



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Department of Public Administration**

*College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*

# **MPA STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-24**



The Master of Public Administration Program at Northern Illinois University is recognized by, and a member of, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). It is among the first programs in the nation found to be in conformity with NASPAA Standards for Professional Masters Degree Programs in Public Affairs and Administration. NIU is also fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

## Welcome to the 60th MPA Class at NIU!



You are beginning an exciting journey in the MPA curriculum. While challenging, the curriculum will expose you to key concepts and skills needed for effective management of public sector organizations. You will find staff and instructors seeking to support you in this journey. We are proud of the work the department has done over the decades to train practitioners in public service and seek to continue the program's tradition of excellence.

The journey includes opportunities and challenges. The curriculum is competency-based and calls upon you to develop the skills and capabilities needed in public sector management. Each course will explain the competencies it provides and how they connect to larger themes in public service education. As a competency-based curriculum, we will call upon you to connect theoretical concepts to practice.

The program will also call upon you to develop specific skills necessary for the daily practice of public service. We will ask you to read material from the field, write extensively, and to be prepared to present the results of such reading and research to a professional audience. It is important that you consider these demands in their developmental context. I recommend pushing yourself to develop your talents in these regards. You should take the assignments as seriously as possible to emulate a professional setting.

You are joining the 60<sup>th</sup> cohort of our MPA program. Many practitioners have graduated from the program and gone on to create a tradition of excellence within the local government and public service community. We look forward to inviting you to join this community on your graduation. We take this responsibility seriously and hope to support and engage you throughout your career.

It is important to keep the values and goals of public service in mind as you proceed through the program and your eventual career. The purpose of the training is to help you serve the public in the many ways that one can serve the public. This program is certainly education with a purpose. We look forward to helping you explore this purpose and hope that inspires you to pursue excellence throughout your career as it has motivated us.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, I would like to welcome you to our program and wish you success in our program and beyond.

Scott E. Robinson  
Chair and Professor  
Department of Public Administration  
Northern Illinois University

## Table of Contents

<b>GUIDELINES FOR PURSUING THE MPA DEGREE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
MISSION STATEMENT .....	1
LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.....	1
SPECIALIZATIONS AND SPECIALIZATION COMPETENCIES .....	2
ADVISING.....	3
TRANSFER CREDITS.....	3
REGISTRATION FOR COURSES .....	3
TIME LIMITATIONS .....	4
READMISSION/REENTRY .....	4
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY .....	4
<b>STUDENT CLASSIFICATIONS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT STUDENTS.....	5
MID-CAREER STUDENTS.....	5
PRE-CAREER STUDENTS.....	5
<b>MPA PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
COURSE REQUIREMENTS .....	6
CORE COURSES.....	6
AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION/ELECTIVE COURSES .....	7
CAPSTONE PROJECT COURSE.....	9
GRADE POINT AVERAGE .....	9
SEQUENCE FOR COMPLETING THE MPA PROGRAM – PRECAREER STUDENTS .....	10
SEQUENCE FOR COMPLETING THE MPA PROGRAM – MIDCAREER STUDENTS .....	11
GRADING SCHEME FOR MPA COURSES .....	12
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS .....	12
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.....	13
LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE CAPSTONE COURSE AND CAPSTONE PROJECT .....	14
<b>CAPSTONE PROJECT (PSPA 699).....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CAPSTONE PROJECT (PSPA 699).....</b>	<b>15</b>
PSPA 699 course requirements .....	15
<b>INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
ADMISSION AND REGULATIONS.....	16
STUDENT RESOURCES .....	17
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT .....	18
INTERN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	18
INTERN EVALUATIONS BY SUPERVISORS.....	19
INTERNSHIP EVALUATIONS BY STUDENTS .....	19
<b>FINANCIAL AID .....</b>	<b>20</b>
GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS .....	20
RHOTEN A. SMITH ASSISTANTSHIPS .....	20
<b>PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>AWARDS AND HONORS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
PI ALPHA ALPHA .....	25
DEPARTMENT AND STUDENT AWARDS .....	25
STUDENT SELECTED AWARDS .....	27
<b>IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>APPENDIX B.....</b>	<b>31</b>

# GUIDELINES FOR PURSUING THE MPA DEGREE

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Public Administration is to improve the quality of life for all in local communities by strengthening professional and ethical public and nonprofit management through our teaching, scholarship, and community engagement.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In order to become effective public leaders, students must develop a solid foundation in technical, analytical, ethical, diversity, accountability, and leadership skills. In addition, students receive greater depth in a specialty area training of their choice: local government management, strategic public management and leadership, fiscal administration, nonprofit management, comparative public service, and public service law and management.

To this end the Department of Public Administration uses a competencies-based curriculum which establishes specific skills and abilities acquired by the students as they complete the required courses. A portfolio of completed work is displayed by the graduate as evidence of proficiencies in distinct categories of public service.

**There are 13 program level competencies that students should attain before graduation from the program. Upon completion of the MPA degree at NIU:**

- ✓ Effectively work with a diverse group of internal and external stakeholders
- ✓ Motivate and engage peers and stakeholders to enhance organizational capacity
- ✓ Integrate current and preferred management practices of budgeting, human resources, information technology and statistical analysis to improve organizations
- ✓ Use performance management to facilitate goal identification and execution
- ✓ Apply decision-making theories to frame and solve public service problems
- ✓ Effectively participate in the public policy process in a role appropriate to a professional public manager
- ✓ Conduct environmental scans and identify the windows of opportunity to influence decisions
- ✓ Evaluate public service issues in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, equity and economy
- ✓ Incorporate professional codes of ethics in public service decision-making to enhance integrity of public services
- ✓ Communicate effectively with diverse audiences both orally (public speaking) and in writing (analytical and persuasive) for a public service organization and in the public policy process
- ✓ Meaningfully engage with people holding diverse perspectives to address public service issues
- ✓ Identify strategies for improving democratic accountability in governance, including improved transparency and civic participation
- ✓ Develop or adapt policies, programs, goods or services to accommodate changing social demographics for the population they serve

## SPECIALIZATIONS AND SPECIALIZATION COMPETENCIES

Students may choose from six specializations in the MPA program each with specific competencies. The specializations are:

- Comparative Public Service
- Fiscal Administration
- Local Government Management
- Nonprofit Management
- Public Service Law and Management
- Strategic Public Management and Leadership

Upon completion of the **Comparative Public Service Specialization** a graduate should be able to;

1. Lead and manage in public governance in a country outside the U.S.
2. Participate in and contribute to the policy process in a country outside the U.S.
3. Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions in a country outside the U.S.
4. Articulate and apply a public service perspective in a country outside the U.S.
5. Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry in a country outside the U.S.

Upon completion of the **Fiscal Administration Specialization** a graduate should be able to;

1. Use financial information to evaluate the financial condition of public service organizations and make appropriate fiscal policy recommendations.
2. Communicate budget and financial information about public service organizations to technical and non-technical stakeholders, including through appropriate graphs and spreadsheets.
3. Develop and implement entity-wide financial management policies for public service organizations in accordance with recommendations by GFOA and similar professional organizations.
4. Analyze nonprofit financial reports and fundraising activities and make recommendations to promote financial sustainability.

Upon completion of the **Local Government Management Specialization** a graduate should be able to;

1. Link local government budgetary practices with service delivery.
2. Organize, facilitate, and document a public meeting or information gathering session of citizens, clients, and stakeholders about public service issues demands in a local government setting.
3. Analyze options for managing conflict situations.
4. Demonstrate analytical capabilities in public policy formulation, building models or simulations for policy and program design alternatives, and planning implementation and evaluations for a functional or administrative agency in local government.
5. Develop the capacity for public service leadership in a dynamic and changing environment.
6. Demonstrate an ability to manage collaborative relationships with other organizations.
7. Demonstrate knowledge and skills for motivating organizations to confront local, regional, and state problems.

