

MPA
STUDENT HANDBOOK
2016 - 17



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Department of
Public Administration**

School of Public and Global Affairs



NASPAA ACCREDITATION

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.

August 2016

Welcome to the 53rd MPA Class at NIU!

The excitement of starting the MPA program is tempered with the realization that this degree requires hard work, persistence, and passion for public service. It is your passion that will see you through this degree and to the next stage of your public service career. It is our passion for teaching and the public administration profession that drives the faculty and staff to improve our program. We are proud of our program and we are excited to have you join our diverse NIU MPA family of students, staff, faculty, and alumni. It is a lifelong connection that you are making.



The excellence in our program and in our students is framed by a competencies-based curriculum. There are explicit learning outcomes for the MPA program, and for each specialization. The assessment inventory that you took as part of orientation provides a benchmark of your current level of competencies. You will be able to track your progress in each area, identify weakness to strengthen, and strengths to enhance. When you retake the assessment inventory at graduation, you will be elated at how much your skills and abilities have developed.

There is nothing more important to success in your professional career than excellent oral and written communication skills. We will be demanding ever better writing from you in a variety of different formats throughout your courses. Rather than try to “get by” in your writing, I challenge you to reach past your current skills and reach for excellence. The return on your investment will not disappoint you. We will also challenge you to improve your oral communication skills by increasing the professionalization of your classroom presentations. The writing exercises and class presentations are learning steps culminating in your capstone paper defense in front of three practitioners, the faculty, and your student peers. You will be knowledgeable, comfortable, and able to answer questions about any aspect of your project with poise. We expect no less of our graduating students.

In 1963, NIU’s new MPA program placed its first graduate student in a local government internship. It was the beginning of a legacy of a high quality, rigorous academic program wedded to an enduring commitment to connecting theory and practice in the classroom and the workplace. Whether you are an intern or midcareer student, you are going to find endless opportunities to connect the theories you learn in your classrooms with the work you do in your public and nonprofit organizations.

Our MPA program is grounded in a theory *and* practice approach to curriculum; both are important to mastering the competencies required of a successful public service manager. The key to a successful MPA degree is learning how to integrate and balance office work and course work. These two learning experiences are designed to be complementary, not competitive, fundamentals to your MPA education. Do not sacrifice achievements in your coursework for achievements in your internship; that strategy is short-sighted and will diminish your overall MPA education. Do not fail to use experiences in your mid-career work assignments as case studies for coursework—in class discussions, paper assignments, and your capstone project. Build your professional portfolio with the evidence that you have core competencies to bring to your next organization, the next position in your current organization.

The MPA program is more than just “getting a job” at the end of your MPA degree. I challenge you to reach beyond your comfort zone to apply for nationally competitive positions in local, state, and federal agencies, in NGOs in the US, Canada, and around the world.

We expect great things from each member of the NIU public administration community, and we look forward to a life-long relationship with you, celebrating your successes and helping you rebound from the temporary setbacks in your career. We encourage your feedback on program competencies and other aspects of the program as well. Welcome to the program and the next stage of your career.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, I wish you much success and joy in your MPA program experience.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt Thurmaier". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kurt Thurmaier
Professor and Chair

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GUIDELINES FOR PURSUING THE MPA DEGREE

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Public Administration is to advance excellence in professional public management through scholarship in teaching, research, and service. The department is committed to strengthening the knowledge and skills that enhance the management and leadership capacity of individuals pursuing public service careers.

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, public management and leadership, fiscal administration, or nonprofit management.

To this end the department 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.

Graduates of the NIU MPA Program should be able to:

- ✓ Effectively work with internal and external stakeholders
- ✓ Motivate peers and employees to enhance organizational capacity
- ✓ Integrate current and preferred management practices of budgeting, human resources, information technology, statistical analysis, and performance measurement to improve organizations
- ✓ Use strategic 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 both orally (public speaking) and in writing (analytical and persuasive) for a public service organization and in the public policy process.
- ✓ Understand and listen critically to 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. The specializations are:

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

There are specialization competencies that students should attain before graduation from the program.

Upon completion of the **Comparative Public Policy Specialization** a graduate should be able to:

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

This specialization requires the student to complete a study abroad for a minimum of one semester. *For further information please see page*

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 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 and manage a senior management staff meeting in a municipality.
3. Demonstrate knowledge and experience in understanding the roles and responsibilities of elected and administrative officials in local government.
4. Analyze options for managing conflict situations.

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 **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 processes models and technologies to assist in the application and implementation of these change and adaptation methodologies.
3. Use conflict management models and technologies to recognize and diagnose conflict situations at a skill level to make recommendations on how to resolve specific conflicts.
4. Show knowledge of leadership theories, models and applications through experiential learning activities.

