

University of Oklahoma

MPA Student Guide

Welcome to the Master of Public Administration degree program. We believe graduate work with us will be intellectually stimulating and professionally rewarding. This Student Guide describes major degree requirements and policies and addresses common student concerns. You are also encouraged to review the *Graduate College Bulletin* for further details on graduate study at the University of Oklahoma. This document is found at <http://gradweb.ou.edu/>.

Contacts

The Graduate College at the University of Oklahoma uses email as the official form of correspondence. In addition, the MPA program relies on the University-sponsored email system as its primary form of correspondence with our students. To receive this correspondence and to make sure that you are aware of upcoming requirements and do not miss any degree completion deadlines, *it is critically important that you access your OU email account on a regular basis*. To find out more about this account or to have your OU email forwarded to another email account, go to this website: www.account.ou.edu.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Deborah Snider at (405) 325-6432 or email at dsnider@ou.edu. Our regular office hours are Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (From early April through late October, Oklahoma moves to Daylight Savings Time.)

MPA Program Administrator and Academic Counselor

Ms. Deborah Snider
University of Oklahoma
Programs in Public Administration
455 W. Lindsey Street, Room 305
Norman, OK 73019-6432

Telephone: (405) 325-6432

Fax: (405) 325-3733

email: dsnider@ou.edu

Home Page for MPA Program: <http://www.ou.edu/cas/psc/pa/>

Graduate College Home Page: <http://gradweb.ou.edu/>

OU-Tulsa Home Page: <http://tulsa.ou.edu/>

Technical Support Information

If you experience technical problems, contact Information Technology by visiting their website at: <http://webapps.ou.edu/it/> or contacting them by telephone at: (405) 325-HELP (4357).

Table of Contents

The MPA student guide is divided into five sections, with the material in the sections arranged to follow your progress through the MPA program. In the first section, you will find resources that guide you from the time you apply to the program to the time you begin preparing for the initial meeting of your first class. The second section contains information helpful to taking and completing your coursework and introduces the final degree requirement – the Research Paper. The first step in the research paper process is preparation of the prospectus document. Section 3 describes this process in detail. After you have collected your data for your research paper, you should consult Section 4 to guide you in developing the research paper. Section 5 contains all the information necessary for successful degree completion.

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Introduced in the 1940's as the Master of Arts in Public Administration (MAPA) and changed to the Master of Public Administration in 1965, the one constant in our program's history has been embracing changes necessary to maintain a flexible degree program to meet students' needs as professional expectations and environmental conditions inexorably change. With hundreds of pre-service students and full-time professionals completing degree requirements at sites around the world, the MPA program offers coursework in a variety of formats ranging from the traditional 15-week face-to-face semester, to a compressed 1-week class meeting schedule and virtual classes mediated by the internet. All of our faculties, including the core faculty from the University of Oklahoma as well as guest faculty from other prestigious programs around the United States, are active scholars and researchers enjoying national and international reputations. The combination of flexibility, high academic standards and quality instruction contribute to the reputation of excellence that the MPA program at the University of Oklahoma enjoys.

The Nature of Graduate Studies

For many MPA students, it has been a while since they were in the classroom. For other MPA students, they have just completed their undergraduate coursework and the graduate degree is the next step before obtaining their first professional position.

A first difference that graduate students notice is that graduate coursework is taken at a much slower pace than during undergraduate studies. As described in the *Graduate College Bulletin* (gradweb.ou.edu), at the University of Oklahoma, a full-time graduate student is expected to enroll in nine credit hours in the Fall and Spring semesters (and six credit hours in the Summer semester if a student wishes) in order to maintain eligibility for financial aid. The traditional MPA degree program is designed to be completed in two years by taking classes in the fall and spring semesters. If you follow this schedule, you would need to enroll in nine credit hours per semester for four semesters. However, since many MPA students also hold full-time positions in the workforce, enrolling in six credit hours per semester may be a more reasonable expectation.

Knowing the expectations of graduate level work is important for both types of students. Different from undergraduate coursework, graduate classes tend to be smaller and run in a more informal, seminar-style where the professor spends less time "lecturing to the class" and students spend more time actively contributing to discussions. The emphasis on graduate studies is to analyze and to critique theories and authors presented in the reading materials and classroom discussions. Rather than memorizing who said or did what and when, the focus is on learning a structured and systematic style of theory-based analysis to apply in a wide variety of settings.

You may be surprised to find out that in graduate studies there is seldom a "right" answer. Instead, your coursework is evaluated on how well you structure your argument and how effectively you use evidence (from theory and practice) to support your conclusions. To many students this style of learning can be overwhelming at first. However, as students become more comfortable in a learning environment where ideas are tested through discussion and empirical research, they find the experience to be very enriching and directly relevant to what they experience in the workplace.

So, when you go to class, make sure you know the material assigned by the professor. Be prepared to respectfully question other students and the professor, on the content of their statements. Offer unusual, but well-considered, perspectives on issues discussed in the course.