Upon completion of the **Nonprofit Management Specialization** a graduate should be able to:

1. Identify the legal and fiduciary environment in which nonprofits operate.
2. Motivate and professionalize a volunteer workforce.
3. Analyze financial reports and fundraising activities and make recommendations to promote financial sustainability.

Upon completion of the **Public Service Law and Management Specialization** a graduate should be able to;

1. Lead and manage in public governance with legal insights.
2. Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions related to the legal issues of a public organization.
3. Articulate and apply a public service perspective while serving in a public organization or a law firm that serves nonprofit, local, state, and federal government agencies.
4. Communicate, interact, and provide a legal perspective within a diverse and changing citizenry.

Upon completion of the **Strategic Public Management and Leadership Specialization** a graduate should be able to:

1. Use their knowledge of innovation models, techniques, and theories, in addition to models of collaboration and change management, to diagnose organization situations and suggest recommendations for alternative solutions.
2. Use their knowledge of strategic management and planning theories and applications to help organizations adapt to changing environmental and technological forces.
3. Use leadership theories and applications, including conflict management models and negotiation techniques, to facilitate transformational organizational change.

## ADVISING

The department chair (chair) and the assistant to the chair (A2C) serve as advisors to all MPA students, and will assist students in academic program planning, selection of an area of specialization, application of transfer credits, and choice of electives. The A2C is also responsible for advising students on matters pertaining to the internship and administrative procedures. Other faculty members in the department are available to assist students on an individual basis. Prior to starting the MPA program students will complete a *Competencies Assessment Inventory* which will document where the student's competencies are when they begin the MPA program. The assessment document will become part of the student's portfolio, and each semester, the students and the A2C will review the progress in achieving growth in the competencies.

## TRANSFER CREDITS

With the approval of the Department of Public Administration and the Dean of the Graduate School, graduate course work may be accepted from other accredited colleges and universities to meet semester hour requirements for the MPA degree. Any student wishing to apply transfer credits must consult the A2C and must obtain approval using the [transfer credit approval form](#) from the department chair. Normally, no more than nine semester hours are accepted in transfer from other colleges.

No more than 15 semester hours of course work aggregated from the following sources may be counted toward meeting MPA degree requirements: transfer credits for course work taken at other universities, courses taken while a student-at-large at NIU, and courses taken as electives in the Northern Illinois University College of Law.

## REGISTRATION FOR COURSES

Students are to use NIU's [MyNIU](#) online registration system to register for courses each semester.

All MPA courses are accessible by permit only. To ensure a place in a class, students should obtain permits from the A2C early during the designated advising periods each fall and spring semester. Registration information, which includes registration timetables, the semester calendar, and add/drop deadlines is available at the [Registration and Records](#) Student Resources web page.

Students who fail to request an advising appointment during the designated advising period in fall and spring semesters cannot expect to receive the classes they desire. Permit numbers should be used within four weeks from the issue date.

## TIME LIMITATIONS

MPA students must fulfill all requirements for the MPA degree within a period of six consecutive years. The date of entry into the first course of a student's graduate program is viewed as the starting point of the six-year period. ***This includes courses taken as a student-at-large and courses accepted in transfer from other graduate or law programs.*** MPA students must satisfy the degree requirements of the catalog during the term for which they have been admitted to the MPA degree program. With respect to all other policies and regulations, all students are subject to those rules and regulations set forth in the most recently published NIU Graduate Catalog and MPA Student Handbook.

## READMISSION/REENTRY

As stated in the Graduate School catalog, "A degree-seeking student who does not register for course work in a 12- month period must submit a reentry application and a new program of courses, as well as obtain permission from the program to reenter." Reentry must be approved by the department chair and the Graduate School and is only granted under exceptional circumstances.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The NIU Graduate Catalog states: "Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as their own work that which they have not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated, for example, if they copy the work of another or use unauthorized notes or other aids during an examination or turn in as their own a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university." A record of each suspected incident is required to be filed by the faculty member with the university judicial office. There is often some degree of uncertainty regarding just what constitutes plagiarism. To clarify the situation, the following may be referred to as examples of plagiarism or violations of academic integrity:

- Copying word for word from the work of another student or author without proper citation,
- Heavily paraphrasing the work of another student or author without acknowledgment,
- Using another's concepts, ideas, or suggested frameworks/models without acknowledging their assistance or contribution to your effort.

In the research of any paper or assignment, students will certainly refer to the ideas and models of others.

The literature review justifies the relevance of the topic and citations of related works are perfectly acceptable **as long as credit is given to the source**. Credit can be given either in a footnote or a bibliographic reference. Sometimes an acknowledgment will suffice, but **anything used that does not represent a student's own idea, thought, or opinion must be cited** unless it is common knowledge. It is best to err on the side of being too careful. If a student is in doubt about whether or not a citation is in order, the instructor should be consulted. Students are urged to complete the online tutorial about [academic integrity](#) .

## **STUDENT CLASSIFICATIONS**

### **GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT STUDENTS**

The [Graduate Certificate in Public Management](#) (GCPM) is offered online by the department, to provide a rigorous intellectual development opportunity for those who are in a career, may hold a master's degree and who are looking for background in public administration. Only students defined as mid-career are eligible to apply for the GCPM. Students are required to complete 15 credit hours of course work. The credit earned for a certificate may be applied toward the Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree with the advice and approval of the department chair. All requirements for a certificate of graduate study must be completed within a period of six consecutive years.

### **MID-CAREER STUDENTS**

A mid-career student is defined as a student who has appropriate professional experience. This is generally defined as: at least two years of administrative full-time work experience in a government or nonprofit organization. A mid-career student is usually employed full-time in their professional position while they enroll in one or two classes each semester to earn their MPA. All students must enroll in 39 hours of courses to complete the MPA degree. Under certain circumstances, a mid-career student may be required by the department chair to complete the internship program for a duration shorter than the two-year requirement for pre-career students.

Mid-career students must comply with professional development requirements (page 13) and capstone requirements. Mid-career students are encouraged to self-assess their competency level each semester by completing the Mid-Career Self Evaluation form (Appendix C – page 33).

### **PRE-CAREER STUDENTS**

Pre-career students who enter the MPA program without “appropriate professional experience” are required to serve internships and enroll in PSPA 695. Internships are not always available for international students. “Appropriate professional experience” can generally be defined as: at least two years of administrative full-time work experience in a government or nonprofit agency. The Chair of the department, upon the recommendation of the A2C, will determine whether a student meets this criterion. Further information on the internship requirements can be found on pages 16 through 19.



# MPA PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The MPA degree normally requires the completion of 39-48 semester hours of approved graduate study in the public management core and a selected specialization. The student must complete a minimum of 39 semester hours of course work, exclusive of internship hours. The distribution of hours is as follows:

24	credit hours of core courses
12	credit hours within an area of specialization
3	credit hours of capstone project (PSPA 699)
<b>39</b>	
3-5	credit hours of PSPA 695: Internship in Public Administration (required of those without “appropriate professional experience” – (see page 5 for definition of pre-career student)

## CORE COURSES

### **PSPA 600 – Introduction to Public Service**

Examines the history of public administration and the basic issues which confront it, including administrative responsibility and ethics, and the formulation and implementation of public policy.