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.

This specialization requires the student to be simultaneously enrolled in the NIU law school or have completed a Juris Doctorate degree from an accredited law school. *For more detailed information please see page*

ADVISEMENT

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. The Competencies Assessment Inventory can be seen at http://www.mpa.niu.edu/pub_ad/publications/Student%20Assessment%20Survey.pdf

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 from the department chair. Normally, no more than 9 semester hours are accepted in transfer from other colleges. The transfer credit approval form can be found at <http://www.niu.edu/its/asp2/OnBaseForms/gradschool/RcGrTransfer.aspx>

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 at <http://www.niu.edu/myniu> to register for courses each semester. Instructions for utilizing MyNIU can be found at <http://www.niu.edu/myniutaining>.

Core 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: <http://www.reg.niu.edu/regrec/students.shtml>.

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. Students failing to register within this time period, or who drop classes without informing the A2C, will receive the lowest priority for registration in following semesters.

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. The form for reentry can be accessed at:

http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/audience/pdf/Reentry_Request_Form.pdf

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The NIU Graduate Catalog states: “Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has 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 at <http://www.ai.niu.edu/ai/students/>.

STUDENT CLASSIFICATIONS

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

The Graduate Certificate in Public Management (GCPM) is offered 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. For specific requirements of the GCPM program, refer to http://www.niu.edu/pub_ad/certificate/

MID-CAREER STUDENTS

A midcareer 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 agency. 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 40 hours of courses to complete the MPA degree. Under certain circumstances, a midcareer student may be required by the department chair to complete the internship program for a duration shorter than the two year requirement for precareer students.

Midcareer students must comply with professional development requirements (page 9) and capstone requirements (page 11). The requirements differ slightly for mid-career and pre-career students, but the focus and the outcomes for these degree requirements are the same.

PRE-CAREER STUDENTS

Pre-career students who enter the MPA program without “appropriate professional experience” will generally be required to serve internships and enroll in PSPA 695. Internships are generally not 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 chairman of the department, upon the recommendation of the A2C, will determine whether a student meets this criterion. The internship is a requirement to earn the MPA degree at NIU. Further information on the internship requirements can be found on page 16.

MPA PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The MPA degree normally requires the completion of 40-50 semester hours of approved graduate study in the public policy/management core and a selected specialization. The student must complete a minimum of 40 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 (see page 7 and 8)
- 4 credit hours of capstone project (PSPA 699)(see page 8)

- 40**
- 3-8 credit hours of PSPA 695: Internship in Public Administration (required of those without “appropriate professional experience” – (see page 5 for definition)

CORE COURSES

PSPA 600 - Scope and Dynamics of Public Administration

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 an advisor with regard to the stated objective of each specialization, and in terms of the specific career goals of individual students.

Comparative Public Policy – 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. See the department's website for [detailed information](#).

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 699B). 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 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
- PSPA 626 – Nongovernmental Organizations and Governance

Two of the following

- PSPA 634 – New Governance
- PSPA 635 – Local Economic Development Policy
- PSPA 653 – Intermediate Public and Nonprofit Financial Management (3)
- PSPA 656 – Management of Not-for-Profit Organizations (3)
- PSPA 673 – Strategic Planning for Public Service Organizations (3)
- 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. This specialization requires student to be enrolled in the NIU law school and the MPA program. The student must apply to both schools and complete the degrees 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 699B). Students enrolled in the Public Service Law and Management specialization must be enrolled in the NIU Law School or have earned a degree from an accredited law school.

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 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 COURSES

PSPA 699A – Public Service Research (one semester hour)– Course must be taken within first year of the MPA program. The purpose of this course is to provide guided discussion and mentorship in the integration of program competencies and public administration theory early in the MPA program. For further details see page .

PSPA 699AB – Public Service Research (three semester hours)- Research and course related to the completion of the capstone paper for the MPA requirement. PSPA 699AB is a three hour course (2 hours of PSPA 699A and 1 hour of PSPA 699B). The course must be taken in 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 page .

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, and with the MPA faculty member who has been designated to serve as an advisor for MPA students studying in the College of Law. 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. You must get approval from the College of Law to enroll in a law course.

SEQUENCE FOR COMPLETING THE MPA PROGRAM

The department strives to pair core courses in an 8 week format so that students are taking 2 core courses and one elective in each semester.

