School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences

Graduate Programs in Public Affairs

Doctor of Philosophy in Public Affairs

75 semester credit hours minimum beyond the baccalaureate degree

Faculty

**Professor:** L. Douglas Kiel  
**Clinical Professors:** Donald R. Arbuckle, John R. McCaskill  
**Associate Professors:** R. Paul Battaglio Jr., Doug Goodman, Sarah Maxwell, Sheryl L. Skaggs  
**Assistant Professors:** Evgenia Gorina, James R. Harrington, Young-joo Lee, Meghna Sabharwal, Nicholas Vargas  
**Senior Lecturer:** Teodoro Benavides

Mission

The mission of the PhD in Public Affairs program is to prepare students for research-oriented careers in academia, policy analysis, and executive public/nonprofit management positions. The rigorous core curriculum provides advanced conceptual and theoretical training in the principal areas of public administration and management, including: public policy, intergovernmental relations, budget and finance, human capital, and organizational theory. Students develop analytical competencies through a sequence of research methods courses and technical knowledge in specific topics through a flexible elective sequence.

Objectives

Through a faculty-guided program of instruction, research and mentoring, students in the Public Affairs doctoral program develop a firm understanding of the broad intellectual tradition of public administration and related fields. The guiding philosophy of the degree is that "public affairs" involves more than mere functional administration, policy implementation or quantitative policy analysis. Rather, doctoral education in public affairs requires an interface between the traditions of public management, public policy, and organizations with a practical appreciation for the challenges of maintaining and building institutions of governance and a civic culture in a complex, democratic society.  
The PhD in Public Affairs begins as a cohort program where entering students remain together through the completion of a core curriculum and the qualifying examination (QE), after which they are able to pursue one of several areas of concentration. The concentration allows students to take courses appropriate for their research interests. This structure produces shared experiences and progress through the program that enrich student learning and research.

Faculty Commitments

The faculty of the PhD program in Public Affairs is committed to assist students in
meeting a set of clear and specific education- and research-related goals. The specific objectives for all graduates of the PhD in Public Affairs program are to:

1. **Demonstrate Comprehensive and Deep Knowledge:** Students will demonstrate their knowledge in principal fields of public administration and management, including: public policy, intergovernmental relations, organization theory, budget and finance, and human capital.

2. **Understand and Apply Theories and Processes of Knowledge Acquisition:** Students will demonstrate familiarity with key theories in each of the principal fields of public administration and management, and will apply this theoretical knowledge in the development of research projects ranging from course assignments to their dissertation research projects.

3. **Produce Scholarly Manuscripts and Publications:** Students, as scholars, will have the ability to execute research projects that utilize state of the art methodologies to produce scholarly manuscripts that are worthy of publication in the journals of the field.

4. **Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas:** Students will have the ability to develop, present, and defend both orally and in writing complex ideas based on in-depth scholarly research.

**Facilities**

Students have access to the computing facilities in the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences and the University's computer labs. The school has four computing laboratories which house 24-30 computers that are network linked and equipped with major social science software packages, including EViews, R, RATS, SPSS, and Stata. A computerized geographic information system, the LexisNexis database, and Westlaw are also available for student use. The University's computer labs provide personal computers and UNIX workstations.

**Application, Admission and Assistantships**

**Application Deadlines:** Due to the cohort nature of the PhD program in Public Affairs, admissions are limited to the fall semester only. The application deadline for students seeking funding through assistantships is March 31. Applications for international students must be received by May 1 and June 1 for all required documentation (transcripts, test scores, letters of recommendation, etc.). The application deadline for U.S. Citizens and Residents is July 1 with all documentation (transcripts, test scores, letters of recommendation, etc.). These deadlines must be followed to ensure applications are given full consideration. The web-based application form can be accessed using the "Apply Now" link for each degree listing at: [www.utdallas.edu/admissions/graduate/degrees](http://www.utdallas.edu/admissions/graduate/degrees).