### **PSPA 605 - Organization Theory and Behavior**

A survey of selected theory and research on organizations relevant to public administration, with a focus on key organizational functions and ways of defining and responding to organizational problems.

### **PSPA 607 - Public Service Performance I: Theory and Management**

Provides an overview of evidence-based decision making in public service organizations. Performance measurement theory and practices are introduced and explored through case studies and the creation of a research design.

### **PSPA 608 - Public Service Performance II: Management and Data Analysis**

This course follows up on the first course in the series focusing on public service performance, again focusing on management. This course studies the basic theory, techniques, and practice of data collection and analysis so that information can be used to inform management decisions.

### **PSPA 609 - Human Resources Management in Public Service Organizations**

An examination of techniques, methods, and policies concerning the management of personnel in public and nonprofit organizations.

### **PSPA 610 - Public Budgeting and Financial Management**

Examination of the public budgetary process and related financial management techniques.

### **PSPA 611 - Public Revenue Analysis and Financial Management**

An investigation of theories and politics of taxation, features and impacts of alternative revenue generation methods, and financial management topics including procurement and procurement systems, enterprise resource planning systems, and contract management.

### **PSPA 612 - Information Technology in Public Service Organizations**

An introduction to concepts and skills concerning the management of information technology in the public sector. Coverage of topics related to managing information and information technology to support public service delivery.

## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION/ELECTIVE COURSES

In addition to the core courses, students must also complete the requirements to develop expertise in a specialized field of academic and professional interest. Elective courses are selected with the aid of the A2C with regard to the stated objective of each specialization, and in terms of the specific career goals of individual students.

**Comparative Public Service** – a study of public administration and management in a global context, students will gain an advanced capacity to assume a leadership role and use management skills to enhance the mission of government agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the US and another country. This specialization requires a semester abroad at an approved university. Specific courses taken abroad must be approved in advance by the department chair. The courses abroad must support the student's ability to demonstrate the specialization competencies. The Comparative Public Service specialization is formatted as an element of the Double Degree Program of Master of Public Administration program with selected collaborating universities in Kenya and Thailand.

### **Competencies Required:**

- Lead and manage in public governance in a country outside the U.S.
- Participate in and contribute to the policy process in a country outside the U.S.
- Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions in a country outside the U.S.
- Articulate and apply a public service perspective in a country outside the U.S.
- Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry in a country outside the U.S.

Students must demonstrate ability to advance in one or more of the specialization competencies with a set of four or more courses (equivalent to 12 semester hours) at a university outside the U.S., approved in advance by the department chair, and successful completion of the capstone project (PSPA 699). Students may enroll in PSPA 693 to earn credit for study abroad courses.

**Fiscal Administration** - a critical examination of techniques and problems in the areas of fiscal management, accountancy, budgetary policy, and political economy.

### **Course Requirements:**

- PSPA 653 – Intermediate Public and Nonprofit Financial Management
- PSPA 657X– Accounting for Public Administration
- Six semester hours of approved graduate study

**Local Government Management** - a thorough study of government administration, focusing on the operations of local governments and the analysis of local government and metropolitan issues.

### **Course Requirements:**

- PSPA 630 – Local and Metropolitan Government
- PSPA 632 – Local Government Administration

### **Two of the following**

- PSPA 627 - Strategic Engagement in Government and Nonprofit Organizations
- PSPA 631 – Urban Planning and Zoning
- PSPA 633 – Citizen Participation
- PSPA 634 – New Governance
- PSPA 635 – Local Economic Development Policy
- PSPA 660 – Ethics and Public Service in America
- PSPA 665 – Public Sector Innovation
- Three semester hours of approved graduate study

**Nonprofit Management** - a study of the unique challenges posed by the administration of nonprofit organizations in both the domestic and global contexts, including communication and promotion, fundraising and grant writing, and intersectoral collaboration with the public and private sectors.

**Course Requirements:**

- PSPA 624 – Resource Development for Nonprofit Organizations or  
PSPA 653 – Intermediate Public and Nonprofit Financial Management  
**Students may substitute PSPA 624 for PSPA 611. Then PSPA 653 must be taken in lieu of PSPA 624.**
- PSPA 626 – Nongovernmental Organizations and Governance or  
PSPA 656 – Management of Not-for-Profit Agencies

**Two of the following**

- PSPA 627 - Strategic Engagement in Government and Nonprofit Organizations
- PSPA 634 – New Governance
- PSPA 635 – Local Economic Development Policy
- PSPA 673 – Strategic Planning for Public Service Organizations
- Three semester hours of approved graduate study

**Public Service Law and Management Specialization** - a study of public administration and management in a legal context, students will gain an advanced capacity to assume a leadership role and use management skills to enhance the mission of government agencies and nongovernmental organizations as it relates to public law and management. The student must apply to the NIU law school and the MPA program simultaneously or have a law degree from a reputable university and apply to the MPA program.

**Competencies Required:**

- Lead and manage in public governance with legal insights
- Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions related to the legal issues of a public organization
- Articulate and apply a public service perspective while serving in a public organization or a law firm that serves nonprofit, local, state, and federal government agencies
- Communicate, interact, and provide a legal perspective within a diverse and changing citizenry

Students must demonstrate ability to advance in one or more of the specialization competencies with a set of four or more law school courses (equivalent to 12 semester hours) approved by the department chair, and successful completion of the capstone project (PSPA 699).

**Strategic Public Management and Leadership** – students will gain an advanced capacity to assume a leadership role and use strategic management and collaborative processes that facilitate the mission of government and nonprofit organizations.

**Course Requirements:**

- PSPA 650 – Leadership in Public Sector Organizations
- PSPA 673 – Strategic Planning for Public Service Organizations

**Two of the following**

- PSPA 627 - Strategic Engagement in Government and Nonprofit Organizations
- PSPA 634 – New Governance
- PSPA 655 – Organization Development in the Public Sector
- PSPA 660 – Ethics and Public Service in America
- PSPA 665 – Public Sector Innovation
- PSPA 671 – Public Management in a Globalized Environment
- Three semester hours of approved graduate study

## CAPSTONE PROJECT COURSE

### PSPA 699– Public Service Research

Research and writing to complete capstone paper requirements for the MPA degree. PSPA 699 is a three-hour course and must be taken in the semester where student will take the oral comprehensive exam, preferably the final semester of the MPA program or penultimate semester based upon advising. For further details, see pages 14 and 15.

## ELECTIVE COURSES OUTSIDE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Students may select elective courses from other graduate programs at Northern Illinois University, or from certain approved courses offered by the NIU College of Law, but all elective courses, including those on the College of Law approved list, must be approved in advance by the A2C as being appropriate for the individual student's program of study.

Students wishing to take courses offered by the NIU College of Law and count them as electives toward the fulfillment of MPA degree requirements should consult with the A2C to secure the necessary permission. Elective courses taken in the College of Law are considered as transfer credits by the Graduate School and thus are subject to the 15-hour limitation on the number of transfer and SAL credits that may be counted toward fulfilling MPA degree requirements. Students must get approval from the College of Law to enroll in a law course.

## GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Graduate students at NIU must maintain at least a 3.00 cumulative grade point average (GPA) in order to remain in good standing. Following the end of any academic term in which the cumulative graduate GPA falls below 3.00, the student will be considered on academic probation. A student on probation who fails to bring the GPA back to 3.00 upon completion of nine additional semester hours of graduate work will be academically dismissed by the Graduate School (see Graduate Catalog for additional information). However, MPA students must earn a cumulative GPA **greater than** 3.0 to be eligible to take the comprehensive examination. Any student who does not meet this minimum requirement will need to enroll in further coursework to improve their GPA before they will be allowed to take the oral comprehensive exam. A grade of C will be detrimental to a graduate student's ability to complete the MPA program. For example, a student who receives two Bs and one C in the first semester would have a GPA of 2.667, well below the required 3.0. You can calculate your GPA using NIU's online [calculator](#).

