

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
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CATALOG DESCRIPTION OF
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

The M.P.A. Program builds on the belief that effective leadership of public agencies requires a basic set of abilities and public values irrespective of the particular characteristics of an organization. Courses in the program focus on the development of critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as an appreciation for ethical decision making.

All students in the program complete a core program of 21 units within the 36 units required for the M.P.A. In consultation with their advisers, students will select the remaining units from graduate public administration courses and courses offered by other departments and programs. These units can be used to further develop a general competence in public administration or to provide students with an opportunity to pursue additional topics of interest. The M.P.A. student can meet the university Graduate Writing Requirement by passing the writing component of the course MPA 210. Please see program director for the written policy. To finish the program students may elect to write a thesis or to take a comprehensive examination.

The curriculum of the program follows the guidelines established by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) and was designed following consultation with senior public administrators in the Fresno area. Consistent with the NASPAA guidelines, the program seeks to prepare administrative specialists who understand the place and role of public agencies and their staffs in the political, social, and economic systems of the United States; who have the analytic tools, both quantitative and qualitative, to diagnose problems and analyze alternative courses of public action; who have the leadership abilities to develop and make effective use of the talents and abilities of agency staffs; who have the abilities required to formulate, implement, and evaluate public policies which are responsible and effective; and who are able to manage an agency in such a way as to make responsible and effective use of its resources now and in the future.

Master of Public Administration Degree Requirements

	Units
Core (MPA 120g, 200, 210, 230, 245, 260)	18
Additional Core (MPA 215, 240, 250, 280T)	3
Approved Electives	3-15
Practitioner’s Seminars (MPA 289T)	0-6
Internship (MPA 287)	0-3
Comprehensive Examination	0
Thesis (MPA 299)	0-3
TOTAL	36

All students will be required to take 21 core units; 18 of these core units are prescribed for students. The remaining 3 core units must be selected from the courses listed under the “Additional Core” heading. Students may take more than one course listed under the “Additional Core” heading. If they do, these courses will count towards meeting their “Approved Electives” requirement. MPA students may also choose to take units offered as Practitioner Seminars (MPA 289T). Pre-service or in-service students with less than six months of experience in the public or non-profit sector will be advised to take MPA 287. This will provide them with both a valuable learning and working experience. To culminate their MPA experience, students may choose either the comprehensive exam or thesis. The comprehensive exam does not count for any units towards the degree, but does satisfy the requirement that students be provided with a culminating experience to their program. The thesis (MPA 299) is worth 3 units toward the degree and also satisfies the culminating experience requirement.

Approved elective courses may be used to build on the foundation of the program’s core offerings. The courses to be used as electives in the MPA program are to be chosen in consultation with the student’s adviser and must be approved by the MPA director. The students’ selection of electives should be guided by their interest in a particular course/ topic and its relationship to the practice of public administration.

Admission

Applicants may qualify for admission to the program and thereby take program courses by achieving classified graduate standing. Classified standing requires:

1. An acceptable baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association;
2. Good standing at the last college attended;
3. Submission to the university of transcripts of college work; scores from the Graduate Record Examination Aptitude Test (GRE) or the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT); a written statement indicating why the applicant wishes to pursue an M.P.A.; and, if any, evidence of work performance in a public or nonprofit agency (see 4d); and
4. Recommendation for admission by the Admissions Committee of the Master of Public Administration Program. Candidates will be recommended on the basis of the promise they show for successfully completing the program and achieving a successful career in public management and administration. Candidates will be evaluated using a combination of:
 - a. grade point average (those with averages of less than 2.75 overall or 3.0 on the last 60 semester units attempted must have compensating strength in other areas)
 - b. aptitude for academic work (those with scores of less than 475 on either part of the GRE or on the GMAT must have compensating strength in other areas)
 - c. professional goals of the applicant
 - d. successful performance in public or nonprofit agency employment as demonstrated by the character of work accomplished, distinctions achieved, and letters of recommendation from persons who can knowingly and comparatively evaluate the on-the-job performance of the candidate over a period of time (this basis for evaluation may be waived for candidates showing great strength in [a] or [b]). Applicants whose native language is not English must also achieve a minimum score of 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language.