One of the ways in which we maintain the high quality reputation of our MPA program is to use only faculty with a terminal degree in their area of study. For most professors, this will be the Ph.D. Most MPA professors are members of the University of Oklahoma; however, at sites outside of Oklahoma we invite nationally and internationally recognized faculty to teach our MPA classes. Whether they are from OU or from another school, in the classroom and in any correspondence you should address all instructors as professor rather than Mr., Ms. or using the person's first name (unless the professor specifically invites you to do otherwise).

Professors in the MPA program commit to being available to students before and after class. In addition, they are available for telephone calls or face-to-face meetings. All you need to do is contact them, often by email, and suggest a couple days and times that you are available and they will let you know what will work best with their schedule. To accommodate travel, teaching and research schedules, you should allow at least one week for a response from the professor before you contact them again. If you need to contact a professor outside of the classroom, you can find their contact information at search.ou.edu or on the syllabus for a class that they teach. For guests professors, who are not direct employees of the University of Oklahoma, please contact the MPA program office for their contact information.

Orientation Sessions

There is an orientation session held at the beginning of each fall semester at the Norman and Tulsa campuses. All MPA students are encouraged to attend. For those who are unable to attend in person, the MPA program website provides orientation materials on our website at www.ou.edu/cas/psc/pa in addition to this guide. Site Managers also provide orientation services and offer a variety of materials to learn more about the resources available in our program.

Degree Requirements

The Master of Public Administration degree requires a minimum of 36 hours of graduate credit for graduation. Because we are certifying your competence to potential employers, we require that at least 24 of those hours be in Public Administration/Public Policy Courses offered by the University of Oklahoma. By taking the majority of courses within the Political Science department, you will receive the high quality of education we have pledged to provide. You will find these courses in the OU catalog prefixed with "PSC."

The MPA degree program offers non-traditional students great flexibility with course scheduling. Because of that flexibility, you will see that the course requirements may vary, depending upon individual student circumstances. Your first six credit hours of course work must be PSC-prefixed courses. To take non-PSC-prefixed courses during your first six credit hours of course work, you must petition the MPA Program Director for permission to take those courses; however, variances are unusual.

MPA Degree Structure

Required courses	12 hours
Area Requirements	12 hours
Electives	<u>12 hours</u>
Total hours for MPA	36 hours

Required Courses

PSC 5913 - Introduction to Analysis of Political & Administrative Data	3 hours
PSC 5143 - Program Evaluation	3 hours
PSC 5183 - Public Budgeting and Finance	3 hours
PSC 5950 Research Problems	<u>3 hours</u>

Total Required Courses 12 hours



Student Sound Off: "Always take the required courses the first time they are available to avoid waiting two or three semesters before they are offered again." John - Colorado

Area Requirements

To equip you with the knowledge and skills needed by practicing professionals, you are required to take at least one course from each of the four areas of the curriculum. Other classes may satisfy an area requirement, but you need to obtain permission from the MPA Program Director before making a substitution.

Organizations (one course required):

- PSC 5103 - Organizations: Design, Structure & Process
- PSC 5193 - Comparative Administration
- PSC 5293 - Administration, Ethics and American Government
- PSC 6143 - Public Organizational Behavior
- PSC 6173 - Leading Public Organizations
- PSC 6173 - Organization Culture and Ethics
- PSC 6173 - Organizational Change and Development

Management (one course required):

- PSC 5033 - Foundations of Nonprofit Management
- PSC 5063 - Nonprofits and the Public Sector Relations
- PSC 5133 - Strategic Planning and Performance Management
- PSC 5153 - Problems in Public Management
- PSC 5243 - Managing Public Programs
- PSC 5253 - Human Resource Administration
- PSC 5313 - Urban Management
- PSC 5363 - Public Financial Management

Public Policy (one course required):

- PSC 5043 – Public Policy Implementation
- PSC 5053 - Foundations in Public Policy
- PSC 5223 - Public Policy Analysis
- PSC 5233 – Health Policy
- PSC 5323 - Problems in Public Policy
- PSC 5333 - Environmental Policy and Administration
- PSC 5343 - Public Policy & Inequality
- PSC 5073 - Education Policy
- PSC 5393 – Regulatory Policy

American Political Process (one course required):

- PSC 5113 - Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations
- PSC 5163 - Legislative Process and Behavior
- PSC 5173 - Bureaucracy and Politics
- PSC 5213 - Administrative Law
- PSC 5263 - Congress in the Political System
- PSC 5453 - The Presidency

Electives

Up to 12 credit hours of electives will count toward the MPA degree. Those hours may include OU Political Science courses or course work taken in other OU departments. Up to 9 credit hours of approved transfer credit from other universities may count toward elective hours. There is a petition process for Transfer Credits, described below.

If you wish to take an elective from another department, it is best to contact the MPA office to determine if the elective will be acceptable. Only courses taught by professors with a terminal degree and requiring graduate level coursework equivalent to that required in the MPA courses are accepted for elective credit.