## SEQUENCE FOR COMPLETING THE MPA PROGRAM – PRECAREER STUDENTS

The Department strives to pair core courses in an eight-week format so that students are taking two core courses and one elective in each semester. An MPA student carrying a full load of courses (10 hours per semester) and serving an internship may complete their sequence of courses as illustrated below. Again, this is an example of a course sequence, but it is subject to change based on department and student needs and abilities.

<b>FALL SEMESTER (YEAR 1)</b>	PSPA 600	Scope and Dynamics of Public Administration
	PSPA 605	Organizational Theory and Behavior
	XXXX	Elective in area of specialization or general
	PSPA 695	Internship in Public Administration
<b>SPRING SEMESTER (YEAR 1)</b>	PSPA 607	Public Service Performance I: Theory and Management
	PSPA 608	Public Service Performance II: Management and Data Analysis
	XXXX	Elective in area of specialization or general
	PSPA 695	Internship in Public Administration
<b>SUMMER SEMESTER</b>	XXXX	Elective in area of specialization or general
<b>FALL SEMESTER (YEAR 2)</b>	PSPA 611	Public Revenue Analysis and Financial Management
	PSPA 610	Public Budgeting and Financial Management
	PSPA 612	Information Technology in Public Service Organizations
	PSPA 695	Internship in Public Administration
<b>SPRING SEMESTER (YEAR 2)</b>	PSPA 609	Human Resources Management in Public Service Organizations
	PSPA 699	Public Service Capstone Project
	XXXX	Elective in area of specialization or general
	PSPA 695	Internship in Public Administration

## **SEQUENCE FOR COMPLETING THE MPA PROGRAM – MIDCAREER STUDENTS**

Midcareer students take two courses each semester (six credit hours) either online or in person. Students who register for the Online Certificate of Public Management or Online MPA program have priority in enrolling in online courses. Online students may also take courses in person. Mid-career students follow a similar sequence (as shown on page 10), but with a focus on tailoring it to meet their individual needs, when feasible.

## GRADING SCHEME FOR MPA COURSES

Score	Letter Grade	GPA Point Value	Value	Description
94-100	A	4.00	Outstanding	Work is complete, original, insightful and of a level and quality that exceeds expectations for a graduate level of study. In-depth understanding of course issues and a high level of analytical skills. No grammar and citation errors. Referencing is done in APA style. References are extensive and of high quality.
90-93	A-	3.67		
87-89	B+	3.33		
83-86	B	3.00	Very satisfactory	Work is complete, of a level that slightly exceeds expectations for this level. Solid understanding of course issues and excellent analysis. Very few grammar and citation errors. Citations are consistent with APA style format and are drawn from a broad range of current sources.
80-82	B-	2.67		
77-79	C+	2.33		
73-76	C	2.00	Satisfactory	Work is mainly complete, and/or a level that partially meets expectations or standards for a graduate course. Important grammar and spelling errors. Problems with citation format.
70-72	C-	1.67		
60-69	D	1.00	Marginally satisfactory	Assignments not turned in or turned in significantly late. Lack of understanding of central course concepts.
0-59	F	0.00	Unsatisfactory	Assignments not turned in or turned in significantly late. Very poor performance on exams/tests. Lack of effort or lack of understanding of central course concepts.

Adopted 21 August 2013

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

MPA students who plan to complete their program requirements (i.e., all remaining course work, writing and presenting of the capstone paper) during a given term must submit an Application for Degree via MyNIU **by the Graduate School deadline specified for that term on the [Graduate School](#) website**. Students who do not apply by the designated term deadline will not be eligible to graduate at the end of that term. Students who apply by the deadline but do not fulfill their program requirements by the end of the term for which the application was made must submit a graduation deferment request form to the Graduate School via the Graduate School website.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Pre-career and mid-career students are required to complete professional development activities (PDAs) over the duration of their MPA studies. These activities are to be documented by the student and reviewed during semester advising sessions. Students are responsible for tracking and reporting any discrepancies to ensure all completed activities meet department requirements. The professional development reporting form is available in the Department of Public Administration Blackboard Community.

	Pre-career Requirement	Mid-career Requirement
Department Events (Formal Department Colloquia and MPA Awards Event)	6	2
National or Regional Conference while in program <b>(*Strongly encouraged)</b>	*	*
State or Local conference(s)	2	1
Professional Association Meetings or Luncheons	4	4
<b>Total PDAs over course of program</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>

**Note:** This table outlines the minimum expected professional development activity totals. Students are encouraged to attend more as their schedule allows, but only need to document the above required activities. Students are also encouraged to become involved on committees of the professional organizations.

All MPA students are encouraged to attend the professional meetings and conferences offered by ILCMA, IAMMA, Civic Leadership Academy, ARNOVA and IGFOA. If in doubt as to whether a meeting or event qualifies as a professional development activity, verify in advance with the Assistant to the Chair.



## LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE CAPSTONE COURSE AND CAPSTONE PROJECT

The culminating experience for the MPA degree at Northern Illinois University requires students to complete a rigorous evaluation of their analytical skills, written communication, and oral communication. The capstone course is intended to reinforce and further develop the program level competencies. The completion of the capstone course allows the MPA student to integrate their learning experiences into coherent, focused products that effectively blend theory and practice. The individual writing assignments and the group project report required in this course are expected to be of superior quality.

### Course Objectives:

- Reflect on central concepts in the field of public administration (broadly defined as administration of public service organizations), including those expressed in the core and specialization competencies of the NIU MPA program.
- Apply central concepts in the field to understand challenges in public service organizations.
- Apply program competencies in public administration courses in course assignments, including reflection essays, final preparation of a professional e-portfolio and the writing of a final capstone paper for the MPA program.
- Demonstrate graduate level writing and oral presentation skills

## CAPSTONE PROJECT (PSPA 699)

**For students completing the following specializations: Fiscal Administration, Local Government Management, Nonprofit Management and Strategic Public Management and Leadership.**

### PSPA 699 in the final or penultimate semester of the MPA program

**Course description:** Students will be required to attend scheduled class sessions, engage in class discussions, and complete written reflections and other written assignments including a competencies review paper. The capstone course also incorporates a group project typically conducted by three or four students on behalf of a public service organization. The capstone course instructor will provide students a limited set of options from which the students will be assigned to conduct their group project in consultation with their organization and their instructor. A scope of work will be negotiated for each project. Each case will provide a complex problem relevant to the field of public administration that students can analyze by applying core and specialization competencies regardless of their specialization.

**Competencies Review Paper:** The competencies review paper is a reflective assignment focused on the student's development and enhancement of core and specialization competencies while in the NIU MPA program. The paper will generally be due during the first 4-6 weeks of the course and constitutes the individual paper requirement that must be met as part of the final steps to graduation. *Students must earn a B or better on the individual paper to proceed in the capstone course. If the student does not earn a B or better on this paper, then the student must retake PSPA 699 in a subsequent term.*

### Group Project

The work product of the team will be a cohesive presentation following the guidance of a presentation rubric as outlined in Appendix A. The team presentation will focus on the group project assigned during the first two weeks of the semester and the group project report prepared by the project team. The final group product will be a presentation that constitutes the oral comprehensive examination for purposes of graduate degree completion.

