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: human resource management, nonprofit management, public policy, government finance, leadership, and organizational theory.

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 a merely 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 organizational theory 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). This structure produces shared experiences 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:

**Demonstrate Comprehensive Knowledge.** Students will demonstrate their knowledge in core areas of public administration and management, including: theoretical foundations of public administration, public policy, organization theory, budgeting and governmental finance, and human capital.

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

PhD 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 that are equipped with major social science software packages including ArcGIS, EViews, R, SPSS, and Stata.

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 January 15. The following link provides details for university deadlines for application: [http://www.utdallas.edu/admissions/graduate/steps-to-admission/fees-and-deadlines/](http://www.utdallas.edu/admissions/graduate/steps-to-admission/fees-and-deadlines/).

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 Graduation Record Examination (GRE) scores are required.

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.

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) and three letters of recommendation from individuals (faculty, employers, community leaders, teachers, etc.) who are able to judge a student’s probable success in graduate school are required. The CV and the letters should be 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 a visa application.

Teaching Assistantships: Prospective students interested in receiving assistantships must have submitted all admission application materials including a Teaching Assistant (TA) application form by January 15 of the year they intend to start the program. Applications for the assistantships may be obtained from the Public & Nonprofit Management 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 Education 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.

Program Overview

The PhD in Public Affairs requires the completion of at least 54 semester credit hours of coursework beyond a 36 semester credit hour Master's degree. The 54 credit hours should include a minimum of 45 semester credit hours of coursework, and a minimum of 9 semester credit hours of dissertation work. Students who do not meet the 36 semester credit hours of Master's degree requirement will be required to take additional courses as directed by the PhD advisor. Funded students will be required to take at least 9 semester credit hours per semester in order to retain funding, as in the case in any other semester during which funding is awarded.

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. In addition, students should have completed a graduate-level course in quantitative methods and a course in public institutions in the recent past. Students who do not meet either of these prerequisites should contact the PhD advisor to discuss leveling courses they will need to take prior to beginning the PhD program. The leveling courses will not count towards the degree plan.

Qualifying Exam (QE)

Students must pass the QE to continue in the PhD program. This exam is based on materials from the following four courses: (1) PA 7306 Foundations of Public Affairs, (2) PA 7330 Research Design in Public Affairs, (3) PA 7314 Advanced Policy Process, Implementation and Evaluation, and (4) PA 7350 Advanced Organizational Theory and Behavior. The exam will be administered once a year, near the close of the spring semester.

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.

If a student fails any section of the exam, he or she will be given the opportunity to retake failed section(s). The retake exam can be taken no sooner than two months after the student receives the written results of the first examination, and no later than one year after the first examination. If the student passes the retake exam he or she may continue in the program. If the student fails any part of the retake exam or does not successfully complete the retake exam he or she will be dismissed from the program. Under no circumstances will a third examination be allowed.
Only under extreme, documented circumstances will a student be allowed to reschedule the QE. If an emergency arises, the student must notify the program head within 12 semester credit 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:

54 semester credit hours beyond 36 semester credit hours of Master's degree credit (90 graduate semester credit hours total)

Required courses fall into three categories: core, research methods, and electives.

Program Coursework

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

I. Public Affairs Core: 21 semester credit hours

PA 7305 Leadership and Change in Public and Nonprofit Organizations
PA 7306 Foundations of Public Affairs***
PA 7314 Advanced Policy Process, Implementation and Evaluation***
PA 7320 Advanced Human Capital Research and Theory
PA 7350 Advanced Organizational Theory and Behavior***
PA 7360 Advanced Fiscal and Budgetary Policy
PA 7375 Nonprofit Organizations: Theory and Practice

II. Research Methods: 9 semester credit hours

PA 7330 Research Design in Public Affairs***
EPPS 6316 Applied Regression¹
  or EPPS 7316 Regression and Multivariate Analysis²
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. Electives: 15 semester credit hours

Students are required to complete 15 semester credit hours of approved electives. Of the 15 semester credit hours, a minimum of 9 semester credit hours have to be
from a PA course and the remaining 6 semester credit hours can be taken in PA/EPPS or another program on campus. This is subject to the approval by the PhD advisor or the student's committee chair.

IV. Dissertation Research: minimum of 9 semester credit hours

To complete the Public Affairs doctoral program, a student must successfully defend their dissertation. The student will select a dissertation chair and a supervising committee to advise them through the research component of the doctoral requirement.

The 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. The three-paper option is permitted when it is composed of a set of articles that together represent a significant and coherent contribution to our knowledge in the field of Public Affairs.

Regardless of the option selected, after a student completes the required courses, they must enroll in **PA 8V99** (Dissertation) every spring and fall semester until they complete and defend their dissertation. The final dissertation defense is completed when the student's dissertation chair and supervising committee agree that the research has been satisfactorily completed.