Courses Offered in the Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program

MPA 120G. Quantitative Applications for Public Administration (3)

Exploring different methods of data analysis for understanding how public decisions are made and public policies are evaluated. Data collection, measurement, sampling, and data analysis – including regression – are explored with practical applications. (2 lecture, 2 lab hours) (Formerly GPA 120G)

MPA 200. Administration and Society (3)

How administration acts and is acted upon by institutional forces and values; role of history, cultural, ethical, political, social, and economic values and institutions; an emphasis on: bureaucracy, economy and democracy, centralization vs. decentralization, professionalism and society; alternatives to bureaucracy. (Formerly GPA 200)

MPA 210. Organizational Theory in Public Administration (3)

A study of the key issues involved in the management of public organizations. This examination of organizational behavior and theories of complex organizations includes the following: leadership styles, communication, organizational change, hierarchy and organizational structure, and organizational culture. (Formerly GPA 210)

MPA 215. State and Local Government (3)

Helps students understand state and local government history and how these governmental units interact with the federal government. Legislatures, executives, courts and city, and county councils are studied, particularly in terms of their emphasis on public policy. (Formerly GPA 280T, GPA215)

MPA 230. Public Budgeting (3)

Examines the budget process, the use of economic analysis in evaluating taxation and expenditure issues, and the development and analysis of budget proposals. Also includes discussion of burdens and effectiveness of different taxes and considers potential reforms to the budgeting process. (Formerly GPA 230)

MPA 240. Seminar in Public Management (3)

An inquiry into contemporary issues facing public managers. Topics that can be covered include accountability, performance management, development of information technology, e-government, public management reforms, implications of privatization/contracting out, and public governance. (Formerly GPA 240)

MPA 245. Human Resources Management (3)

Explores the development of the merit system in government, hiring and termination, career development, human resource planning, management-labor relations, equal opportunity, affirmative action, workplace diversity, and the legal dimension of the public personnel system.

MPA 250. Ethics and Public Administration (3)

(Same as AETH 202.) Prerequisite: MPA 210. The moral dimensions of public administrative decision-making. The nature of public and private morality; psychological and ethical egoism; relativism; utilitarianism and deontological theories; rights and goods in the public service context; sensitive applications of rules in public agencies. (Formerly GPA 250)

MPA 260. Public Policy Administration (3)

Prerequisites: MPA 120G, 200, 210, 240. A study of policy initiation, formulation, and implementation and a public manager's role in them; management processes and functions in the policy process; policy justification and advocacy, policy analysis, and implementation evaluation. (Formerly GPA 260)

MPA 280T. Topics in Public Administration (3; max total 6 if no topic repeated)

Selected topics meeting student needs and interests that are not met in other university courses. (Formerly GPA 280T)

MPA 287. Internship in Public Administration (3)

Supervised work experience for a realistic exposure to an organizational-bureaucratic environment for students in the M.P.A. program who lack significant work experience in a public or nonprofit organization. CR/NC grading only. (Formerly GPA 287)

MPA 289T. Practitioner's Seminar (1; max total 6 if no topic repeated)

Prerequisite: Some seminars may have course prerequisites. Selected topics in the administration of public programs and agencies examined from the prospective and experience of practitioners. (Formerly GPA 289T)

MPA 290. Independent Study (1-4; max total 6)

See Academic Placement – Independent Study. Approved for RP grading. (Formerly GPA 290)

MPA 299. Thesis (3)

Prerequisite: See Criteria for Thesis and Project. Preparation, completion, and submission of an acceptable thesis for the master's degree. Approved for RP grading. (Formerly GPA 299)

MPA Program Faculty

Kurt Cline, Ph.D.

Jeffrey Cummins, Ph.D.

Kenneth Hansen, Ph.D.

Thomas Holyoke, Ph.D.

David Schecter, Ph.D.

Mark Somma, Ph.D.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

To apply for admission to the graduate program use csufresno.edu website:

Division of Graduate Studies and Research,
Thomas Administration Bldg., Rm. 132,
California State University, Fresno
5241 N. Maple Avenue
Fresno, CA 93740-0051, Phone: (559) 278-2448

For applications for University Scholarships write or call:

Financial Aid Office
Joyal Administrations Bldg.,
5241 N. Maple Avenue
California State University, Fresno
Fresno, CA 93740-0064, Phone: (559) 278-2183

Information on registration for testing:

Office of Testing Services
Academic Affairs
Family/Food Services, Rm 110
California State University, Fresno
Fresno, CA 93740, Phone: (559) 278-2457

For Further Information:

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OR WRITE :

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