Any student who fails to successfully complete the capstone presentation requirement will be ineligible to graduate and must retake PSPA 699 or its equivalent in order to graduate. This will entail retaking the entire course including writing a new capstone paper using a new case study and presentation with a newly assigned group.

## **Oral Comprehensive Examination**

Students will complete an oral comprehensive examination in the last or penultimate semester of the MPA program. For this examination, students will present a portion of the group presentation that they have developed in the PSPA 699 course. The presentation must be approximately 15 minutes long, plus 15 minutes for question and answers. The presentations will be held before a panel consisting of two faculty members and three practitioners. Each student will be evaluated on an individual and group basis by each panel member. The panelists will use a defined rubric to evaluate the performance of each group and each student. Students must pass the oral comprehensive exam to complete the MPA degree. See Appendix A – page 28 for the Oral Comprehensive Exam Capstone Presentation Rubric.

## **Final Individual Capstone Paper**

The final individual capstone papers must be approved by and submitted to the PSPA 699 course instructor according to the course syllabus.

## **Capstone Paper Executive Summary**

Each capstone group will submit a capstone paper executive summary. This summary is sent to practitioners and faculty members who will be on the oral comprehensive exam panel at least one week prior to the event. The executive summary shall be: two pages in length, single spaced with a minimum of 11 font size. It must include a problem statement, an analysis of the problem and a recommendation. The executive summary should not include a cover page, a literature review, references, or tables.

## **CAPSTONE PROJECT (PSPA 699)**

### **For students completing the Specializations in: Comparative Public Service and Public Service Law and Management**

#### **PSPA 699 course requirements**

Students will be required to enroll in PSPA 699 in their final semester or penultimate semester of the MPA program when they will be prepared to present their paper at the oral comprehensive exam. Under the guidance of a faculty supervisor, students will write a major paper (normally 25-40 pages) based on the application of public administration theory to a practical issue comparing it to another country (in the case of the Comparative Public Service Specialization) or in a legal context (in the case of the Public Law and Management Specialization).

While the paper is being written, students will meet to discuss progress and receive feedback about the process of writing the paper. Meetings will continue until the student is ready to present and defend the completed paper. The presentation and defense of the capstone project fulfills the graduate school requirements for a comprehensive exam.

Students in the Public Service Law and Management Specialization may be given the option of taking the PSPA 699 course and presenting the capstone as part of a group. Students in the PSLM specialization will be required to research the law in relation to the project.

# INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

## ADMISSION AND REGULATIONS

The internship through the Department of Public Administration has been a part of the MPA program for over 50 years. The internship experience is designed to give students a two-year professional experience in a public or non-profit agency. As such, students typically retain the same internship for the duration of their graduate study.

To be considered for an internship, the admitted student is required to submit a professional cover letter, resume, and a writing sample to [publicadm@niu.edu](mailto:publicadm@niu.edu). MPA partnering organizations will review the student documents and student interviews will be arranged. Candidates are interviewed by the employing agency and positions are offered to the student that best fits the organization's needs.

Internships cannot be guaranteed to any particular student, but every effort will be made to develop opportunities and work with the student to increase their marketability as an intern. The availability of internships fluctuates according to demand and time of the academic year. Interns generally work 20 to 24 hours per week and are paid on an hourly basis. Specific hours are arranged between students and their internship agencies. Work hours should be planned so as not to conflict with course work, since interns are required to register for a full course load of regular academic study.

Internships are subject to the following conditions:

1. Student preferences regarding internship assignments will be considered, but the program offers no promises or guarantees that any student's preferences can be met, especially in regard to type of assignment and geographic location. The student is expected to take responsibility for working out any discrepancies regarding these issues with the representative of the contract agency before accepting an internship.
2. Internships are awarded solely by the contract agency after interviews by said agency. The A2C nominates intern candidates to individual agencies based upon expressed interest and availability.
3. Except for students with internship appointments financed by NIU funds, internship stipends are determined by the contracting agency. Stipend amounts will not be taken into consideration by the A2C when making internship nominations. It should also be noted that a high-quality internship experience is not necessarily correlated with a high hourly rate.
4. Students may be enrolled in internships for less than two years or more than two years, with consent of the A2C and internship supervisor. There may be occasions when modifications in one's existing internship or a complete change of internships may be warranted. Students **must not** make a change in their internship without the prior consent of the Chair or Assistant to the Chair.
5. Students should **immediately** notify the A2C if there are problems in their internship or if there is a consistent increase to more than 24 hours, or a decrease to less than 20 hours per week, during any regular fall or spring semester. Work hours during semester break periods, especially summer, are not subject to these limitations, provided they are acceptable to the internship supervisor and the student.
6. Interns must comply with all internship requirements imposed by both the agency and the program faculty. On the academic side, this includes attendance at all colloquia sponsored by the MPA Program and finalizing a checklist of approved professional development activities (see page 13).

Students are expected to transport themselves between their place of residence and their chosen internship locations. In practical terms this means the student needs their own vehicle, as there is no public transportation operating between DeKalb and the locations of most of the intern sites available.

# STUDENT RESOURCES

## Writing Center

The [University Writing Center](#) at Stevenson Towers South, Lower Level is a place for all writers at Northern Illinois University, undergraduates, graduates, staff, and even faculty, to talk about their writing with trained consultants, one-on-one.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you need an accommodation for this class, please contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. It is located in the Campus Life Building, Suite 180, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or [drc@niu.edu](mailto:drc@niu.edu).

Also, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. Please note that you will not be required to disclose your disability, only your accommodations. The sooner you let me know your needs, the sooner I can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course. You must disclose and present the accommodation from the DRC in the first week for it to be valid for the course. (That is, do not present the accommodation 5 minutes before an exam to say that you need an accommodation.)

## Student Development Assistance

If you have any personal difficulties and need some assistance to be successful at NIU, check out the [Counseling and Student Development Center](#).

## A word about anxiety

These are extremely stressful times. You are not alone in feeling it. We are all living with unsettling uncertainty and it affects the way we perceive the world, ourselves, and others. Such feelings may be persistent or may come on suddenly. Let's all promise to be patient with each other and help support a healthy learning environment. If you or somebody you know is struggling with anxiety or other issues, do not hesitate to reach out. [Resources](#) available include the [DRC](#), [Student Counseling Services](#) or by calling 815-306-2777. As always, in the event of a crisis call for immediate help via 911 or other general support services.

## If you are uncomfortable

Discussing public policy and public management issues invariably leads to participants voicing views that others disagree with, sometimes as it relates to social justice and diversity and inclusion issues (DEI). One of our core public management competencies is helping you learn to "meaningfully engage with people holding diverse perspectives to address public service issues." If you feel uncomfortable with an assignment or a class discussion related to DEI, please do not hesitate to raise the issue with Dr. Robinson through email ([srobinson1@niu.edu](mailto:srobinson1@niu.edu)), or office visit (213 IASBO). You may also raise the issue with Jeanna Ballard ([jballard5@niu.edu](mailto:jballard5@niu.edu)) or the university's [ADEI office](#). The department is committed to ensuring that we swiftly address any concerns students may have about DEI or any other program issues.

## ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT

Academic credit is given to MPA students who serve in internships. Students must register for one hour of PSPA 695 while completing an internship. This course requires continuous enrollment and may be repeated to a total of eight semester hours. **Failure to comply with all internship and syllabus requirements may result in an unsatisfactory grade for the internship credit, as well as the suspension of the student's graduate assistantship or other scholarships.**

## INTERN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Below is a list of basic duties and responsibilities for interns in the NIU MPA Internship Program.

