cell phones, etc.)—other than a calculator—during the examination.

4. The exam questions are written and graded by faculty who teach core courses. If more than one faculty member teaches a core course service on the examining committee rotates. Great care is taken by the examiners to ensure that student performance is not related to which instructor writes and grades the exam question. Members of the examining committee are appointed by the PA Chair.

5. The grading scale for the exams is High Pass, Pass, Low Pass, or Fail. The examining committee may recommend that a student who fails one or more sections of the exam retake all or specified parts of the examination. Students may retake the exam at a regularly scheduled examination period or, upon recommendation of the examining committee, at an earlier time. MPA students who fail to complete a portion(s) of the comprehensive exam receive a fail on that portion(s).

6. Students who fail four or more sections of the comprehensive examinations will be eligible to be retested on these sections during the regularly scheduled comprehensive exam periods. Students being re-examined will take the same test as the other students, but the re-examined students will not have to answer sections that they previously passed.

7. Students who begin their comprehensive exams but do not complete all portions of the exam will have the missed portion(s) treated as a failure, unless a legitimate and verified excuse is provided. (*Adopted August 13, 2010*)

8. Students failing written comprehensive exams twice will be terminated from the program. In such cases, students may petition the examining committee to determine if any additional remedies are

appropriate. The PA Chair or Director of Graduate Programs, based on the recommendation of the examining committee, may request that a terminated student be reinstated. (*Adopted August 27, 2007*)

9. Students will be informed of the outcome of their exam no later than 10 calendar days following the completion of all (i.e., the second day of) exams.

Exam Dates	Review Sessions	Sign-up Deadlines
January Mon-Tues prior to the state of Spring classes	Late Oct. or early Nov	2nd week in December
May Mon-Tues following Spring graduation	Late March or early April	2nd week in April
August Mon-Tues immediately before classes begin	Late March or early April	1st week in August

Written Examination Format

The written exams are comprehensive, covering course material as well as general theories, concepts, and techniques of public management. Questions emphasize both theoretical and applied skills. While the questions are drawn from the core course subject matter, you should incorporate all course material into preparing your responses.

Preparation for the examination should begin with the first course the student takes. At the start of each semester, MPA students should review the competency examination guides for each of the core courses (PA 510, PA 511, PA 512, PA 513, PA 514 and PA 515). The competency examination guides are available on the MPA website for current students.

Notes taken in class and on textual material are invaluable in preparing for the exam. Review sessions are held twice a year, in the spring and fall semesters. Review session dates for the January exams are announced in September, and the for the May and August exams in February.

The exam questions are written and graded by faculty who teach core courses. If more than one faculty member teaches a core course service on the examining committee rotates. Great care is taken by the examiners to ensure that student performance is not related to which instructor writes and grades the exam question. The PA Chair consults with the Director of Graduate Programs and then appoints the examining committee. The grading scale for the exams is High Pass, Pass, Low Pass, or Fail. Students will be informed of the outcome of their exam within 10 days of completing the entire examination. Students can register for the comprehensive exams after completing all of the prerequisite and core MPA course. To register to take the exams, please contact Mr. Mac McGee, Graduate Secretary, by email (wlmcgee@ncsu.edu) or by phone (919-515-5159).

VI.   ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MPA students should review the NC State Graduate School's Handbook for academic policies and procedures for graduate degrees, financial assistance and student codes of conduct. The Graduate School Handbook can be found online, http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/handbook/sections/index.php.

A sampling of the policies and procedures that may be helpful to MPA students includes:

Course Load

A full-time graduate course load is 9 to 15 credits per semester (including audited courses) and 6 credits per summer session (including audits). Most full-time MPA students take 9 to 12 hours during regular sessions. Part-time students generally take 3-6 hours.

Course Audits

Students wishing to audit courses must have the approval of their advisors and of the instructors teaching the courses. While auditors receive no course credit, they are expected to attend class regularly and participate in any way defined by the instructor. A grade of NR (no recognition given for audit) is possible. (For details on auditing, see: http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/catalog/audits.html)

A graduate student may register for one audit in any semester without charge when registered and paying for other on-campus course work; each additional audit in the same semester will cost the same as for credit. It is possible for a previously audited course to be taken at a later date for credit, upon the faculty advisor's approval.