An MPA student carrying a full load of courses (9 hours per semester) and serving an internship may complete his/her sequence of courses as illustrated below:

Fall 2016

PSPA 600	Scope and Dynamics of Public Administration
PSPA 605	Organizational Theory and Behavior
XXX	Elective in area of specialization
PSPA 695	Internship in Public Administration

Spring 2017

PSPA 607	Public Service Performance I: Theory and Management
PSPA 608	Public Service Performance II: Management and Data Analysis
XXX	Elective in area of specialization
PSPA 695	Internship in Public Administration
PSPA 699A	Public Service Research (1.0 Credit Hour)

Summer 2017

XXX	Elective in area of specialization
PSPA 612	Information Technology in Public Service Organizations
PSPA 695	Internship in Public Administration

Fall 2017

PSPA 610	Public Budgeting & Financial Management
PSPA 611	Public Revenue Analysis and Financial Management
XXX	Elective in area of specialization
PSPA 695	Internship in Public Administration

Spring 2018

PSPA 609	Human Resources Management
XXX	Elective in area of specialization
PSPA 695	Internship in Public Administration
PSPA 699A/B	Public Service Research (3.0 Credit Hours)

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Graduate students at NIU must maintain at least a 3.00 cumulative grade point average 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 and improve their GPA before they will be allowed to take the oral comprehensive exam.

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-service and midcareer students are required to complete professional development activities over the duration of their graduate 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 reporting form is available on the current student page of the department website (<http://www.formstack.com/forms/?1285191-hTRW8MRNTq>).

	Precareer Requirement	Midcareer Requirement
Formal Department Colloquia and MPA Awards Event	6	2
National or Regional Conference while in program (*Strongly encouraged)	*	*
State or Local conference(s)	2	1
Professional Association Meetings or Luncheons	4	4
Total PDAs over course of program	12	7

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.

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, please call the office at least 24 hours in advance to verify.

CAPSTONE PROJECT (PSPA 699A/B)

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

Students who are completing specializations in *Comparative Public Policy and Public Service Law and Management* will follow the Capstone Project process described on pages 15 – 18.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE CAPSTONE COURSE AND CAPSTONE PROJECT

Serving as a culmination of a student's coursework for a master's degree in public administration, 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 a coherent, focused product that effectively blends theory and practice. The capstone paper and group project required in this course are expected to be of superior quality.

The learning outcomes for the capstone course emphasize the following:

- evaluate public service issues in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, equity and economy
- apply decision-making theories to frame and solve public service problems
- effectively work with internal and external stakeholders
- communicating effectively both orally (public speaking) and in writing (analytical and persuasive) for a public service organization
- integrate current and preferred management practices of budgeting, human resources, information technology, statistical analysis, and performance measurement to improve organizations
- incorporate professional codes of ethics in public services decision making and research

PSPA 699A course in the first year of the MPA program

The purpose of this course is to provide guided discussion and mentorship in the integration of program competencies and public administration theory early in the MPA program. Students will enroll in PSPA 699A twice while completing the MPA program. In the second semester of the program each student will enroll in one hour of PSPA 699A, based on advising. This 16 week course will meet for two sessions in the semester; once in the first 8 weeks and once in the second 8 weeks. Students will be required to attend and contribute to discussions at these two sessions in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This course will be graded on an S/U basis.

PSPA 699A/B in the final or penultimate semester of the MPA program

Students will enroll in two hours of PSPA 699A and one hour of PSPA 699B in their final or penultimate semester of the program.

Course description:

The PSPA 699A/B course combination will involve class meetings, guidance on the integration of competencies, the writing of a final capstone paper, and the completion of a group project. Students will be required to attend class for the first four weeks of the semester. Following the first four weeks, the students will have eight weeks of self-guided time to write a case study analysis paper. The capstone course instructor will provide students one or a limited set of case study options upon which the student can write their capstone analysis paper. Each case will provide a complex problem relevant to the field of public administration that students can analyze in local government management and/or nonprofit management.

Capstone analysis paper: The instructor will provide students with a structured timeline for writing and revising the capstone analysis paper. The paper should be:

- 20 to 25 pages in length
- Demonstrate explicit attention to at least 5 program competencies

- Clearly reference theory and concepts from core curriculum courses
- Include reference to literature read in the course of study in the MPA program

Students will complete and submit their capstone analysis paper to the capstone course instructor the 12th week of the semester. The grade received for the capstone analysis paper will be the grade for the PSPA 699B course.

The last four weeks of the semester students will analyze a public and/or nonprofit management case as a group project. The team presentation will focus on the same case study that was analyzed in the individual case analysis. Students will be divided into groups consisting of four members. Each group will develop a briefing for the case study using the individual case analysis of the team members. The final group project will be a presentation for the oral comprehensive examination.

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 briefing that they have developed in the PSPA 699A/B course. The presentation must be a minimum of 20 minutes long with 20 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 responsible for presenting a portion of the presentation and will be evaluated on an individual basis by each panel member. The panelists will evaluate each student's performance using a defined rubric. Students must pass the oral comprehensive exam to complete the MPA degree.