1. Presumes algebra.
2. Presumes calculus.

Master of Public Affairs

*36 semester credit hours minimum*

Faculty

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;
• Demonstrate sound preparation for careers in the public and nonprofit sector;
• 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 Admissions page. 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 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 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 micro computing 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. Students seeking a MPA degree must complete at least 36 (39 if internship is required) semester credit hours of work in the program. The program has three components: a 24 semester credit hour core, 9 semester credit hours of directed electives within a chosen professional specialization and the 3 semester credit hour Capstone seminar (PA 6399). For pre-service 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.

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 (if required) 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: 9 semester credit hours

Students select 9 semester credit hours of specialized courses from one of the following specialization tracks: Local Government Management and Nonprofit Management. Students can also customize a track based on their career goals with the MPA Director's approval.

Specialization 1: Local Government Management (9 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 Case Study: Policy Management in Seoul
- PA 6370 Project and Contract Management
- PA 6386 Diversity Management

  or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA Director

Specialization 2: Nonprofit Management (9 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 6389 Volunteer Management
- PA 6391 Nonprofit Marketing and Communication

  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 (if needed)

Students with less than 12 month full-time managerial public or nonprofit sector work experience must complete three (3) semester credit hours of internship credit (PA 6V9 7) for 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 120 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 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.

3. Students seeking the Nonprofit Management Graduate Certificate have the option to take PA 6374 Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations in lieu of PA 6321.

Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management: 12 semester credit hours

The School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences offers a Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management for local government professionals and for MPA students who desire to broaden their knowledge of important issues and approaches employed by professional local public administrators. Local governments in the United States play an important role in our democratic system. They are the place in our democratic system where citizens have the most direct contact with elected and appointed officials on numerous issues.

Local government managers operate in a complex legal and political environment. They are responsible for the provision of varied services directly to citizens, such as land use planning, law enforcement, water and sewer services, and recreation. Both the method and quality of service delivery are greatly influenced by managers who are hired by elected officials. The management of cities and counties has become increasingly professional over the past several decades. How the professional staff delivers services to the public within the political environment in which it works is the topic of many of the courses in this program. Students will gain knowledge and skills that will allow them to lead and manage in local government settings; learn critical thinking and strategic thinking; and learn to communicate in a strategic manner.

Requirements for admission to the certificate program are the same as for a non-degree seeking graduate student. Completion of twelve (12) semester credit hours is required to attain the Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management and those semester credit hours may count toward a degree if the student completes all requirements for full admission as a graduate student. The face-to-face program will continue to be offered at the UT Dallas campus. Pending approval, the majority of the classes will be taught in the city hall facilities in the City of Plano, specifically at its Municipal Center, for the off-campus program.

Faculty

**Required courses: 9 semester credit hours**

Choose three of the following:

- [PA 6321](#) Government Financial Management and Budgeting
PA 6326 Decision Tools for Managers
PA 6344 Local Government Management
PA 6345 Human Resources Management

Prescribed Elective Courses: 3 semester credit hours

Choose 1 of the following:

PA 6315 Evaluating Program and Organization Performance
PA 6324 Urban Planning
PA 6342 Local Economic Development
PA 6370 Project and Contract Management
PA 6386 Diversity Management

Permission from the Public Affairs Program Head or MPA Director is required for courses outside this list.

Courses for the certificate must be completed within a 3-year period with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.

Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management: 15 semester credit hours

Nonprofit organizations constitute an increasingly significant sector of the American economy as well as an essential element in American civic life. Nonprofits are found in such diverse fields as health care, education, human services, and criminal justice, as well as in cultural and civic activities. Faced with resource constraints and rising demands for accountability, nonprofit organizations require professional managers with an understanding of both administrative principles and techniques and of the distinctive legal, economic, and social environment within which nonprofits operate. The Certificate in Nonprofit Management is designed to provide an overview of the nature and context of nonprofit organizations combined with skill-based courses to develop the competencies needed by nonprofit managers. The certificate is intended for professionals already working in the nonprofit sector, those working in private for-profit or governmental settings who would like to work or volunteer in the nonprofit sector, and students without professional experience who seek to prepare themselves for nonprofit careers.

Completion of fifteen (15) semester credit hours are required to attain the Certificate in Nonprofit Management and those semester credit hours may be counted toward a degree if the student completes all requirements for full admission as a graduate student.

Faculty

Required courses are:

PA 6369 Grant Writing and Management
PA 6374 Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations
PA 6382 Nonprofit Management
PA 6315 Evaluating Program and Organizational Performance

Related electives require permission from the Public Affairs Program Head or MPA Director.

Courses for the certificate must be completed within a 3-year period with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.

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