### A. Student Responsibilities to the Academic Institution:

- recognize and understand the educational objectives of the intern experience;
- be able to state personal objectives for participating in the experience;
- consistently meet academic requirements, attend required colloquiums, keep in touch with the A2C, and report any problems as soon as they arise;
- be committed to completing the program in a timely fashion;
- recognize and respect that they are an unofficial representative of the school.

### B. Student Responsibilities to the Sponsoring Agency:

- report to work on time, dress responsibly, and act in a professional manner;
- be willing to perform some routine tasks, if asked;
- expect to observe, as well as participate in, agency activities;
- be confidential about information gained on the job;
- always ask before quoting agency personnel in any research work.

### C. Student Responsibilities to Themselves:

- see that the internship as an educational as well as professional experience;
- accept work assigned with good grace;
- look for no special favors or treatment;
- be willing to ask questions if an assignment is not understood;
- be aware of the constraints that may prevent an agency from fast action;
- be careful not to be overly aggressive in trying to get things accomplished;
- recognize the need to be rational, impartial, and objective about agency activities.

### D. Supervisor Responsibilities to Student:

- see that the internship as an educational as well as professional experience;
- assign projects that are challenging;
- mentor and train student in career path;
- be willing to answer questions and offer guidance;
- encourage and support professional development;
- treat student as a member of the management team.

### E. Academic Institution Responsibilities to Student:

- assist student in securing an internship;
- provide student with guidance in choosing course path;
- mentor and guide student through internship or coursework challenges;
- assist student in any issues regarding accommodations for disabilities if applicable;
- inform students of important events and deadlines for the program and university.

## **INTERN EVALUATIONS BY SUPERVISORS**

Supervisors are required to complete an annual review of the intern using the program's 13 competencies, review it with the student and submit it to the A2C by the end of the first year of the internship. Supervisors are encouraged to contact the A2C at any time should they have questions or concerns regarding the program or the student intern. Internship success will be based in part on supervisor evaluations and students' conduct at the internship site. The A2C visits each internship site at least once during the intern's two-year assignment.

## **INTERNSHIP EVALUATIONS BY STUDENTS**

Interns are required to complete an internship evaluation each semester (See Appendix B). This form must be completed and submitted to the A2C via Blackboard on the specified due date in order for the intern to receive credit for the internship.

# FINANCIAL AID

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Selected pre-career students will be provided financial aid through graduate assistantships. A partial university tuition waiver and stipend are awarded as part of the contract. In order to receive and maintain this assistance the student must:

- be serving in an internship or graduate assistantship;
- be enrolled in PSPA 695 (unless an exception is made);
- be taking a full course load (for precareer MPA students with an internship, a full load is defined as 10 hours in fall and spring terms, 6 hours in the summer term);
- pay student fees;
- maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA;
- attend the required professional development and advising meetings each semester; including the new student orientation before the student's first term of enrollment.

Eligibility: Students must apply for the MPA program by the early application deadline of February 1. The admissions committee awards graduate assistantships based upon the applicant's GPA, Letters of Recommendation and Career Goal Statement.

## **RHOTEN A. SMITH ASSISTANTSHIPS**

The Rhoten A. Smith assistantship program was established at NIU to help provide financial support to minority students enrolled in graduate programs in which these groups are underrepresented. The program, named in honor of the university's sixth president who was himself a member of the public administration faculty, represents part of the institution's commitment to increasing access for minorities to graduate education.

Within the department, Rhoten A. Smith (RAS) assistantships are used to match other financial support provided to minority students enrolled in the internship program. Through the matching funds arrangement, more internship opportunities are provided to minority students. Funds to support Rhoten A. Smith assistantships are provided by the Graduate School. Rhoten A. Smith assistants receive a tuition waiver while enrolled in the internship program.

An MPA student participating in the Rhoten A. Smith assistantship program is required to:

- be a U.S. citizen;
- be serving in an internship;
- be enrolled in PSPA 695;
- be taking a full course load (for pre-career MPA students with an internship, a full load is defined as 10 hours in fall and spring terms, 6 hours in the summer term);
- maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA;
- attend the required professional development and advising meetings each semester, including the New Student Orientation before the student's first term of enrollment.

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

An important factor in the employment market is professional contact. Students should join, as early as possible, at least one professional association relevant to their career interests. The importance of these early professional contacts cannot be overstated.

### Alliance for Innovation (AFI)

The Alliance for Innovation is an international network of progressive governments and partners committed to transforming local government by accelerating the development and dissemination of innovations. They seek out innovative practices, challenge existing business models, exchange knowledge, and provide products and services that help our members perform at their best.

Alliance for Innovation  
411 N. Central Ave., Suite 400  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

<http://www.transformgov.org>

### American Public Works Association (APWA)

The American Public Works Association exists to develop and support the people, agencies, and organizations that plan, build, maintain, and improve our communities. Working together, APWA and its membership contribute to a higher and sustainable quality of life. Individual student membership: \$28 per year, group student membership (5 or more students): \$20 per year.

Kansas City Missouri Office  
1200 Main Street, Suite 1400  
Kansas City, MO 64105-2100

<http://www.apwa.net/>

### American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

Membership includes students, academic specialists, and practitioners from local, state, and federal agencies. ASPA has one national meeting each year, and there are also regular multi-state regional meetings and local chapter meetings in many areas. ASPA publishes *Public Administration Review* (PAR), perhaps the most important journal in public administration, which includes articles of commentary, analysis, and research. Members also receive *Public Administration Times*, which includes job openings in various administrative fields, and articles on current events in public administration.

American Society for Public Administration  
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20004

<http://www.aspanet.org>

### Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA)

ARNOVA is a leading interdisciplinary community of people dedicated to fostering through research and education, the creation, application, and dissemination of knowledge on nonprofit organizations, philanthropy, civil society, and voluntary action. The student membership is \$60 per year.

ARNOVA  
550 W. North St., Suite 301  
Indianapolis, IN 46202

<http://www.arnova.org>

### Government College Relations Council (GCRC)

The Government College Relations Council (GCRC) was founded in Chicago in 1968. It is a professional association that supports working relationships between representatives from accredited post-secondary colleges/universities and federal, state, county, and local governments. The Student/ Academic Membership rate for this organization is \$15.

Government College Relations Council

<https://www.gcrcinfo.org/>



### **Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL)**

ELGL is a professional association of more than 3,200 local government professionals from 49 states, the UK, Canada, and Australia. They encourage membership from all areas of the government arena. Members come from local government, non-profits, public affairs firms, banks, students as well as federal and state government. The student membership is \$26.65 per year.

Engaging Local Government Leaders

<http://elgl.org/membership/>

### **Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)**

The purpose of the Government Finance Officers Association is to enhance and promote the professional management of governments for the public benefit by identifying and developing financial policies and best practices and promoting their use through education, training, facilitation of member networking, and leadership. Membership in the GFOA is open to everyone whose career, studies or interests involve government financial management.

Government Finance Officers Association  
203 N LaSalle Street, Suite 2700  
Chicago, IL 60601-1210

<http://www.gfoa.org>

Students may also benefit from a free membership in the **Illinois Government Finance Officers Association (IGFOA)**, located at <http://www.igfoa.org>.

### **Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA)**

ILCMA is the Illinois state affiliate of ICMA. ILCMA in turn has three affiliates: Metro Managers Association, Illinois Association of Municipal Management Assistants (IAMMA), and Greater Illinois City and County Managers Association. Members receive a newsletter, which includes job listings. Student membership is \$20 per year or free if you are an IAMMA student member.