Course Assignments

Capstone Paper Executive Summary

The capstone paper executive summary is sent to the 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.

Final Capstone Paper

The final publishable quality capstone papers must be approved by and submitted to the PSPA 699AB course instructor according to the PSPA 699AB course syllabus. All papers submitted after this date, even though approved, will result in a delayed graduation date.

Distinguished Manuscripts

If the PSPA 699AB course instructor determines that the capstone paper qualifies for a nomination of distinguished manuscript he can request that the student submit their paper for the Distinguished Manuscript Award. The nominated paper will be reviewed by a faculty member and one external reviewer who will determine whether the paper meets the quality of distinguished based upon a specific rubric. If the capstone paper is determined to be a Distinguished Manuscript by the faculty and an external reviewer, the student will receive a Distinguished Manuscript Award at the Pi Alpha Alpha Award Ceremony and the file will be stored electronically and will be accessible for future students from the MPA Computer Lab. Papers submitted for the Distinguished Manuscript Award must be sent to the A2C in PDF Format with a cover page that contains the following information: title of paper, student's name, course instructor, year and semester paper completed. Please refer to appendix A for a sample distinguished manuscript paper tile page.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

PSPA 699A credit hours are graded as S/U/IP. Students will receive a grade for PSPA 699B. The grade will be based upon a grading rubric for the capstone paper. The PSPA 699A course assignments are related to the overall MPA program competencies through the course objectives and competencies as described in the PSPA 699AB course syllabus.

CAPSTONE PROJECT (PSPA 699)

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

Students completing specializations in *Fiscal Administration, Local Government Management, Nonprofit Management and Strategic Public Management and Leadership* please see pages 13 -14.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE CAPSTONE COURSE

Serving as a culmination of a student's coursework for a master's degree in public administration, the capstone course is intended to reinforce and further develop the program level competencies. The project expects an MPA student to integrate their learning experiences into a coherent, focused product that effectively blends theory and practice. The capstone project is an analytical exercise that is expected to be of superior quality.

The learning outcomes include developing analytical skills, framing problems and recommendations, engaging students collaboratively, communicating effectively both orally (public speaking) and in writing (analytical and persuasive) for a public service organization and in the public policy process, learning how to engage in ethical research practices, and improving technical abilities.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be required to enroll in an assigned section of PSPA 699 to complete a capstone paper in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MPA degree. Under the guidance of their PSPA 699 section faculty supervisor, students will write a major paper (normally 25-40 pages) based on the application of public administration theory to a practical issue or project in their workplace organization. Each faculty member in the department is assigned to a section of PSPA 699 and serves as the faculty supervisor for the capstone projects of all students assigned to that section.

Precareer students will begin taking the PSPA 699A course after completing their first semester of MPA courses (or 9 hours). Midcareer students will begin the PSPA 699A course after completing 15 hours of MPA courses. During the semester in which the capstone paper is to be initiated, the student will register for one semester hour of PSPA 699A: Public Service Research. Once capstone paper research has begun, students must continue to register for at least 1 semester hour of PSPA 699A until the semester in which they will defend their capstone paper in the oral comprehensive exam.

Each PSPA 699 section will meet at least once each semester at the direction of the faculty supervisor. In these meetings students and faculty members will give feedback about each of the ongoing capstone projects. The sessions are intended to promote collaborative learning, build mutual understanding and a greater breadth of perspectives on the topics and issues the students are investigating, as well as to improve their problem-solving and presentation skills.

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.

A typical sequence of meetings would entail the following series of conversations:

- In the second semester for precareer students. The initial meeting should be one on one between faculty and student. At this meeting, the student must choose which capstone option they prefer: the professional experience analysis or the primary data collection option. The group session will focus on problem identification. This discussion will relate to the paper topic and the methodology chosen for the completion of the project. Discussion should include how one identifies and describes a problem or issue in a way that lends itself to potential resolution. Students should make oral presentations to the group (faculty and students) about

their problem identifications in this and subsequent sessions. Midcareer students should have this meeting after they complete five courses in the MPA program. The first group discussion will relate to the topics chosen by students, the format of the paper, the overall objectives of the assignment, and the expectations of the faculty supervisor.

In the third semester for precareer students. Several group sessions will focus on problem solving and action planning. Discussions should include how one links theory with practice, helping students to develop their capstone papers. Students may also consult individually with the faculty member for specific guidance on their capstone paper's development. A draft of the capstone paper must be completed and submitted to the faculty supervisor by December 15th for presentation in the spring semester and August 15th for presentation in the fall semester. Students who fail to submit a draft of the capstone paper by the deadline will be required to delay their oral presentation to the next semester when the oral comprehensive exams are being held.