**Admission Requirements:** The program only admits students who have completed a master's degree from an institution of higher education. It is preferred that the master's degree is in public affairs or social science. A graduate GPA (grade point average) of 3.0 or better is expected. Prospective students must complete the University's online graduate application and submit a narrative outlining 1) academic interests, 2) current or long-range interests in research, teaching, or other professional objectives, 3) description of publications or other scholarly endeavors, and 4) listing of academic and professional organizations and fellowships, scholarships, or other honors received. The
Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is also required of all applications with a minimum verbal score of 156 and quantitative score of 152. International students whose native language is not English are also required to submit the Test of English as a Second Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 88, unless they graduated from a four-year college or university in the United States or other English speaking country. Students should submit examination scores and transcripts from all colleges previously attended to UT Dallas' Office of Admission and Enrollment Services. Three letters of recommendation from individuals (employers, community leaders, teachers, etc.) who are able to judge a student's probable success in graduate school are required. The letters may be sent directly to the program office or uploaded online. International applicants without Permanent Resident Visas must submit evidence of financial support (financial affidavit and original bank statement) before they can receive the I-20 or other required documents needed for visa application.

**Teaching Assistantships:** Prospective students interested in receiving assistantships must have submitted all application materials including a Teaching Assistant (TA) application form by March 31 of the year they intend to start the program. Applications for the assistantships may be obtained from the Public Affairs Program Office. Offers of teaching assistantships will be made during the spring semester prior to fall enrollment, although additional appointments may be made as new positions become available each semester.

It is expected that those applying for a TA position can communicate effectively in both written and spoken English. State law and regulations of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board require that international students appointed as TA's be proficient in the use of the English language. An English Proficiency Interview conducted under the auspices of the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies will be used to screen for students requiring remedial help in the form of English as a Second Language (ESL) course. International students must satisfy the proficiency requirement upon appointment or pass the ESL course within two semesters to be eligible for consideration of continued appointment as a TA. Regardless of test scores, students must meet the language requirements of their programs.

**Program Overview**

The PhD in Public Affairs requires the completion of at least 75 semester credit hours including a minimum of 45 semester credit hours of coursework, 12 semester credit hours of dissertation work and up to 18 semester credit hours of transfer hours from previous graduate coursework. If less than 18 semester credit hours are approved for transfer then the student will be required to take additional coursework to meet the 75 semester credit hours requirement. To qualify for transfer credit, the student must have completed the graduate coursework within the past 24 months at an institution of higher education and earned a grade of B or better. Grades of B- and courses completed through correspondence or extension are not eligible for transfer credit. The award of such transfer credit must be consistent with the University's "Transfer of Credit" policy.

**Prerequisites**

Prior to enrolling in core classes for the PhD program, students must have completed a master's degree in public affairs/administration or related field and show evidence of completing a graduate level course within the past 24 months in statistics/quantitative methods and public policymaking/public institutions. A grade of B or better is expected in these course prerequisites.
Qualifying Exam (QE)

Students must pass the QE to continue in the PhD program. If a student fails the exam he or she will be dismissed from the program. Students must have a grade of B or better in each of the four exam-related courses to be eligible to sit for the exam. Students who do not meet this requirement may choose to leave the program or repeat a course to earn a better grade (only one course may be repeated). Students are encouraged to review the University's Retaking Courses Policy. Students retaking an exam related course are required to enroll in the course in the next semester it is offered. Students will not be permitted to enroll in courses outside the doctoral core curriculum until successful completion of the QE.

1. The QE is based on four specified courses from the core curriculum. The exam comprises 3 sections: (1) general public affairs topics; (2) policy topics; and (3) research methods.

2. The QE is a classroom proctored test. It includes three 4-semester credit hour sessions, which will take place over a two day period. The specific days and location of the sessions will be designated by the department head and announced at the start of the spring semester.

