

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) is a professional degree that prepares students for a career in management of government and nonprofit organizations.

Students can choose to pursue the degree in a totally online format, or in a traditional classroom environment, or in a mix of both that best suits a student's individual needs.

The MPA degree is often described as a practitioner degree, in that it is intended primarily for those who will be doing public or nonprofit administration in their career. Nonetheless, some of our recent graduates have decided to go on to pursue doctorates in preparation for a career on a college or university faculty, and they have done so successfully, as well.

Becoming Career Ready...

/Students develop the skills to become responsible managers and policy makers by learning strategic decision-making.

/Students learn to analyze the ethical considerations confronting public and nonprofit organizations serving diverse communities in an evolving world.

/Students elevate critical thinking skills that are both job relevant and theoretically grounded.

/Students cultivate the ability to organize information and ideas and to communicate them effectively, both in written reports and oral presentations.

/Students engage in the development of leadership skills to successfully communicate with a range of individuals, communities and organizations.

/Students deepen their commitment to public service within the public sector.

/Students work closely with a faculty advisor to expand their skills through scholarly and professional opportunities beyond the classroom.

Why should I pursue an MPA at Southeast?

The MPA program at Southeast provides students a rich and diverse educational experience. Typically, the core courses are taught by full-time, doctorally-prepared faculty with degrees from a wide range of graduate schools around the United States. Many have MPA degrees themselves, and all have had real-world experience in public or nonprofit administration. On occasion, public administration elective courses may also be offered by adjunct faculty who are area practitioners, and whose specialized expertise makes a valuable contribution to students' educational experience.

Consistent with the practitioner orientation of the MPA degree, students will typically complete a 120-hour internship in a public or nonprofit agency. The internship permits students to apply the knowledge they have acquired during their coursework, while learning or sharpening career skills and gathering experience in the types of organizations in which they would like to be employed.

Career Opportunities

Graduates of the Master of Public Administration program can look forward to rewarding careers in a wide variety of governmental and nonprofit organizations. Current employment in national, state, and local governments exceeds twenty million. In addition, there are almost two million nonprofit organizations in the United States. Our graduates have positions in a wide variety of governmental and nonprofit organizations, as shown below.

Employment of Recent MPA Graduates

- Managing city governments
- Directing charitable organizations
- Supervising parks and recreation programs
- Administrating educational programs
- Working in human resources departments
- Leading disaster relief efforts
- Managing grant programs
- Heading chambers of commerce

Admission Requirements

In addition to the criteria established for general admission to graduate studies are the following departmental criteria. Application materials must demonstrate the student's commitment to a career in governmental or nonprofit organizations.

1. An undergraduate GPA of 2.7 on a 4.0 scale
2. Resume
3. Two letters of recommendation addressing the student's potential for a career in public or nonprofit service
4. A letter of intent addressing professional goals and objectives. The letter should address what the applicant expects to achieve through graduate level study. The letter should be typed and a maximum of 750 words in length.

GRE, LSAT, or GMAT scores are not required but may be submitted to strengthen application

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This is a guide based on the 2020-2021 Graduate Bulletin and is subject to change. The time it takes to earn a degree will vary based on factors such as dual enrollment, remediation, and summer enrollment. Students meet with an academic advisor each semester and use Degree Works to monitor their progress.

The Master of Public Administration degree requires the completion of 36 hours of coursework, consisting of 21 hours of core courses, 12 hours of elective courses, and a 3-credit-hour capstone, internship or thesis. A full-time student can often complete the program in two years, subject to appropriate planning for the internship.

CURRICULUM CHECKLIST

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36 hours required

Core Requirements:

- PS502 Fundamentals of Public Administration (3)
- PS505 Organizational Theory and Behavior (3)
- PS518 Public Policy Analysis (3)
- PS545 Research Methods for Public Administrators (3)
- PS603 Public Personnel Administration (3)
- PS615 Government Budgeting Process (3)
- PS655 Federalism, State and Local Government (3)
- PS697 Public Administration Internship (3)
- OR
- Thesis (3)

Choose 12 hours from:

- AC548 Government/Not-For-Profit Accounting (3)
- EC525 Public Policy Economics (3)
- PS625 Administrative Law (3)
- PS689 Independent Study in Public Administration (3)
- PS691-696 Topics in Public Administration (3)
- PY571 Behavioral Statistics (3)
- PY650 Organizations as Open Systems (3)
- SC560 Organizational Communication (3)

Other Degree Information

- The capstone internship (PS 697) involves 120 hours of work with the host organization, and the writing and defense of a scholarly internship paper on the experience.
- Undergraduate students who apply for and meet the eligibility requirements of the Accelerated MPA Program can take as many as four of the 500-level core courses and have them count toward both their undergraduate and MPA degrees.
- The University requires that at least 18 credit hours of the 36-hour program must be at the 600 level.
- Students are also expected to comply with Graduate School general requirements, including continuous enrollment provisions, etc.