Illinois City Management Association  
Regional Development Institute  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, IL 60115

<http://www.ilcma.org>

<http://www.iamma.org>

### **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)**

ICMA is a professional and educational organization representing appointed managers and administrators in local governments throughout the world. Members receive bi-weekly newsletters and the monthly publication of *Public Management* magazine. Students receive a free membership as a member of the NIU student chapter.

International City/County Management Association  
777 N. Capitol Street, NW, Suite 500  
Washington DC 20002

<http://www.icma.org>

### **Local Government Hispanic Network**

The purpose of the International Hispanic Network is to encourage professional excellence among Hispanic local government administrators, to improve the management of local government, provide unique resources to Hispanic local government executives and public managers, and advance the goals of professional, effective, and ethical local government administration. The network works with other organizations, such as the International City/County Management Association, which shares common goals. The student membership is \$10 per year.

International Hispanic Network (IHN)  
2107 N. First Street, Suite 470  
San Jose, CA 95131

### **International Personnel Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR)**

IPMA-HR is the recognized association for public personnel professionals. Members receive a monthly newsletter which includes position openings, a quarterly journal, and a membership chairman. Student membership is \$45 per year.

International Personnel Management Association  
1850 K Street, N.W., Suite 870  
Washington, DC 20006

<http://www.ipma-hr.org>

### **Iowa City/County Management Association (IaCMA)**

The Iowa City/County Management Association (IaCMA) is an organization of local government management officials (e.g., managers, administrators, assistants, and other administrative staff) working together to improve the public administration profession in the state of Iowa. The purpose of IaCMA is to increase the knowledge and ability of members through various means, one of which is the promotion of information exchange between members. Student membership is \$20 per year.

Iowa City/County Management Association  
c/o Iowa League of Cities  
317 Sixth Avenue, Suite 800  
Des Moines, IA 50309

<http://www.iacma.net>

### **Illinois Public Employers Labor Relations Association (IPELRA)**

The Illinois Public Employer Labor Relations Association provides exceptional professional development and greater understanding in the field of labor and employee relations for public sector employers. Student membership is \$20 per year.

IPELRA  
6133 N River Road  
Suite 1120  
Rosemont, IL 60018

<http://www.ipelra.org>

### **Women's Legacy Project**

The purpose of the Legacy Project is to advance women in local government. It is a forum for learning, connecting, and promoting the knowledge that supports the collective legacy of women in local government management. Legacy Project aims to help women succeed in public service by enhancing career-building models that develop leadership skills and by providing an opportunity to network with professional women in government. General membership is \$40, student membership is \$10 (Membership is free if a current member of ILCMA or IAMMA)

Legacy Project  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, IL 60115

<http://www.legacyprojectnow.org>

### **National Association of Hispanic Public Administrators**

The National Association of Hispanic Public Administrators was organized to promote programs and activities that inspire professionalism and sound administrative practices, to help Hispanics strengthen their standing in the public sector and in their communities and enhance and assist with career development through effective networking and information dissemination. Active membership \$25, associate member \$20.

NAHPA  
P.O. Box 142171  
Coral Gables, FL 33114-2171

<http://netside.net/~jalera/nahpafi.htm>

### **National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA)**

The mission of the NFBPA is embodied in the organization's commitment to strengthen the position of Blacks within the field of public administration; increase the number of Blacks appointed to executive positions in public service organizations; and to groom and prepare younger, aspiring administrators for senior public management posts in the years ahead. Students at the undergraduate and graduate levels are eligible to become members of the NFBPA, provided they subscribe to the goals and objectives of the NFBPA and shall be a full-time student as defined by the institution in which they are enrolled. Student Membership is limited to four consecutive years. Adults who are employed full-time and pursue part-time academic study are ineligible for student memberships. Documentation that verifies full-time status is required. Student membership is \$35 per year.

National Forum for Black Public Administrators      <http://www.nfbpa.org>  
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 807  
Washington, DC 20002

### **Wisconsin City/County Management Association (WCMA)**

The Wisconsin City/County Management Association (WCMA) is an organization of professional managers and administrators from counties, cities, villages, and towns throughout the state. The WCMA has two primary objectives: (1) to promote the development of professional municipal management in Wisconsin, and (2) to contribute to the professional development of its members. Student membership is \$20 per year.

Wisconsin City/County Management Association      <http://www.wcma-wi.org>  
3919 Oakmont Trail  
Waukesha, WI 53188

# AWARDS AND HONORS

## PI ALPHA ALPHA

Northern Illinois University has established a local chapter of Pi Alpha Alpha, the National Honorary Society for Public Affairs and Administration. According to our Chapter Constitution:

*The purposes of this society shall be to encourage and reward scholarship and accomplishment among students and practitioners of public affairs and administration, to promote the advancement of education and scholarship in the art and science of public affairs and administration, and to foster integrity and creative performance in the conduct of governmental and related public service operations.*

Pi Alpha Alpha membership is prestigious for our students as well as for our public administration program, and the university. We encourage all eligible public administration graduate students, alumni, and faculty to apply for induction.

### Eligibility for Pi Alpha Alpha

Classes and qualifications for membership in Pi Alpha Alpha, in accordance with our Chapter Constitution, are as follows:

- A. Graduate Students:** Master's degree students who have completed at least 21 semester hours of graduate work with a GPA of at least 3.7 may be inducted.
- B. Alumni Members:** Those who meet all the requirements of student membership but who have graduated before induction by this chapter may be inducted as alumni members. Student members shall become alumni members upon graduation.
- C. Faculty Members:** Any full-time member of a NASPAA member institution faculty, offering course work in public affairs or administration degree program at which a Pi Alpha Alpha chapter is located, may be elected to faculty membership by such a local chapter.

In addition to the above-named requirements for induction, there is a one-time fee which includes the induction fee and PAA medal. Members of Pi Alpha Alpha are entitled to participate in chapter meetings and national conventions.

## DEPARTMENT AND STUDENT AWARDS

Each year, the department recognizes the following awards and honors:

### William R. Monat Scholar/Graduate School Outstanding Scholar

Our highest student award honors President Emeritus William R. Monat. The Monat Scholar exemplifies excellence in scholarship and public service and meets faculty expectations for great public service in future years. The award includes a \$1,000 gift from the Monat Scholar Fund. The Monat Scholar is also nominated by the faculty for the NIU Graduate School Outstanding Scholar Award.

### ASPA Outstanding Student Award/Daniel Wit Award

This award is available to undergraduate and graduate students who have demonstrated outstanding scholarship in the study of public and nonprofit administration and public policy. Members and non-members of ASPA are eligible for this award.

**James M. & Audrey M. Banovetz Fellowship**

This competitive monetary grant is selected by the fellowship committee and awarded to an NIU MPA student who has exhibited exceptional potential for a successful career in local government management. Endowed in 2000 by David and Catherine Arnold, the fellowship honors Professor Emeritus James M. Banovetz for his leadership in developing the NIU graduate program in public administration as one of the premier programs in the United States. In 2006, Audrey M. Banovetz's name was added to honor Audrey for her many years of supporting the program, its faculty, and students.

**David and Catherine Arnold Fellowship**

This competitive monetary grant is selected by the fellowship committee and awarded to a minority student who applies for funding to attend a conference geared towards the professionalization of minority public administrators. This Fellowship is named after the founders of the Banovetz Fellowship, David and Catherine Arnold. The Arnold Fellows are expected to build professional networks among their peers as they become the next generation of public administrators. This exciting opportunity is open to both our pre-service and midcareer students.