Student Sound Off: "I printed out the Admission to Candidacy form before I started classes. I used the form to write in when I would take the classes to make sure I met all requirements." Niccole - Yongsan

Information on Special Courses

PSC 5950 Research Problems

Enrollment in this course is allowed only when you are ready to complete the final MPA degree requirement. This is a required course, but it requires special permission that is given after you have completed 27 hours of graduate coursework, filled out the Identification of Interest form and been assigned a faculty advisor. Unlike other courses, PSC 5950 does not have any class meetings. Instead, you work directly with your faculty advisor to complete the prospectus and research paper documents.

PSC 5960 Special-Directed Readings

You may complete up to six credit hours by special directed readings. These are special assignments agreed upon by the student and the faculty. To enroll in PSC 5960, you need to contact a main-campus MPA professor and ask them to agree to supervise the directed readings. You and the professor will agree upon reading materials and course assignments. Then, the professor will notify the Academic Counselor of the arrangement and computer permission for enrollment will be given. Enrollment in a Special Directed Readings course is not routinely approved, but is considered on a case-by-case basis depending on your specific circumstances and on the availability of a MPA faculty member to direct the readings.

Variable Content Courses and Seminars

PSC 5153, 5170, 6123, 6223, and 6173 are variable content classes. You can take these courses more than once as long as there is a substantial difference in content in the course number that you repeat. For example, you might have taken PSC 6223, Seminar in Public Policy, on environmental issues. Then, a year later PSC 6223 is offered again, but the subject is national security issues. You are permitted to enroll in the PSC 6223 course again.

There are limitations on the number of hours that you can accumulate through repeats of the same course number. Specifically, MPA students may enroll in up to six credit hours under any PSC 5000-level seminar, or nine credit hours under any PSC 6000-level seminar course providing there is a change of subject matter for each enrollment.

You should make sure that the content of the repeated course is different from the earlier course. When you begin the enrollment process, look carefully at the title of the course that you wish to repeat and review the course description or syllabus. If you have any doubt about whether the content is the same or different from the previous course, we suggest that you consult the MPA program's Academic Counselor in the Main Campus office.

Admission Policies

When a student is admitted or readmitted to the MPA program, no coursework over five years can be applied toward the degree. Also, at the time of graduation, no coursework taken more

than five academic years ago can be counted toward degree completion. Under the current policies of the Graduate College, the five years begins at the end of the semester in which you took the course work. For example, if you took classes in the fall of 2008, then you would have until early December 2013 before that credit would become overage.

Variances to the five-year rule are rarely granted, but if you have unusual circumstances requiring an exception from the established deadlines, contact the MPA Program Administrator at the Norman campus to discuss your situation and to try to resolve the problem. The University of Oklahoma supports our service members in times of extended military engagements. If you face delays in completing any class because of TDY, PCS or long-term deployments, please notify your course professor to make arrangements for completing the coursework according to the current University policy. If you have difficulty completing your degree program in 5 years because of military commitments, you should contact the MPA Program Administrator.

After completing admission paperwork and being accepted into the program, you will be admitted into one of the following categories:

Provisional Admission Status

All Advanced Programs students begin the program in provisional status while the University processes their admission paperwork. Within 120 days of application, an admissions decision will be made and you will be notified. If you are admitted, it will be under either Full or Conditional status. All coursework taken as an Advanced Program student while in Provisional Admission Status will count toward the MPA degree requirements.

Full Admission Status

You are admitted to the MPA program under Full Admission Status if one of the following conditions is met:

You have an undergraduate grade point average of 3.00 or better, or
You have completed 12 hours of letter-graded graduate level work¹ from another school with a grade point average of 3.00 or better.

Conditional Status

You are admitted to the MPA program under Conditional Status if your undergraduate or graduate grade point average is between 2.75 and 2.99. Students entering the program through Conditional Admission Status must take only PSC prefixed courses and maintain a GPA of at least 3.00 in the first twelve hours of coursework or they will be terminated from the MPA program. In addition, students in Conditional Status are not allowed any incomplete ("I") grades.



Student Sound Off: "I limited the number of classes that I took while on Conditional Admission status to make sure I got only A's or B's and could stay in the MPA program." Kevin - Norman

¹ Letter-graded work can include no pass/fail or S/U type courses. The letter-graded courses are used to calculate a graduate-level grade point average for admission purposes and must be between 3.00 and 4.00 on a 4.00 scale for full admission to our program.

Generic Dual Master's Degree

The University of Oklahoma offers a Generic Dual Master's Degree for students who have an interest in combining subject matter expertise with general public administration and public policy knowledge. Dual degrees combining the MPA and the respective master's degree in Social Work, Regional and City Planning, Human Relations and Economics have been quite popular with students. Students may complete two master's degrees at the same time with a reduction of up to 20 percent of the total graduate credit hours required for both degrees. Students must satisfy the degree requirements for both degrees and must graduate with both degrees in the same semester. For more information about the Generic Dual Master's Degree, go to the OU Graduate College web page at <http://gradweb.ou.edu/>.