- In the fourth semester for precareer students or final semester for midcareer students. Students will enroll in PSPA 699B and they will orally defend their capstone paper with a formal presentation to a panel of practitioners, faculty members, and students in their PSPA 699 section as well as other PSPA 699 sections. Students must have a presentation quality version of the capstone paper prepared in advance and submitted to their faculty supervisor two weeks prior to the capstone presentation and oral examination; this version will be read and critiqued by the PSPA 699 faculty supervisor. Students will also complete and submit an executive summary of their capstone paper two weeks prior to the oral comprehensive exams. This executive summary will be sent to the faculty members and practitioners who will sit on the panel for the student's oral comprehensive exam. Students will be challenged in their oral defense of the paper to draw upon the knowledge gained in coursework; demonstrate the ability to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions; and to effectively participate in and contribute to the policy process by articulating and defending their recommendations. The presentation and oral defense of the project paper will fulfill the graduate school requirement of a comprehensive exam for the MPA degree.

NOTE: There are no make-up days for this examination, and failure to appear will postpone graduation to a subsequent semester.

All students who are enrolled in PSPA 699A or 699B are required to attend the oral comprehensive exam presentations.

Capstone Paper Executive Summary

The capstone paper executive summary is sent to the 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. Please refer to appendix D for an outline of the executive summary.

Final Capstone Paper

The final publishable quality capstone papers must be approved by the PSPA 699 faculty supervisor and submitted to the A2C according to the published department exam schedule. All papers submitted after this date, even though approved, will result in a delayed graduation date.

After approval by the faculty supervisor, the student must submit a final version of their capstone paper in a PDF format to the A2C. Each capstone paper must start with a cover page that contains the following key information: *title of paper, students name, faculty supervisor, year and semester paper completed, file name.*

Please refer to appendix A for a sample capstone paper title page.

The file name for the capstone paper must be formatted as follows:

Last name.first initial.year and semester capstone completed.faculty supervisor initials.699.PDF

For example: **Smith.J.2012Fall.KT.699.PDF**

Distinguished Manuscripts

If the faculty supervisor determines that the capstone paper qualifies for a nomination of distinguished manuscript he can request that the student submit their final version of the capstone paper at a deadline two weeks prior to the oral comprehensive exam (the date will be outlined to the students at the beginning of the semester). The student will have the option of submitting their paper for the Distinguished Manuscript Award. The nominated paper will be reviewed by two external reviewers who will determine whether the paper meets the quality of distinguished based upon a specific rubric. If the capstone paper is determined to be a Distinguished Manuscript by the faculty and an external reviewer, the student will receive a Distinguished Manuscript Award at the Pi Alpha Alpha Award Ceremony and the file will be stored electronically and will be accessible for future students from the MPA Computer Lab.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

This section should be considered as incorporated into the syllabi of individual PSPA 699A and 699B sections. Students have two options for the capstone paper: Analytical Paper Option or the Research Option. The choice will depend on the interests of the student, the student's experiences in internships or in professional careers, and consultation between the student and the PSPA 699 faculty supervisor. Before proceeding with the capstone paper research and analysis, each student is required to get approval of a project idea by his or her PSPA 699 faculty supervisor.

Requirements Regarding Human Subjects in Research Evaluation Projects

Any capstone paper research that includes the use of human subjects must go through the NIU Office of Research Compliance (ORC) internal review process. http://www.niu.edu/orci/human_research/index.shtml

The first step is to determine if your research needs IRB approval. This determination should be done in consultation with your faculty supervisor. You may also consult the Public Administration IRB departmental reviewers.

Next, if your study does require IRB approval, there are two steps. The first is to complete CITI Online Human Subjects Research Tutorial which you access from the IRB website. The certification usually takes two to four hours and you receive a certificate upon completion. Then, you complete an IRB application (forms and samples are available from the IRB website here: http://www.niu.edu/orci/human_research/applications/new_app.shtml).

The information below is taken from the ORC IRB Policies and Procedures website about this process:

Northern Illinois University has the responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects used in research projects conducted at this institution or under the direction of any employee or agent of this institution, whether funded or not, and regardless of the source of funding. In compliance with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations for the Protection of Human Research Subjects (45 CFR 46, as amended), NIU has established duly constituted Institutional Review Boards to review all research involving the use of human subjects and to set forth institutional policy regarding such research.