3. Exams will be read and graded by a committee of Public Affairs faculty. Each section will be read by a minimum of two readers and given a Pass or Fail grade. A student who fails two or more sections of the QE will be dismissed from the program. If a student fails one section, he or she will be given the opportunity to retake that section. The retake exam will be given within four weeks of the original exam, and will be graded as described above (see 3). If the student passes the retake exam he or she may continue in the program.

Only under extreme, documented circumstances will a student be allowed to reschedule the QE. If an emergency arises, the student must notify the department head within 12 hours of the scheduled exam and request to take a rescheduled exam. If approved, the exam will be rescheduled within 2 weeks of the original exam date.

Required Courses and Dissertation: 75 semester credit hours

Required courses fall into three categories: core, research methods, and areas of concentration. Students must earn a grade of B- or better for all three areas (core, research methods, and areas of concentration). Repeating a course for a higher grade will be permitted one time only; a student earning two or more grades lower than B- in their area of concentration will be dismissed from the program.

Program Coursework

*** Indicates the four (4) courses included in the required qualifying examination taken following the first two semesters of coursework.

1. Public Affairs Core: 21 semester credit hours

   PA 7305 Leadership and Change in Public and Nonprofit Organizations
   PA 7306 Foundations of Public Affairs***
II. Research Methods: 9 semester credit hours

- **PA 7330** Research Design in Public Affairs***
- **EPPS 6316** Applied Regression\(^1\)
  - or **EPPS 7316** Regression and Multivariate Analysis\(^2\)

Choose ONE course from the following:

- **EPPS 6346** Qualitative Research Methods
- **EPPS 7344** Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables
- **EPPS 7370** Time Series Analysis I
- **EPPS 7386** Survey Research
- **EPPS 7390** Bayesian Analysis for Social and Behavioral Sciences

III. Concentration: 15 semester credit hours

Students choose one of the concentrations listed. Each concentration includes three required courses and two approved elective courses, for a total of 15 semester credit hours. Students may also choose the Customized and Directed Research option which includes 15 semester credit hours of approved electives.

**Concentration 1: Policy Analysis and Evaluation**

- **PA 6315** Evaluating Program and Organizational Performance
- **PA 7317** Economics and Public Policy
- **SOC 6340** Domestic Social Policy

6 semester credit hours of approved electives (6000 level or above)

**Concentration 2: Human Capital**

- **PA 6322** Negotiations for Effective Management
- **PA 6334** Ethics, Culture and Public Responsibility
- **PA 6386** Diversity Management

6 semester credit hours of approved electives (6000 level or above)

**Concentration 3: Nonprofit Management**

- **PA 6315** Evaluating Program and Organizational Performance
PA 6374 Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations
PA 6389 Volunteer Management

6 semester credit hours approved electives (6000 level or above)

Concentration 4: Customized and Directed Research
Choose 5 courses; ALL courses must be pre-approved by the PhD Advisor or Program Head.

IV. Additional Coursework (variable semester credit hours)
Students may be required to take additional coursework as needed to meet the 75 semester credit doctoral degree requirement.

V. Dissertation Research: minimum of 12 semester credit hours
Option 1: A dissertation is an original work initiated and completed by the doctoral candidate that demonstrates research competence and substantially adds to the knowledge in the candidate's field.
Option 2: A three-paper option is composed of a set of articles that together represent a significant and coherent contribution to our knowledge in the field of Public Affairs. A dissertation or a three-paper option requirement must be completed for successful completion of the Public Affairs doctoral program. Students will select a dissertation chair and a supervising committee to advise them through the research component of the doctoral requirement.
Regardless of the option selected, students will enroll in PA 8340 Dissertation Seminar in Public Affairs at the beginning of the dissertation process and enroll in PA 8V99 Dissertation during each following semester until the research is completed and defended. The final dissertation defense is completed when the student's dissertation chair and supervising committee agree that the research has been satisfactorily completed.
To remain in good standing, student must be continuously enrolled in PA 8V99 each long semester while completing their dissertation.