Financial Aid

As the cost of higher education continues to rise across the nation, many students need financial aid to pursue their education. OU MPA Students have access to a variety of financial aid resources, including student loans, scholarships, and paid internships.

Student Loans

To apply for federal student loans, follow these steps:

1. Get a Pin # at www.pin.ed.gov.
2. Apply for financial aid by completing the **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) on the web.
3. After completing the FAFSA form, you will receive a Student Aid Report once your FAFSA is processed by the U.S. Department of Education.
4. After OU Financial Aid Services receives your FAFSA, you will be notified via OU email if any additional information is needed or for award notification.
5. Read and respond as quickly as possible. If you do not respond, it will delay the processing of your funds.

For additional information about student loans and financial aid, visit the OU Financial Aid website: <http://www.financialaid.ou.edu/>



Student Sound Off: "Be careful withdrawing from a class while on Financial Aid. I nearly had to repay my student loans when I dropped a class and did not maintain full-time status." Bill - Altus AFB

Scholarships

MPA program students are eligible to apply for a variety of scholarships. For more information, review the scholarships information on the Department's webpage: www.ou.edu/cas/psc or contact the MPA Academic Counselor. Descriptions of the scholarships, the application materials and the deadlines are presented below.

Walter F. Scheffer Scholarship

- *Number given: 1 or 2 —Amount: \$500*
- *Application deadline: February 1*

The Scheffer Scholarship is a merit scholarship for students currently enrolled in the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program who have completed a minimum of eight (8) hours of OU graduate work, have no more than twenty-four (24) completed hours and have a minimum 3.50 GPA. The award is based on grade point average, letters of recommendation, career accomplishments, or other evidence of academic promise. Students may self-nominate by submitting a statement and one faculty recommendation letter.

John Halvor Leek Memorial Scholarships

- *Number given: Varies—Amount: Varies*
- *Application deadline: Monday after Spring Break*

The Leek scholarships are merit scholarships for Political Science and Public Affairs and Administration majors at the junior level and for Political Science, Public Administration, and Congressional Studies students at the graduate level. To be eligible, undergraduate students must have at least twelve hours in political science major credit at OU, including at least six completed hours, and a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPA. Graduate students must have a minimum 3.50 in the graduate work in political science.

Hugh MacNiven Award

- *Number given: 1—Amount: \$200*
- *Application deadline: Nomination only*

The MacNiven Award is awarded for an outstanding research paper written by a MPA student during the previous calendar year. Nominations are made by faculty members.

Internships

Our Main Campus and Tulsa students primarily use internship credit hours. The MPA program partners with the City Managers Association of Oklahoma to create internship opportunities in local governments that can result in the development of a pipeline of future city management

professionals. If you are interested in a city government internship, please consult the <http://www.oml.org/dbs/CMAO/index.cfm> website for more details.

Another excellent opportunity in the State of Oklahoma is the Carl Albert Public Internship Program (CAPIP), created by the Oklahoma State Legislature in 1988 to offer the experience of public service at the state level. Graduate students may participate in the CAPIP Executive Fellows Internship program for a period of six months up to two years in professional- or managerial-level positions. The eligibility criteria include an undergraduate degree, completion of six credit hours of graduate course work, and achievement of a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale). Those who successfully complete a two-year internship are then eligible for appointment to a position in the classified or unclassified state service. Additional information about the CAPIP Fellows Internship program can be found at http://www.ok.gov/opm/State_Jobs/Carl_Albert_Public_Internship_Program.html

If you are able to arrange an internship with a public or non-profit organization, you may receive 3 credit hours on your transcript by enrolling in PSC 5910, Government Internship. To earn credit hours, you will be required to work 80 hours per credit hour, research a topic related to the internship and submit a written paper to a faculty advisor. As part of the credit hour requirements, your direct supervisor also evaluates your job performance.



Student Sound Off: "I found out about the CAPIP internship from another student who was in the program and get a full-time position with the State Retirement Agency." Brian - OKC

Grade Requirements and Academic Probation

Once you attain Full Admission Status, you must maintain a GPA of 3.00 or you will be placed on academic probation. If placed on academic probation, the Graduate College will designate a specific time period for bringing your GPA up to the 3.00 or higher level (usually one semester). Failure to meet the probationary requirements will result in dismissal from the University and the MPA degree program.

Annual Progress Review

All graduate students' academic progress is reviewed in the summer to assess progress towards degree completion and to advise you of any outstanding issues to address to continue in the program. You receive a copy of the evaluation each year. If you have concerns about your progress, please contact the Norman MPA Program Office.

Course Enrollment and Preparation

enroll.ou.edu

There are two websites that provide course schedules for upcoming semesters. A one year schedule for all MPA courses at all sites is located at www.ou.edu/cas/psc/pa/course_information.html. All courses offered through OU can be viewed

at enroll.ou.edu. If your 4 + 4 and password have not been activated, you can sign in as a guest to review course schedules and create a course list for one semester.