All proposed projects that include activities which meet the federal definitions of research involving human subjects conducted by NIU faculty, staff, and/or students or sponsored in part or in whole by NIU must be reviewed and approved by an NIU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or its agents prior to the start of data collection. To qualify as human-subjects research, the project must involve living humans from or about whom the investigator obtains data or information (through intervention, interaction, or from privileged records or existing databases) that is intended to contribute to generalizable knowledge (typically via scholarly dissemination). This includes research conducted in conjunction with a student dissertation or thesis. It includes interviews, observation, educational tests, and secondary analysis of data previously collected for research or for non-research purposes as well as experimental trials. It includes subjects of both genders, all ages, and all conditions no matter where they reside.

For all research approval must be obtained prior to the start of data collection. The department strongly recommends that students prepare their IRB applications as early as possible, and preferably within the second semester once the methodology has been confirmed.

IRB applications are first drafted and given to the faculty supervisor for suggestions and comment. Once the application is approved by the faculty supervisor, the draft application should be emailed by the student to the Public Administration IRB departmental reviewer copying the faculty supervisor. The departmental reviewer will then review the draft and may suggest additional changes. Once the departmental reviewer is satisfied that the application is complete, the student is responsible for signing the application and having the application signed by the faculty supervisor. A final version with these signatures can be delivered hard copy to the departmental reviewer or emailed as a PDF. The departmental reviewer will then sign the application and email the completed application to the IRB for review. The IRB will notify the student directly via email and CC the departmental reviewer and faculty supervisor.

Analytical Paper Option

The Analytical Paper Option (APO) is strongly recommended. The analytical paper focuses attention on a research question related to a problem or issue in the internship or work site that demands a deeper analysis than a few phone calls to neighboring communities. The task is to review appropriate scholarly literature related to the problem or issue; identify appropriate theoretical models to analyze the situation; and then to synthesize the literature, theory, and practical problem into a recommendation for action by the organizational decision makers.

Research Option

The research option paper is used by students who wish to undertake primary data collection to evaluate a program intervention or similar public service problem. The student must select a capstone research topic and develop it in consultation with his or her faculty supervisor. Students must use research design, literature review, data collection, and data analysis tools to conduct the research for this option. The study should involve methods that are appropriate for the type of study undertaken (survey research, qualitative interviews, etc.). The research project should be designed for completion, together with other program requirements, by the last year of study. The capstone project should demonstrate the student's ability to achieve the PSPA 699 course objectives and competencies.

Matrix of Course Assignments, Course Objectives & Competencies, and Program Competencies

http://www.niu.edu/orci/human_research/applications/new_app.shtml

Assignments that Address Objectives & Competencies	Capstone Course Objectives & Competencies	Program Competencies
The paper must demonstrate a student’s ability to critically analyze the topic by framing the problem and developing appropriate solution options consonant with preferred management practices.	Develop Analytical Skills: Frame Problems and Recommendations	Use decision-making theories to frame and address public service problems
Students will meet regularly with both their faculty supervisor and their peers who are writing about public service topics so that they can give and receive feedback on the progress of the capstone papers. Students will work with work supervisors and peers to identify the problem or issue and to craft appropriate solution options.	Engage Students Collaboratively	Effectively work with internal and external stakeholders
Students will present their research and defend their recommendations to a diverse audience that includes practitioners, student peers, and faculty. Students will use computers and presentation software for a final professional presentation of the project and results. They will respond to critiques and suggestions appropriately and in a professional manner.	Communicate effectively both orally (public speaking) and in writing (analytical and persuasive) for a public service organization and in the public policy process.	Effectively participate in the public policy process in a role appropriate to a professional public manager
The capstone paper is an opportunity to apply MPA ethics training to a project, including attention to cultural and demographic factors affecting the issue. For students conducting research with human subjects, the IRB process that students must complete to begin research for the capstone is a useful exercise in how to engage in ethical research.	Learn How to Engage in Ethical Research Practices	Understand and listen critically to diverse perspectives to address public service issues
The capstone research paper requires analysis of data, interview responses, and/or documents that relate to the paper topic. Students will use computers and/or analytical software to complete the capstone paper.	Develop Analytical Skills: Improve Technical Abilities	Evaluate public service issues in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, equity and economy

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Faculty supervisors will assess their students based on their ability to meet mandatory deadlines, attendance at peer group meetings, and the quality of the capstone paper. The PSPA 699A course is graded as a S/U/IP. Students will receive a grade for PSPA 699B. The grade will be based upon the grading rubric as described in appendix B. The PSPA 699 course assignments are related to the overall MPA program competencies through the course objectives and competencies, as seen in the matrix above.

INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

ADMISSION AND REGULATIONS

To be considered for an internship, the student is required to submit a professional cover letter and resume to publicadm@niu.edu. MPA partnering organizations will review resumes and cover letters and contact students for interviews. 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 his or her 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. The internship 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. 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 chairman.
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, providing 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 10)

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

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 monthly seminars, 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 he/she is 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 Himself/Herself:

- 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.