Directed Studies
The program offers two courses—PA 580 Independent Study and PA 635 Readings and Research— which permit students to design a course around extensive readings, research, and writing in a subject of particular interest to a student under direct, individual faculty supervision. Grades are assigned in PA 580 while PA 635 is taken Pass/Fail. Students must get approval from the faculty member. A course contract must be filed in the PA Office and approved by the PA Chair or Director of Graduate Programs by the end of the first week of classes in the semester. If not approved by this time, the registration may be canceled. Contract forms may be obtained from the Graduate Secretary. To meet degree requirements, MPA students may include up to 6 credit hours of PA580: Independent Study, PA635: Readings and Research, or a combination of PA580 and PA635. During any given semester students may sign up for up to 3 credit hours of PA580 or PA635 for a specific study. This does not preclude a student from continuing the study and signing up for an additional three hours of PA580 or PA635 in a later semester.

Transfer Credit

Except in the case of Inter-institutional Registration, grades on courses transferred from another institution will not be included in computing the grade point average. Normally, a maximum of nine semester hours of graduate course work, including work taken for another master's degree, may be

transferred to the MPA degree if: 1) the courses were completed in a graduate classification at a graduate school accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or equivalent regional accrediting body; 2) grades of "B"' (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or better were earned; and 3) they are related to public administration, public policy, or consistent with the student's area of specialization. Participation at non-credit or CEU credit courses outside the area of public administration or public management will not be counted toward the MPA degree. Transfer of credits policies applicable to the MPA program can be found on the Graduate School website: http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/handbook/sections/3.1-minimum-degree-requirements.html.

Policy on Continuous Registration

Students are required to register for courses each semester, excluding summer sessions, until they graduate. Students who do not plan to take classes during a semester must obtain prior permission at least one month before the start of the semester. Students who fail to get prior permission and do not register will have their graduate admission terminated and will have to apply for readmission to graduate school. There is no guarantee that readmission will be granted. (The Request for a Leave of Absence form can be found on the Graduate School website: http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/faculty-and-staff/docs/forms/leave.pdf.)

Grading Policies

Grading policies applicable to graduate courses are explained in the Graduate Catalog (http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/handbook/sections/3.19-graduate-courses.html). Students must maintain a 3.0 average in order to be in good standing in the graduate program and to be eligible for financial aid. The Graduate School automatically terminates the admission of all students who do not have a 3.0 average after completing 18 hours of graduate course work. PBS courses are not included in the calculation of the grade point average until the courses are approved as part of the Graduate Plan of Work.

500 and 700-level courses cannot be taken for credit (S/U) only. It is possible to take a 400-level course as credit-only and satisfy the MPA requirement for a course in these areas, but the course will not count toward the forty hours required for the degree.

Academic Difficulties

Students who receive notification of academic probation should see their advisor as soon as possible. Students may also check the website for university policies and procedures related to academic difficulties (http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/handbook/sections/3.20-academic-difficulty.html). The PA Chair or Director of Graduate Programs, based on the recommendation of the student's advisor and evidence that the student's performance should improve, may request that a terminated student be reinstated.

Grievances

Most problems encountered by graduate students can be resolved through communication between the student and the instructor. If, however, a matter arises which cannot be resolved through student-instructor or student-advisor interaction, then the matter should be brought to the attention of the Director of Graduate Programs or the PA Chair. For further information, the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures outline the entire grievance process (See Discipline and Grievance Procedures, http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/handbook/sections/5.1-discipline-and-grievance.html).

Plagiarism Policy

You will be required to produce at least one outside writing assignment in each of your public administration courses except PA 601. While written assignments may differ considerably from one course to another, you should be aware of departmental policies on plagiarism and dual submissions. Papers that are submitted for one course may not be submitted for another course without the consent of both instructors. Papers that are submitted for more than one course without instructor permission or which are plagiarized will be treated as violations of the university's honor code.

Plagiarized papers will, at a minimum, receive a grade of "0" for the assignment. Material quoted verbatim must be enclosed in quotation marks and accompanied by an appropriate citation. Original ideas paraphrased from a source must also be attributed to that source in a citation.

If you are unsure about the rules that apply to paraphrasing, documentation cites, or anything else that constitutes plagiarism or might bring into question the honesty of your work, you should consult the course instructor. For further general information on scholarly integrity and plagiarism, see Universities Policies Pertaining to Research http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/rcr/research_policies.html.