During the enrollment period and before the drop/add deadlines, students may enroll in or drop courses online through enroll.ou.edu. To enroll in or drop courses online, first select the appropriate campus and semester, and login with your 4X4 user name and password. Deadlines for enrollment and withdrawal from courses are given in the official University calendar for each semester found at this website calendar.ou.edu. For Advanced Programs course schedules, which can have slightly different deadlines, you should consult www.goou.ou.edu for specific details.

For timely degree completion, we have several students who travel between the sites to take coursework. Main campus students can use enroll.ou.edu to enroll in either main campus or OU-Tulsa courses, but will need to contact the appropriate Advanced Programs site director to enroll in an AP course (including AP Norman courses). This process requires a little coordination between the Academic Advisor and the Site managers since it crosses multiple computer systems, but since it is done frequently, it is normally not overly cumbersome.



Student Sound Off: "I have taken classes at all three Oklahoma sites. I used the schedule on the MPA webpage to find what classes were offered where before going to enroll.ou.edu." Stephanie - Tulsa

Course Schedules

For quick degree completion, we offer courses in a sequence assuring that all degree requirements can be met in 18-24 months at each of our sites. All of the MPA course offerings for the next year are available at www.ou.edu/cas/psc/pa/course_information.

We usually offer 10-12 graduate level courses on the Norman campus in the Fall and Spring semester. Of these, 6-8 are specifically designed for MPA students. At the Health Sciences Center campus, we offer one 15-week format class and one weekend format class in the Fall and Spring semester. We normally schedule eight courses per year at the Tulsa Campus and at each Advanced Program site. There are three semesters per year: Fall, Spring, and an eight-week Summer semester. Even if you have to miss one or two courses, you can usually satisfy your course requirements within 2 years.

Course Formats

In order to provide flexibility for students with varied work, and family obligations, the MPA program offers courses in several formats.

Traditional 15 Week Format

Each semester, several classes on the main campus and at the Health and Sciences Center (HSC) in Oklahoma City are taught in the traditional, 15-week semester format. These classes meet one evening per week, for three hours per class session. The 15-week format classes are only offered

at the main campus in Norman and at the Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City. They are generally structured to include exam(s), significant student participation and a research assignment or experiential learning.

Two-Weekend Format (For sites within the State of Oklahoma)

Courses offered in Oklahoma through the Tulsa campus or Advanced Programs sites are taught in a two-weekend intensive format. These classes meet on Friday evenings, all day Saturday and Sunday afternoons. In addition, the classes normally contain an online participation element to compensate for reduced contact hours and have special assignments (described below).

One-Week Format (For sites outside the State of Oklahoma)

For sites outside of the State of Oklahoma, Advanced Programs offers courses in the one-week format. The scheduled meeting times vary by site and can be found at www.gouu.ou.edu. In addition to the face to face class meetings during the week of instruction, the classes normally contain an online participation element to compensate for reduced contact hours and have special assignments, described in the next paragraph.

Special assignments for compressed format courses: Courses taught in both the two-weekend and one-week formats are scheduled using a four-week structure. In the first week, the student is expected to read all the material for the class and prepare a pre-class assignment. In the second week (or the two weekends surrounding the second week), the class meetings are held and an in-class exam is given on the last day of face-to-face meetings. During the third and fourth weeks, the student prepares a post class assignment. The normal expectations for compressed format courses include a pre-class assignment requiring the analysis of assigned readings, a final exam, and a post-class assignment often featuring a case-study analysis or research paper.

Internet-Based Courses

All MPA students are eligible to take courses in a 100% internet-mediated format. These classes typically last 8 weeks and are scheduled to offer two in the fall and spring semesters and one in the summer semester. Requirements for these classes vary widely; however, it is reasonable to expect a combination of online (real-time or time-delayed) participation; multiple, analytical assignments such as problem sets, case-study analysis or scholarly research; and exam(s).



Student Sound Off: "Internet courses were the only way I could continue my studies while deployed to the Middle East and then to Vietnam. BUT, you have to have good internet connections to keep up with weekly class activities." Bob - Okinawa

Important information you should know about online courses:

Enrollment for these classes is no different than for other Norman Campus, Tulsa Campus or Advanced Programs courses.

- These courses rely heavily on the online course management system called Desire2Learn for communication between the professor and the students. To sign on to Desire2Learn (D2L), go to learn.ou.edu and log in using your 4x4 and your OU network password (note that this is the same 4+4 and password that you use to access your OU email). Once you are logged in, look on the right-hand side for “My University of Oklahoma Courses,” locate your course and click on it. Remember to check your course site on D2L every day.
- Click on the online orientation link that is also located on Desire2Learn under “My University of Oklahoma Courses.” You are required to complete the orientation. It provides vital information for succeeding in your online course.
- If the course is using a course website, you will find a link for the website on the syllabus under Class Dates, Course links. Please click on this link to start your course.
- Course Materials are available at Follett/AP Bookstore. On the syllabus, you will find a link to the Follett Bookstore. Text for online courses are listed under ONLINE– MISC.