INTERN EVALUATIONS BY SUPERVISORS

Intern supervisors complete an assessment of their intern's competency two months after the student begins the internship and upon completion of the internship. Supervisors are required to complete and submit to the A2C an evaluation of the intern at the end of the first year of the internship. This evaluation is shared with the student. 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. 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 precareer students will be provided financial aid through Graduate Assistantships. A 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
- be enrolled in PSPA 695
- 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 (February 15th). The admissions committee awards graduate assistantships based upon the applicant's GPA, GRE scores, 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 serving in an internship
- be enrolled in PSPA 695
- 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.

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. Student membership is \$20.

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.

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/ Academic Membership rate for this organization is \$55.

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 \$10.

Government College Relations Council <http://www.thegcrc.org>

Emerging Local Government Leaders (ELGL)

ELGL is a professional association of more than 1,500 local government professionals from 45 states. 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.

Students free for one year <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. The Education Membership rate is \$40, and \$35 of your total membership dues pay for a subscription to Government Finance Review, GFOA’s bimonthly magazine.

Government Finance Officers Association <http://www.gfoa.org>
203 N LaSalle Street, Suite 2700
Chicago, IL 60601-1210

Students may also benefit from 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. Students interested in joining ILCMA or in learning more about the ILCMA affiliates should contact:

Illinois City Management Association <http://www.ilcma.org>
Regional Development Institute <http://www.iamma.org>
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115

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 <http://www.icma.org>
777 N. Capitol Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington DC 20002

International Hispanic Network (IHN)

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

International Hispanic Network (IHN) <http://www.ihnonline.org>
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.

International Personnel Management Association <http://www.ipma-hr.org>
1850 K Street, N.W., Suite 870
Washington, DC 20006

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. The Student/ Academic Membership rate for this organization is \$20.

Iowa City/County Management Association <http://www.iacma.net>
c/o Iowa League of Cities
317 Sixth Avenue, Suite 800
Des Moines, IA 50309

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 <http://www.legacyprojectnow.org>
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115

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 to enhance and assist with career development through effective networking and information dissemination. Active membership \$25.00, Associate member \$20.00

NAHPA <http://netside.net/~jalera/nahpafi.htm>
P.O. Box 142171
Coral Gables, FL 33114-2171

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; to 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 memberships are \$25.00

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. The Student/ Academic Membership rate is \$20 and includes complimentary membership in WAMCAM.

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

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 new 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. Unfortunately, John died of cancer at a young age. 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.

Distinguished Manuscript Award

This award recognizes an outstanding capstone paper that is evaluated by faculty as a superior manuscript. The paper should include original data collection and analysis and/or outstanding analytical review. The capstone paper nominations are subjected to objective review and confirmation by members of the Board of Advisors and other alumni.

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 precareer 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 precareer 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.

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.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION		815 753 0183
Dr. Aaron Deslatte	adeslatte@niu.edu	815 753 0183
Dr. Heidi Koenig	hkoenig@niu.edu	815 753 0183
Dr. Michael Peddle	mpeddle@niu.edu	815 753 6146
Dr. Greg Porumbescu	gporumbescu@niu.edu	815 753 0183
Dr. Alicia Schatteman	aschatteman@niu.edu	815 753 0942
Dr. Kurt Thurmaier	kthur@niu.edu	815 753 0311
Dr. Eric Zeemering	zeem@niu.edu	815 753 2205
Denise Burchard	dburchard@niu.edu	815 753 6149
Ellen Cabrera	ellenc@niu.edu	815 753 6142
Lisa March	lmarch@niu.edu	815 753 0184
MPA Lab (Ronnie Nataatmadja)		815 753 6189

UNIVERSITY SERVICES

Bursar's Office		815 753 1885
Career Services		815 753 1641
Center for Governmental Studies		815 753 1901
Career Services		815 753 1641
CLAS External Programming		815 753 5200
Department of Political Science		815 753 1011
Financial Aid		815 753 1395
The Graduate School		815 753 0395
Housing & Dining Services		815 753 1525
MyNIU Help Line		815 753 8100
NIU - Hoffman Estates		815 753 8850
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

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A : Distinguished Manuscript Award Nominated Paper Title Page

Northern Illinois University

Title of Paper

By

Victor E. Huskie

Eric Zeemering, Course Instructor

Fall 2016

Huskie.V.2016Fall.EZ.699.pdf

APPENDIX B

GRADING RUBRIC FOR PRIMARY DATA CAPSTONE PAPER

Final Capstone Paper	Student _____
Grading Rubric—Primary Data	Faculty supervisor _____
	Semester/Year _____
	Title _____