Applying to or Transferring into the PhD Program

Occasionally, MPA students seek to transfer into the department's PhD in Public Administration program. There are advantages and disadvantages to doing so. Financially, full-time students transferring into the PhD program are eligible for fewer years of support under NC State's graduate student support plan (GSSP) http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/support-plan/: under current rules, the plan bases eligibility on the date a student first takes graduate courses at NC State: for MPA students, this means one or more years of GSSP-eligibility may be exhausted before even starting the PhD program. Academically, there is also a school of thought that it is better for graduate students to earn their masters and doctoral degrees at separate institutions since doing so allows exposure to diverse perspectives.

With those caveats, an MPA student considering entering the PhD program may request an advisory opinion from the PhD admissions committee. After completing 18 credits of MPA course work, a student should send the PA Chair or DGP a statement indicating interest in pursuing the PhD. The chair or DGP will forward the statement and the student's academic records to the PhD

admissions committee. Students who are recommended for future admission into the PhD program will work with their advisor to select courses that may be included in the PhD program of study. Approved additional courses typically will satisfy 1) advanced statistics or methodology course requirements, 2) PA doctoral course requirements, or 3) electives appropriate to the student's doctoral specialty area.

A full-time MPA student may request to transfer into the PhD after completing 18 credit hours if the student has a strong academic record and the student has established a research relationship with a faculty member.

A student who receives an MPA from NC State no more than 12 months prior to enrolling in the Ph.D. program may petition the PA Chair or Director of Graduate Programs to accept up to 18 additional credit hours of coursework. Approved additional courses will satisfy 1) advanced statistics or methodology course requirements, 2) PA doctoral course requirements, or 3) electives appropriate to the student's doctoral specialty area. Independent study courses taken at the 500 or 600 level will not be approved for additional credits. Normally, special topics courses will not be approved.

MPA students who apply to the department's PhD program in Public Administration before graduation from the MPA program do not have to pay the graduate school application fee. Students interested in the PhD program should consult with the PA Chair of Director of Graduate Programs before initiating the application process.

VII.   REGISTRATION AND GRADUATION PROCEDURES

Registration

All students register for courses using the on-line system accessed through My Pack Portal. Directions for accessing the system and registering for classes can be found on the Registration and Records website (see http://www.ncsu.edu/registrar/registration/guide/index.html).

Each semester, SIS automatically places advising holds on student records, preventing registration for the subsequent semester. For new MPA students, holds will be lifted after students meet for their initial advising session with their assigned MPA advisor. For continuing MPA students, advising holds can be released by their advisor or the Director of Graduate Programs (this can be done routinely, for example, when students have an approved Plan of Work on file in SIS). Students are encouraged to register at the first available opportunity, before class rolls become full (see the registration calendar at http://www.ncsu.edu/registrar/calendars/index.html).

Official Withdrawal from the University

Students who wish to drop all their semester or summer session courses must officially withdraw from the University. A student who had pre-registered and prepaid is considered registered and must officially withdraw unless s/he has notified the University prior to the beginning of the semester (summer session). Students considering withdrawal should consult their faculty advisor. A student initiates the official withdrawal process with the Counseling Center, which verifies that the student does not have any outstanding financial obligations. Graduate students should refer to the Graduate School Handbook for policies and procedures on an official withdrawal from the university, see http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/handbook/sections/3.17-withdrawal.html.

Students using the Inter-institutional Registration arrangement must also contact the NC State Department of Registration and Records to initiate the paperwork necessary for withdrawing from the class roll at the other institution.

Filing For Graduation and Diplomas

Applying for graduation is done through My Pack Portal. A description of the graduate process can be found at: http://www.ncsu.edu/registrar/graduation/process.html.

Students should also notify the PA Graduate Secretary of their intent to graduate by the end of the first full week of the semester. Each semester, deadlines for applying for graduation will be posted on the PA Office door and are also emailed to students. Deadlines are also listed on the Registration and Records website and in the University's academic calendar. The academic calendar for graduate students can be found online at http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/faculty-and-staff/academic-calendar.html.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they complete their coursework during the semester they apply to graduate in and that no incompletes are on their records. In addition, students should have no library fines or other fees outstanding. Failure to pay attention to these details may result in the Graduate School placing a "hold" on the diploma. The MPA Program is not notified of such holds until the graduation date has passed.

A graduate student who establishes a graduation date by enrolling in the last course on the Plan of Work and who does not complete all the requirements (incomplete grades) by the graduation date is put on "hold" for a period of thirty days following graduation. The Graduate School will notify the student and his/her Director of Graduate Programs of this action by letter. If the student does not complete the outstanding requirement within thirty days after the graduation date, his/her name is removed from the graduation list and added to the next graduation list following the removal of the outstanding requirement(s). If the student's time limit for the degree expires before the outstanding requirement is met, his/her graduate program will be terminated unless a request for extension is submitted to and approved by the Graduate School.