Course Withdrawals

- If you need to drop or withdraw from a course, please contact your Academic Counselor (for Norman or Tulsa Students) or your Site Manager (for Advanced Programs Students). You can drop a course without a penalty up to the add/drop date. You can drop a course after the add/drop date through the first day of class with a penalty.
 - 1) 16-29 days before start of class session: 25% penalty
 - 2) Between 15 days before and the start of first class session: 50% penalty
 - 3) On the first day of class: 100% penalty
- After the class has started, you can only withdraw from the course with the professor’s permission and you will not receive a refund for your tuition. In special circumstances, you can drop a class without a penalty after the add/drop date by providing proper documentation and receiving the appropriate approvals. Your Academic Counselor can assist you with this process.

learn.ou.edu

All of the classes offered at the University of Oklahoma include a website on our course management system called Desire2Learn (often called d2l). You will find the websites for all the courses in which you are enrolled at learn.ou.edu. The professor maintains the individual class website and it is not accessible to the students until the class professor makes the class active. The class is active until the class professor makes it inactive or at the end of the semester. All OU professors are encouraged to provide the syllabus and to set up the gradebook on the learn.ou.edu website for the course. Many professors will use other features supported by d2l including a calendar, news announcements, course content, links, a dropbox to upload student

assignments, discussion boards, live chat rooms, and quizzes and exams. You can also use the learn.ou.edu website to store computer files in the locker feature and send email.

Book Purchases

You are responsible for purchasing your textbooks well in advance of the class meeting dates so that you can complete required readings and create notes or an outline for what you have read. These notes and outlines will be quite helpful when you prepare any pre-class assignments and when you participate in class discussions. In addition to the vendors described below for each of the different sites, many students use online websites such as www.amazon.com or <http://www.half.ebay.com/> to purchase books.



Student Sound Off: "I found used books and older editions of assigned textbooks online. Before purchasing the older version I contacted the professor to see if it would be acceptable." Colin - Tinker

Main Campus and HSC Courses

All books for main campus and HSC courses are sold at the Oklahoma Memorial Stadium University Bookstore, which is located on the west side of the football stadium.

OU-Tulsa Courses

OU-Tulsa students can purchase books from the Mathews Bookstore, which is located in room 4W102 on the first floor of Building 4 West.

Advanced Programs

Advanced Programs students can purchase books online from the Follett/AP Bookstore at: <http://www.bkstr.com/Home/10001-10703-1?demoKey=d>

Norman Advanced Programs Courses

Books for AP courses held at the Norman location are also sold at the Union Bookstore, which is located in the Oklahoma Memorial Student Union on the main campus.

Pre-Class Preparation

To succeed in the MPA program, students have found it beneficial to read all assigned course materials well in advance of the due date. This allows time to critically analyze the arguments of the author, as well as to prepare notes that can be used in class to supplement the lecture and class discussion. These notes are quite helpful to exam preparation.

Remember a key difference in graduate studies is a seminar format where the professor does not typically lecture over all the material in the readings. Instead, it is more likely that the professor will only highlight key points and will introduce a great deal of supplementary material in their

discussions with the class. Since many students will take classes in a compressed format where the class meets less than 15 weeks, completing all the readings before the class begins is even more important.

Paper Preparation

Surveys of employers of our graduates suggest that written and oral communication skills are an area to emphasize in our MPA curriculum. Given this, it is not unusual for students to give in-class presentations or to prepare literature reviews and research papers. Your professor will provide specific instructions about written and oral class assignments. However, it is safe to assume that written assignments will be graded based on criteria such as analytical quality (critical thinking, ability to compare and contrast ideas, arrive at conclusions and support arguments); focus (how well the assignment meets the required objectives); and presentation (clarity, organization, grammar, spelling). It is also safe to assume that poor writing will adversely affect your grade. Technical errors in things like grammar, spelling, and punctuation will lower your grade. For this reason, it is important to edit very carefully any assignment you complete. If you have trouble with your writing style, you should also ask a close friend to review your work before you submit it. You might find it helpful to purchase a book on general writing style (e.g., *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White), and/or a research paper style guide (e.g., Turabian or the American Psychological Association).

Citing External Sources

Any information taken from any source must be cited, whether or not direct quotes are used. If you are in doubt as to how to cite a source, please talk to your professor. This is important. Failure to cite sources opens you to a charge of plagiarism. The citation and reference style commonly used for Public Administration and Public Policy scholars is the APA style. You can find out more about this style at The OU Writing Center homepage located at <http://www.ou.edu/writingcenter/index.html>. Professional organizations also offer style guides such as the American Psychological Association (www.apa.org) or by reviewing the *Public Administration Review* style guide found under Instructions to Authors at www.aspanet.org. The APA style, cites references in the text and uses an alphabetized reference list, rather than footnotes. Footnotes are used only for substantive notes. Using this method, the in-text citation gives the actual page number within the parentheses for a direct quote (Author, 2008:7). The reference would then be:

For a book:

Author Last Name, First Name. Year published. *Title of the book*. Geographic location of the publisher: Name of the publisher.