Detailed Explanation of Criteria:

1. **Criterion 1:** The student has constructed a set of logical, clear, and well thought out research questions, hypotheses, and/or propositions to use to explore the topic. (15%)
2. **Criterion 2:** The student selected an appropriate source/type of data and used valid methods to collect the primary data. (20%)
3. **Criterion 3:** The literature review is well organized and comprehensive. Theory drawn from the literature is used to support the research questions/hypotheses and thesis (15%).
4. **Criterion 4:** Data analysis methods are appropriate. The data analysis is clear, comprehensive, and accurate. (20%)
5. **Criterion 5:** The student’s findings and conclusions are appropriate. The student makes a valid argument that connects the data results to the literature/theory. (10%)
6. **Criterion 6:** Overall, the capstone is well written. The capstone uses appropriate and accurate citation methods, is nearly free of typos and other errors, and is clear and succinct. (20%)

Competencies Assessment

Dependent on the nature of the capstone project, the following core competencies may be met through the capstone process:

Competency 1: Students should be able to effectively work with internal and external stakeholders.

Competency 1a: Students should be able to integrate current and preferred management practices of budgeting and financial management, human resources, information technology, statistical analysis, and performance measurement to improve organizations.

Competency 2: Students should be able to use decision-making theories to frame and address public service problems.

Competency 3: Students should be able to communicate effectively both orally (public speaking) and in writing (analytical and persuasive) for a public service organization and in the public policy process.

Competency 4: Students should be able to evaluate public service issues in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and economy.

Competency 4a: Students should be able to demonstrate the trade-offs between efficiency, effectiveness, and equity in terms of program alternatives.

Competency 5: Students should be able to understand and listen critically to diverse perspectives to address public service issues.

Grading Table for Capstone Paper with Primary Data Collection

Criteria	Level of Achievement			Total Points
	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Outstanding	
1 Research questions/hypotheses	11 or below	12-13	14-15	
2 Data collection and methods	16 or below	17-18	19-20	
3 Literature review	11 or below	12-13	14-15	
4 Data analysis	16 or below	17-18	19-20	
5 Findings and conclusions	6 or below	7-8	9-10	
6 Writing quality, formatting, citations	16 or below	17-18	19-20	
TOTAL GRADE			/100	

Grading Rubric for Analytical Capstone Paper

Final Capstone Paper

Grading Rubric—Analytical

Student _____
Faculty supervisor _____
Semester/Year _____
Title _____

Detailed Explanation of Criteria:

1. **Criterion 1:** The student has constructed a logical set of research questions to use to explore the topic. (15%)
 2. **Criterion 2:** In the introductory section, the student cogently links theory to practice when discuss the objective of the paper. (20%)
 3. **Criterion 3:** The literature review is well organized and comprehensive. Theory drawn from the literature was used to support the research questions and thesis (20%).
 4. **Criterion 4:** Case analysis selection is appropriate. The case is a logical choice to explore the theories presented. (15%)
 5. **Criterion 5:** The student’s findings and conclusions are well written. The student makes a valid argument that connects the literature to practice. (10%)
 6. **Criterion 6:** Overall, the capstone is well written. The capstone uses appropriate and accurate citation methods, is nearly free of typos and other errors, and is clear and succinct. (20%)
-

Competencies Assessment

Dependent on the nature of the capstone project, the following core competencies may be met through the capstone process:

Competency 1: Students should be able to effectively work with internal and external stakeholders.

Competency 1a: Students should be able to integrate current and preferred management practices of budgeting and financial management, human resources, information technology, statistical analysis, and performance measurement to improve organizations.

Competency 2: Students should be able to use decision-making theories to frame and address public service problems.

Competency 3a: Students should be able to communicate effectively both orally (public speaking) and in writing (analytical and persuasive) for a public service organization and in the public policy process.

Competency 4: Students should be able to evaluate public service issues in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and economy.

Competency 4a: Students should be able to demonstrate the trade-offs between efficiency, effectiveness, and equity in terms of program alternatives.

Competency 5: Students should be able to understand and listen critically to diverse perspectives to address public service issues.

Grading Table for Analytical Capstone Paper

Criteria	Level of Achievement			Total Points
	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Outstanding	
1 Research questions/hypotheses	11 or below	12-13	14-15	
2 Theory linked to practice	16 or below	17-18	19-20	
3 Literature review	16 or below	17-18	19-20	
4 Case analysis	11 or below	12-13	14-15	
5 Findings and conclusions	6 or below	7-8	9-10	
6 Writing quality, formatting, citations	16 or below	17-18	19-20	
TOTAL GRADE			/100	