Master of Public Affairs
42 semester credit hours minimum

Faculty
Professor: L. Douglas Kiel
Clinical Professors: Donald R. Arbuckle, John R. McCaskill
Associate Professors: R. Paul Battaglio Jr., Doug Goodman, Sarah Maxwell, Sheryl L. Skaggs
Assistant Professors: Evgenia Gorina, James R. Harrington, Young-joo Lee, Meghna Sabharwal, Nicholas Vargas
Senior Lecturer: Teodoro Benavides
Mission

The Master of Public Affairs (MPA) program advances excellence in public service. The program accomplishes this mission through three sets of activities aimed at preparing its students to serve as capable and ethical stewards of the common good. It imparts essential knowledge, competencies and perspectives to a diverse array of future and current professionals in government and nonprofit organizations. It supports the wider community through in-service professional and leadership training, through policy and management analysis services, and it produces new knowledge through practice-centered research.

Objectives

The Master's degree in Public Affairs is a professional diploma that focuses on skills of management and analysis that contribute to successful carrying out of administrative and leadership responsibilities in government and nonprofit settings. The specific outcome objectives for students who graduate with the MPA degree are:

- An understanding of the philosophical, theoretical, and legal foundations of public management, policy making, and leadership in government and nonprofit settings;
- Proficiency in organizational and decision analysis, research and evaluation practice, and quantitative and qualitative techniques;
- Sound preparation for advanced study aimed at research centers;
- Mastery of persuasive written and oral communication.

Facilities

Students have access to the computing facilities in the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences and the University's computer labs. The school has four computing laboratories which have 24-30 computers that are network linked and equipped with major social science software packages, including Eviews, R, RATS, SPSS and Stata. A computerized geographic information system, the LexisNexis database, and Westlaw are also available for student use. The University's computer labs provide personal computers and UNIX workstations. Many important data and reference materials are also available online via the library and school's memberships in numerous organizations.

Admissions Requirement

The University's general admission requirements are discussed on the Graduate Admission page (catalog.utdallas.edu/2015/graduate/admission). The Public Affairs Master's program at UT Dallas typically admits only students who have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better. Prospective students must complete the University's online graduate application and submit a narrative outlining 1) academic interests, 2) current or long-range interests in research, teaching, or other professional objectives, 3) description of publications or other scholarly endeavors, and 3) listing of academic and professional organizations and fellowships, scholarships, or other honors received. International students whose native language is not English are also required to submit the Test of English as a Second Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 80, unless they graduated from a four-year college or university in the United States or other English speaking country. Students should submit examination scores and transcripts from all colleges previously attended to UT Dallas' Office of Admission and
Enrollment Services. Three letters of recommendation from individuals (employers, community leaders, teachers, etc.) who are able to judge a student's probable success in graduate school and a current resume are required. The letters and resume should be uploaded online.
To be guaranteed consideration for admission, fall applications must be received by July 1 (late registration deadline is August 1). Applications for spring admission must be received by November 1 (late registration deadline is December 1). Any incomplete application received after these dates will not be considered for admission during the designated semester. Students who do not meet this deadline must reapply for the following semester.
In addition to the university's transfer of credit requirements, a maximum of 9 semester credit hours of transfer credit can be applied to the MPA degree.

Prerequisites
While there are no specific prerequisites required for any MPA course, students who lack background in particular areas may be advised or required to take preparatory courses. In particular, students who lack background or experience in American political and policymaking institutions, in mathematics, and microcomputing may be required to develop proficiency in these areas before being admitted into certain courses. Students meet with the MPA Director to determine these requirements. Leveling courses will not count toward the MPA degree.

Degree Requirements
The University's general degree requirements are discussed on the [Graduate Policies and Procedures page](catalog.utdallas.edu/2015/graduate/policies/policy). Students seeking a MPA degree must complete at least 42 semester credit hours of work in the program. The program has three components: a 24 semester credit hour core, 12 semester credit hours of directed electives within a chosen professional specialization and the 3 semester credit hour Capstone seminar (PA 6399). For students without evidence of at least 12 months full time managerial experience in the public or nonprofit sectors, 3 semester credit hours of internship credit are also mandatory. Students for whom the internship requirement is waived must complete PA 6348 Navigating the Public Service Workplace.