EXAMPLE: Light, Paul C. 1998. *The Tides of Reform: Making Government Work 1945-1995*. Yale University Press.

For a chapter in a book:

Chapter author Last Name, First Name, (Year originally published), "Title of the chapter." Title of the Book containing the chapter, Editor of the book (ed.), (Year book was published), Geographic location of the publisher: Name of the publisher. Page numbers of chapter.

EXAMPLE: Stewart, Debra W. (1976), "Women in top jobs: An opportunity for federal leadership." Reprinted in *Classics of Public Personnel Policy*, Frank J. Thompson (ed.) 1991 (2nd ed.) Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, pp. 273-282.

For an article in a scholarly journal:

Author Last Name, First Name. Year Published. "Title of the article." *Name of the journal*. Volume and issue numbers, page numbers.

EXAMPLE: Franklin, Aimee L. 2001. "Serving the Public Interest: Federal Agency Experiences with Participation in Strategic Plan Development." *American Review of Public Administration*. Vol. 31, No. 2, (June 2001), pp. 126-138

For an internet citation:

Author Last Name, First Name. Year Published. *Title of the internet document*. (Accessed from the Internet at this website xxx, on this date mm/dd/yy.)

EXAMPLE: National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO). 2001. *The Fiscal Survey of the States*. (Accessed from the Internet at this website www.nasbo.org on January 9, 2008.)

For a U.S. Court Case

Plaintiff v. Defendant, volume, level for reports, page, (year)

EXAMPLE: *Row v. Wade*, 410, U.S. 113 (1973)

Court case with multiple listings:

EXAMPLE: *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (Brown I)*, 347 U.S. 483, 74 S.Ct. 686. 1954.

For a Newspaper Article

Author last name, first initial. (Date of Publication). Title of Article. *Title of Publication*, section, page number.

EXAMPLE: Herbers, J. (1988, March 6). A different Dixie: Few but sturdy threads tie new South to old. *The New York Times*, sec. 4, p. 1.



Student Sound Off: "Go to APA.org to easily find out how to create a reference entry for anything! You just have to fill in the blanks and it formats it for you." Anahita - Washington, DC

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Professors have to obey rules of honest scholarship and so do students. Here are the basic assumptions about academic work at the University of Oklahoma:

- (1) Students attend OU in order to learn and grow.
- (2) Academic assignments exist for the sake of this goal.
- (3) Grades exist to show how fully the goal is attained.
- (4) Thus, all work and all grades should result from the student's own effort to learn and grow. Academic work completed any other way is pointless, and grades obtained any other way are fraudulent.

Academic integrity means understanding and respecting these basic truths, without which no university can exist. Academic misconduct - "cheating" - is not just "against the rules." It violates the assumptions at the heart of all learning. It destroys the mutual trust and respect between student and professor. Finally, it is unfair to students who earn their grades honestly.

There is a research tutorial describing what academic misconduct is, how it is handled at OU and how to avoid it at the Provost's website (<http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/>).



Student Sound Off: "The professor in our class let us see the turnitin.com report for our research papers. This helped my understand in-text cites much better." Billy - Mountain Home, AFB

Incomplete Grade Policy

A grade of "I" for incomplete coursework is not automatically assigned, but rather must be requested by the student by submitting to the professor a "Petition for and Work to Remove an Incomplete Grade" form. An "I" can never be used in lieu of an "F" nor can an "I" be assigned because of failure to participate in class activities.

Disability Statement

Students with disabilities are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and accommodations are made to assist them. Students who have a disability that prevents them from fully demonstrating their academic abilities should contact the professor. The professor should then refer the student to the Student Affairs Office in Norman or the OU-Tulsa Office of Student Affairs in Tulsa. This office will then work with the student and professor to assess the student and to make arrangements to ensure the student's full participation in the course, if necessary.

Procedures for Completion of Course Evaluations

For classes that meet in the face-to-face format, the professor will have the materials for the course evaluation available at the end of the class. A student in the class will administer the evaluation and return the materials to the designated staff person.

On-line courses have a different evaluation format. Completion of the online evaluation form is an important tool to gain information and student feedback for improvement of courses. Students taking online courses through the Norman or Tulsa campuses will get instructions from their course professor when the online evaluation materials are available.