**John E. Morris Scholarship**

John E. Morris was a 1988 graduate of the MPA program who died at a young age due to cancer. His family created this scholarship in his memory. It recognizes an outstanding applicant to the MPA program who also shows promise of excellence in public service. The award is based on the applicant's admission essay, undergraduate grade point average and GRE scores. Morris Scholars must maintain a GPA of 3.7 in order to continue receiving the scholarship in their second year and maintain full-time status, and then they will receive a certificate at graduation honoring their status as a Morris Scholar.

**ASPA Outstanding Administrator Award**

This award recognizes practitioners in the public sector for outstanding service and contributions in the field of public service and public policy. Members and non-members of ASPA are eligible for this award.

**Model Public Administrator Awards**

Candidates must exhibit a continuing effort towards excellence in their respective specialization and the field of public administration overall. The student embodies the core values of public leadership and demonstrates a commitment to lifelong education and professional development.

**Academic Achievement Award (GPA 4.0)**

This award recognizes students who have achieved a perfect 4.0 cumulative GPA to date.

**Intern of the Year Award**

The Intern of the Year recipient will be selected on the basis of the quality of his/her work, management and leadership abilities, analytical skills, demonstration of ingenuity or creativity, and value added to the organization based on the nomination feedback of the internship supervisor.

Only internship supervisors can nominate their intern, and the department chair and A2C will use the nominations to make the final decision on the award recipient.

**Outstanding Service Award**

This award is selected by the PA Faculty to honor someone who provides excellent service to the department. The designee is not necessarily an alumnus of the program.

## **STUDENT SELECTED AWARDS**

Each year students in the department vote for the following awards and honors:

### **Supervisor of the Year Award**

This award provides pre-career interns an opportunity to honor their supervisor(s) for outstanding leadership and mentoring during their internship experience. A one-page nomination letter should be sent to the department by the required deadline. Only pre-career students can nominate their direct internship supervisor(s), and the department chair and A2C will use the nominations to make the final decision on the award recipient.

### **Outstanding Peer Award**

This award recognizes a graduating, or recently graduated, student who often serves as a formal or informal leader. The candidate should have a strong commitment to supporting their fellow peers and the department and exhibit an outstanding commitment to public service. The nomination process will be via electronic ballot format. Only eligible students will be listed as options for nomination, and all current students will be eligible to submit their electronic nomination by the stated deadline. The department chair and A2C will use the nominations to make the final decision on the award recipient.

### **Professor of the Year Award**

This award recognizes a department faculty member with a strong commitment to student learning and development. This faculty member upholds the ideals of public service and goes beyond the traditional required role of faculty. The nomination process will be via electronic ballot format. Only eligible faculty will be listed as options for nomination, and all current students will be eligible to submit their electronic nomination by the stated deadline. The Chair of the Department of Public Administration is ineligible for this award recognition to eliminate conflict of interest among voting students. The department chair and A2C will use the nominations to make the final decision on the award recipient.

## IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

<b>DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>		815 753 0183
Jeanna Ballard	<a href="mailto:jballard5@niu.edu">jballard5@niu.edu</a>	815 753 6149
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<b>UNIVERSITY SERVICES</b>		
Bursar's Office		815 753 1885
Career Services		815 753 1641
Center for Governmental Studies		815 753 1901
Department of Political Science		815 753 1011
Financial Aid		815 753 1395
The Graduate School		815 753 0395
Housing and Dining Services		815 753 1525
MyNIU Help Line		815 753 8100
NIU - Naperville		815 753 8975
NIU - Rockford		815 753 8740
Parking Services		815 753 1045
Registration and Records		815 753 0681
University Bookstore		815 753 1081

## APPENDIX A

### Oral Comprehensive Examination Capstone Presentation Rubric

**Case Study:**

**Student Presenters:**

**Your Name:**

Directions: The purpose of this rubric is to evaluate the presentation content and the oral delivery of that content to the audience. Your evaluation of the presentation is very important to the integrity of this assessment. We ask that you rate the presentation on the scale below. We also would like any general comments on the presentation that may be shared with students to improve their presentation skills. The capstone course instructor will have responsibility for assessing the theoretical framework, methodology and analysis separately.

Scale: Please rate the presentation elements on a scale from 1-5.

(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=mixed, some agree, and some disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree).

**A. The first set of items has to do with the overall content of the group presentation.**

Item	Circle your selection				
	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
1. The group was well prepared and showed evidence of rehearsal. The presentation was organized and had a flow/structure from one person/topic to another.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The presentation made a clear and convincing argument based on sound rationale and logical thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The presentation offered workable and practical recommendations to address a public administration issue.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The group demonstrated the ability to respond to questions beyond the scope of their research paper.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The group members participated equally and contributed to the overall quality and presentation time.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The group showed a full understanding of the topic through each member's contribution.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Each group member used visuals/props appropriately and cohesively.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The group's executive summary accurately presented the contents of the presentation.	1	2	3	4	5

***Please provide suggestions and feedback regarding the group presentation that will be shared with the group by the course instructor.***



**B. The following set of items has to do with each presenter's oral communication skills. Please rate each presenter independently.**

**Student Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Circle your selection				
	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
9. The presenter had professional and polished oral communication during the presentation (good voice pitch, tone and projection).	1	2	3	4	5
10. The presenter used body language effectively during the presentation including good eye contact with audience members, no nervous physical habits (such as clearing throat, fidgeting, relaxed hands, posture and facial expressions).	1	2	3	4	5
11. The entire presentation was completed within the designated time frame effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The presenter responded effectively to questions in a clear and professional manner.	1	2	3	4	5

*Please provide suggestions and feedback that will be shared by the course instructor with the individual presenter regarding their presentation overall and how to improve future presentations.*

**Student Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Circle your selection				
	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
9. The presenter had professional and polished oral communication during the presentation (good voice pitch, tone and projection).	1	2	3	4	5
10. The presenter used body language effectively during the presentation including good eye contact with audience members, no nervous physical habits (such as clearing throat, fidgeting, relaxed hands, posture and facial expressions).	1	2	3	4	5
11. The entire presentation was completed within the designated time frame effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The presenter responded effectively to questions in a clear and professional manner.	1	2	3	4	5

*Please provide suggestions and feedback that will be shared by the course instructor with the individual presenter regarding their presentation overall and how to improve future presentations.*

## APPENDIX B

### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

815-753-0183

[publicadm@niu.edu](mailto:publicadm@niu.edu)

### INTERN SELF-EVALUATION REPORT



Northern Illinois  
University

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ZID: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Intern Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Please use this form to evaluate your performance over the last semester. The assessment is based on the core competencies that have been established in the MPA program.

**Core Competencies:** Using the rating scale below, please indicate the degree of competence you have demonstrated in each skill area during your internship experience. Please describe one or two action items that you completed to demonstrate this competency.

1 I have **not** had the opportunity to gain this competence

3 I am moderately competent

2 I have a small degree of competence

4 I am highly competent

MPA Core Competencies	1	2	3	4
I work effectively with internal stakeholders.				
I work effectively with external stakeholders.				
I understand the budget process, financial reports and financial management tools.				
I understand personnel management structures and practices.				
I have an understanding of information technology systems.				
I can effectively apply research to public problems.				

I have identified and applied appropriate analytical techniques to address issues.				
I have effectively interpreted research results.				
I can distinguish policies, programs, goods or services to accommodate changing social demographics.				
I have adopted and adhere to a professional code of ethics.				
I communicate effectively orally.				
I communicate effectively in writing.				
I listen critically to diverse perspectives.				
I am participating in a strategic management process.				
I incorporate preferred practices of decision making when making decisions.				

Please identify and develop three competencies that you would like to develop next semester along with action items associated with that goal.

Competency #1

Competency #2

Competency #3

Signature of Student Intern: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_