Grade Point Requirements
Students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average in the core courses and an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 to graduate. If a student's GPA does not meet these standards, university policy concerning academic probation and removal from the program are in effect.

Program Coursework

**Major Core: 24 semester credit hours**
All MPA students should complete the core courses as soon as possible, with the requirement that Introduction to Quantitative Methods (EPPS 6313) be taken during the first two long semester following admission. A full-time student entering the program will normally take two core courses and one additional course each semester. The Capstone or internship is usually undertaken during the final semester in the program.
Required core: 24 semester credit hours

- **EPPS 6313** Introduction to Quantitative Methods
- **PA 6311** Public Management
- **PA 6313** Public Policymaking and Institutions
- **PA 6320** Organizational Theory
- **PA 6321** Government Financial Management and Budgeting
- **PA 6315** Evaluating Program and Organization Performance
- **PA 6345** Human Resources Management
- **PA 6382** Nonprofit Management

Professional Specialization Courses: 12 semester credit hours

Students select 12 semester credit hours of specialized courses from one of the following specialization tracks: Local Government Management, Nonprofit Management, and Policy Analysis. Students can also customize a track based on their career goals with the MPA Director's approval.

**Specialization 1: Local Government Management (12 semester credit hours)**

- **PA 6300** Quality and Productivity Improvement in Government
- **PA 6324** Urban Planning
- **PA 6326** Decision Tools for Managers
- **PA 6342** Local Economic Development
- **PA 6344** Local Government Management
- **PA 6349** Municipal Governance in Seoul, Korea
- **PA 6370** Project and Contract Management
- **PA 6386** Diversity Management
  - or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA Director

**Specialization 2: Nonprofit Management (12 semester credit hours)**

- **PA 6369** Grant Writing and Management
- **PA 6374** Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations
- **PA 6386** Diversity Management
- **PA 6387** Strategic Planning for Nonprofit
- **PA 6391** Nonprofit Marketing and Communication
  - or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA Director
Specialization 3: Policy Analysis (12 semester credit hours)

- **PA 6326** Decision Tools for Managers
- **SOC 6340** Domestic Social Policy
- **PA 7317** Economics and Public Policy
- **PA 7377** Education Policy
- **EPPS 6316** Applied Regression
- **EPPS 7304** Cost-Benefit Analysis

Appropriate advanced methods courses offered by an EPPS program or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA Director

**Capstone Course: 3 semester credit hours**

The Capstone in Public Affairs (**PA 6399**) is the culminating experience for graduating MPA students. Students integrate knowledge from across the MPA curriculum in a faculty-directed semester-long applied research project. This required 3 semester credit hour seminar should be taken during the semester in which the student intends to graduate.

**Internship: 3 semester credit hours**

Three (3) semester credit hours of internship credit (**PA 6V97**) are required for completing the MPA. The internship involves work in a professional capacity in an organization, under the joint supervision of an experienced professional mentor at the internship site and the MPA Internship Coordinator. The standard three semester credit hour internship requires approximately 20-hours per week time commitment to the work experience for a total of 300 internship contact hours during the semester. The objective of the internship is to provide an introduction to professional life and to establish sound approaches to the practice of public affairs. Students shall not take more than 6 semester credit hours of approved internship toward the MPA. Students with evidence of at least 12 months full-time managerial experience in the public or nonprofit sector will take **PA 6348** Navigating the Public Service Workplace. Students who wish to seek the internship waiver must submit a formal written request to the MPA Director that includes a letter documenting the duration of their experience and its relevance to public or nonprofit management. This request must be approved no later than the student's penultimate semester in the program. Students for whom the internship requirement is waived must complete an additional 3 semester credit hours of approved elective coursework in lieu of the internship.

1. Presumes algebra.
2. Presumes calculus.

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