Students will receive a diploma indicating the MPA. The administrative specialization or a graduate certificate is not listed on the diploma. (Note: Students earning a graduate certificate in Nonprofit Management or Public Policy will receive a separate certificate. The graduate certificate program will be designated on the student's transcript and the student will receive a certificate from Registration and Records. To receive the certificate, students must also apply online through MyPackPortal.)

VIII.   STUDENT SERVICES

MPA Program Career Information and Placement

Information regarding current job opportunities and internships are posted on the PA website at http://spia.ncsu.edu/pa/current-students/careers/internships.html. In addition, the Internship/External Relations Coordinator maintains an electronic mailing list of active job seekers and communicates directly with them regarding opportunities. The coordinator also assists students in developing a placement file, securing leads to professional positions, and preparing for interviews (often in conjunction with requirements of PA 650: PA Internship).

The program disseminates announcements information regarding competitive post-graduate internships, such as the Presidential Management Fellowship program and various city and state fellowships and internship. Three national professional associations (NASPAA, ASPA, and APPAM) have created a job source for public service careers in government, nonprofits and NGO's. To find a full-time job or competitive internship, students should also use PublicServiceCareers.org see http://www.publicservicecareers.org/

Alumni are the most ready source of information about career opportunities. Individual faculty members or office staff may be able to direct you to appropriate alumni. In recent yeas, the PA Alumni Society has sponsored "days" (e.g., local government, state government, environment) to bring students and alumni together to learn about specific career opportunities. For the past several years, the society has hosted an annual fall luncheon organized around a current theme (e.g., in 2012, the focus was Public-Private Partnerships) and a spring professional networking social.

Financial Aid

The PA Department has a limited number of assistantships available to full-time students. All full-time students are considered for assistantships at the time that they are admitted to the program. The Internship Coordinator works with students who do not receive financial aid to identify temporary jobs.

Students with Disabilities

In conjunction with the NC State Disability Services Office, the PA Department works with eligible students to provide reasonable accommodations. Students eligible for accommodation should contact the Disability Services Office http://www.ncsu.edu/dso/ to establish their eligibility for such services and to assure that they receive needed accommodations.

Other Services

Your student fees cover an array of services. Consult the various websites to learn about the services offered, when they are offered, and any eligibility requirements:

University Career Center http://www.ncsu.edu/career/

Designed to assist students in developing their career objectives and to provide a link for the student between the academic community and employers. Services of the Center are available on a

year-round basis. Contact the Career Center directly for full information on services provided. It is located in 2100 Pullen Hall (next to Harris Hall), 515-2396

Libraries (http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/ **)**

The library regularly adds services both on-line and physically. Visit the library building and web site to see what is available. Two widely used services are Trip Saver, which delivers books and articles from area libraries, and Electronic Reserves.

Student Health Services (http://www.ncsu.edu/student_health/ **)**

All currently enrolled students are eligible for medical care. The pre-paid health fee covers professional services such as nurse and M.D. visits, laboratory tests, cold medications and health education. There is a nominal charge for x-rays, prescriptions and specialty clinics. Students are responsible for all services received off-campus, e.g., M.D. or hospital. Student Health Services is located in the Health Services Building at 2158 Cates Avenue.

NCSU strongly encourages each student to have accident and sickness insurance protection, either by their parents' group policy or under the NCSU Student Insurance Plan. The policy offered by the University helps cover the cost of referrals to off-campus specialists or to hospitals for serious illnesses.

University Counseling Center (http://healthcenter.ncsu.edu/counseling-center/ **)**

This Center provides services designed to assist individuals in gaining a better understanding of themselves and their opportunities. The types of services offered include: help in choosing a career; academic planning; identifying and overcoming educational difficulties; developing greater self-understanding; developing more satisfying personal relationships; and coping with stress or emotional crisis. Workshops are offered on various topics such as test anxiety and money management. Services for physically disabled and learning disabled students are also available. All counseling is strictly confidential.

One-to-one and group counseling is available, with workshops offered throughout the year in a variety of areas. There is no cost for enrolled students. Appointments may be scheduled over the telephone by calling 515-2423 or in person by visiting the Counseling Center on the second floor of the Health Services Building, 2815 Cates Avenue. Walk-ins are available from 9 am to 4 pm daily and 11am -4pm Wednesdays.