Upon completion of online courses offered through the Advanced Programs format, students will go to the Advanced Programs website at <http://www.gooou.ou.edu>. In the "Quick Links" drop down menu, choose "Online Classes." On the Online Education webpage, locate the "Course Evaluation" menu, click on the applicable semester to reach the course evaluation form. The evaluation will ask for the "Evaluation Code" which is located just below the course number on the first page of this syllabus. The evaluation will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Resources

On-Site Resource Materials

All Advanced Programs sites, the Norman MPA office, and the OU-Tulsa office have the following resource materials to support your research efforts:

Public Administration Reference Books
Writing style/format book

If you are having difficulty completing your Research Paper, faculty members can help you or the MPA office can often provide additional information to help you.

Library Resources

OU Library Web Site: <http://libraries.ou.edu>

OU Library Distance Education Resources: <http://libraries.ou.edu/services/index.asp?id=4>

The OU Library offers main campus as well as Advanced Programs students numerous services to help with online reference sources within the library. The OU library online resources include the following:

Online Tutorials

The library features many short online tutorials designed to assist you when accessing library resources. You are encouraged to explore libraries.ou.edu and click under Resources to find the tutorials.

InterLibrary Loan and Document Delivery

This service can be accessed at <http://libraries.ou.edu/info/info.asp?id=2>

Here you will find information on InterLibrary Loan and Document Delivery as well as a link to the actual forms to request this service.

Ask a Librarian

Students may contact a library to help with reference source questions, such as:

- Verifying bibliographic citation information
- Looking up addresses and/or phone numbers of companies, institutions, associations, and government entities
- Locating factual information, such as census data or biographical information

Ask a librarian can be accessed at <http://libraries.ou.edu/help/askus.asp>. E-mail reference questions receive a response within two working days of the librarian's receipt of the question. Email questions should include: student name, student e-mail address, reference questions, and any resources that have already been consulted.

LORA Online Database Access

A large collection of academic/research databases can be accessed using the libraries database service. Most MPA students will use LORA (offering online databases to find journal articles) and the library catalog extensively as they do research for course assignments, but these resources are also critically important to successful completion of the MPA research paper. Students that are at a distance from an OU campus library will commonly use the interlibrary loan function to check out books held by OU as well as by other University libraries in the United States. These materials can be sent to students at their home location.

Commonly used databases: JSTOR, PAIS, LexisNexis, WorldCat.

Commonly used journals:

Public Administration Review,
American Review of Public Administration,
Administration & Society,
Journal of Public Administration Research
and Theory,
State and Local Government Review,
Journal of Politics,

Journal of Policy Analysis & Management,
Public Budgeting and Financial
Management,
Review of Public Personnel Management,
State Politics and Policy Quarterly,
Policy Studies Journal
American Political Science Review



Student Sound Off: "google scholar (www.google.com) can help you identify other articles by the same author, but use LORA at libraries.ou.edu to get free access to the journals." Mike - Tulsa

OU Writing Center

The OU writing center is available to help Norman campus students strengthen writing skills and improve class assignments and research papers. You are encouraged to visit their website since they offer all their services electronically as well as face-to-face. The website is located at <http://www.ou.edu/writingcenter/>. Resources include consultations on paper, writing style guides and details on topics like academic plagiarism. Writing ability is critically important to success in the MPA program; all students are encouraged to use the writing center.

The writing center is open from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday through Wednesday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Thursday, and 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Friday (walk-ins only). For more information about the writing center, or to schedule an appointment, visit: <http://www.ou.edu/writingcenter/>



Student Sound Off: "I needed more hands-on feedback about my writing style. The writing center's online paper submission option worked well with my schedule since I could not get to campus during regular business hours." Paul - Norman

Directions from the Director

Want to start the program out right? Here's a few suggestions I have based on student problems I have had to resolve as Director. Of course, I'm just a phone call or email away if you run into a snag. *Aimee Franklin, Director of Programs in Public Administration*

- Check your OU email account frequently! Emails are most commonly used to give you critical information about degree requirements and deadlines that you face.
- Our 36 hour degree program has a 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 structure: 12 hours of required courses, 12 hours of area courses, and 12 hours of electives. Often classes will count in 1, 2, or all 3 of these areas. This flexibility makes scheduling and degree completion quite easily.
- Enrollment in special courses is limited to certain conditions. Work with our Academic Counselor to make sure your enrollments in the special courses will count toward degree completion.
- Maintain a 3.0 GPA to stay in good academic standing in the MPA program.
- Know the financial aid rules to make sure you can continue to receive student aid.
- OU raised more than \$200 million in student scholarship funds in the 2008 academic year. At the start of the spring semester, check the department and college web pages to explore scholarships for which you may be eligible.
- Pre-service students can gain experience and build a professional network by seeking out internship opportunities. This will jump start the job search later.
- Use online course schedules to plan your coursework. This helps to make sure you take required and area courses when they are available at your site.
- Buy your books early and read these books before classes start! Take extensive notes before and during class.
- Graduate programs are writing intense. Edit your papers carefully. Professional writing is a must; grades on individual assignments are reduced for grammar, structure and technical writing errors.
- Use available student services (like the library resources, writing center, CAS internet course support center and OU technical support) before your professor tells you need to. This can make degree completion much smoother.