CHASS Computing Laboratory (http://it.chass.ncsu.edu/software/lab.php**)**

The MPA students have access to needed software and peripheral equipment in labs located in Winston, Tompkins, Withers, and the "Laundry Building" Check the web site for information on hours and available resources.

IX.   ORGANIZATIONS AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A variety of social and professional contacts with other students, alumni and practitioners are essential parts of pursuing education for a professional career.

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) (http://www.aspanet.org/)

All MPA students are strongly encouraged to join ASPA, the principal professional association in the field. ASPA is dedicated to better government and excellence in public service. ASPA is a unique society which addresses all professional levels and the functional diversity found in the public service. Members include practitioners in city, county, state and federal governments, academicians, students, and business and community leaders who discuss their concerns, exchange ideas, and share knowledge through ASPA. One of ASPA's best features is its grass-roots orientation. Local ASPA members can belong to the Research Triangle Chapter. Careers are enhanced through networking, luncheons, forums, seminars, conferences, and workshops. Students are welcome and active in chapter activities, affording them the opportunity to meet practicing public administrators. The American Society for Public Administration has an annual conference, and its regions sponsor annual conferences. Members of ASPA receive: 1) *Public Administration Review*, the major journal in the field of public administration, published 6 times per year, with occasional special editions; and 2) *PA Times*, a bimonthly newspaper that includes public management job listings.

Graduate Association of Public Administration (GAPA)

GAPA is the student organization for graduate students in public administration at North Carolina State University. It is an affiliate of the university's Graduate Students Association. GAPA contact information (e.g., officers' email addresses, GAPA website, Facebook page) is available in the PA Directory.

GAPA sponsors both professional and social functions. Professionally, the organization provides a medium to introduce students to topics and to get people involved in government and public affairs. GAPA offers several social events during the academic year. At times, GAPA and the MPA program co-sponsor both professional and social events. In recent years, GAPA has provided some funds to students to attend professional meetings.

Pi Alpha Alpha

Each year, the Nominations Committee will select from among students and recent alumni who have completed at least 26 hours of course work in either the PhD or MPA curriculum, who have a GPA of no less than 3.7, and who have an approved Graduate Plan of Work. The Committee will select up to 10 students, or the top 30% of the class, whichever is larger. The local chapter sponsors projects to increase communications among currently enrolled MPA students, alumni, faculty and the public service community. For additional information about the national honor society for public affairs and administration of Pi Alpha Alpha, see http://www.naspaa.org/initiatives/honor.asp.

International City/County Management Association Student Chapter (ICMA)

New for 2013-14, NC State MPA students have started a ICMA Student Chapter. For additional information, contact GAPA (contact can information found in the MPA student directory). http://icma.org/en/icma/career_network/education/student_chapters

X.   APPENDIX A: FACULTY STATEMENT ON INTEGRITY

Public Administration faculty members have observed that some students may be unsure of what constitutes academic dishonesty. The following statement (used with permission[4]) describes a range of behaviors that constitute academic dishonesty:

> "Plagiarism, or presenting another's works or ideas as one's own, is a form of stealing. The instructor reserves the right to examine any source used by the student before giving a grade on a paper, and to give and "incomplete" in the course if necessary, to allow time to obtain sources. Students should be prepared to show source material to the instructor for the purpose of verifying information. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes the following offenses:
>
> 1. Claiming as your own work a paper written by someone else (including unpublished papers).
> 2. Turning in a paper that contains paraphrases of someone else's ideas but does not give proper credit to that person for those ideas.
> 3. Turning in a paper that is largely a restatement in your own words of a paper written by someone else, even if you give credit to that person for those ideas. The thesis and organizing principles of a paper must be your own.
> 4. Turning in a paper that uses the exact words of another author without using quotation marks, even if proper credit is given in a citation, or that changes the words only slightly and claims them to be paraphrases.
> 5. Turning in the same paper, even in a different version, for two different courses without the permission of both professors involved.
> 6. Using any external source (notes, books, other students, etc.) for assistance during an in-class exam, unless given permission to do so by the professor."

Further details on academic integrity are in NC State University's Code of Student Conduct (http://www.ncsu.edu/student_conduct).

The PA faculty has agreed that violations of academic integrity must have consequences. Consequently, students who cheat (behaviors cited in point 1 and 6 or similar behavior) may receive at least an F in the course; other forms of dishonesty, similar to those covered in points 2 through 5 may result in at least a "0" for the assignment.

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[4] Source: Kendra Stewart et al., Columbia College.