Master of Public Administration - MPA-MPAD

Mission

The mission of the Master of Public Administration (MPAD) program is derived from and supports the Department of Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences, Lamar University, and Texas State University System. The MPA program strives to provide a high quality academic experience with real-world applicable knowledge of public administration that must operate in a political environment; to advance the needs of a diverse student body through quality research and internship opportunities; and to enhance the capabilities of the communities in the Southeast Texas Region and the State of Texas with graduates who understand and contribute to a diverse and global economy.

Academic year 2024-2025

Master of Public Administration - MPA-MPAD Learning Outcomes

Knowledge NOT MET

Provide students a solid and advanced understanding of public administration, policy, and organization theory and show improvement in public administration knowledge.

MEASURES	RESULTS	ACTIONS
All incoming MPA students will take an entrance examination in their first semester of coursework in the program through the Orientation and Assessment lab online. The same examination will be given as an exit examination to all graduating MPA students during their last semester of coursework immediately prior to graduation through the Orientation and Assessment lab online. The MPA Director is responsible for administer and reporting to the Department Chair the results of the entrance and exit examinations. Direct - Exam (Course) Target Our goal is to achieve an overall percentage increase of 50% knowledge gained in the major (core) subfields of the discipline. Our target is that students will achieve at least a 70% on the assessment by the time the student finishes the program.	NOT MET Analysis In the spring 2025 semester, the average score earned on the MPA Entrance Assessment was 49.34%. In that same semester, the average score earned on the MPA Exit Assessment was 63.09%. The difference between these two averages indicates a 27.87% increase in public administration knowledge between program entrance and program exit. One of the four students who took the MPA Exit Assessment in the spring 2025 semester earned a score 70% or higher (95.23%).	Gather Additional Data Not Started In the spring 2025 semester, seven students took MPA Comprehensive Examinations and only four students took the MPA Exit Assessment. We need to develop a way to ensure a higher percentage of potential graduates take the MPA Exit Assessment. Recommended Due Date: 09/12/2025

General Outcome Actions

ACTIONS

Modify Policies / Procedures

Not Started

We need to develop a new policy to ensure that students complete the MPA Entrance Assessment during their first semester in the program.

Recommended Due Date: 09/12/2025

Conclusion

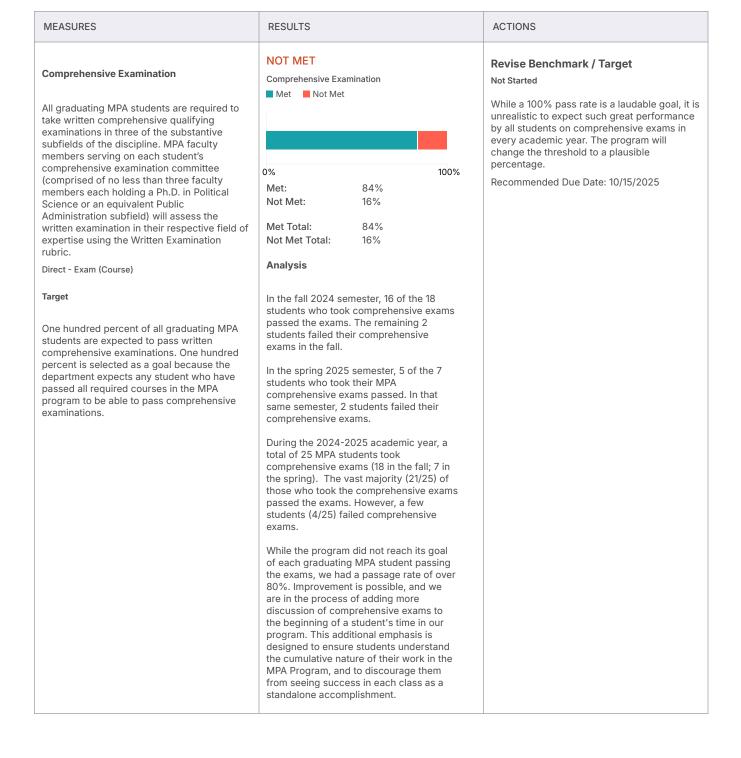
In the spring 2025 semester, the results of the MPA Entrance Assessment and MPA Exit Assessment demonstrated a notable increase in knowledge between program entrance and program exit. However, that increase in knowledge was below the threshold in our goal. Also, one of the four students who took the MPA Exit Assessment earned a score high enough to indicate that student met the individual-level goal of this outcome.

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The data used to assess this outcome are not complete and not sufficient for this task. The current program director has access to the spring 2025 data, but does not have access to the fall 2024 data. Also, the program does not currently have an enforcement mechanism/policy in place to require students to take the MPA Entrance Assessment and MPA Exit Assessment. In the near future, the program will take steps to address these issues with the data.

Written Communication NOT MET

Provide students with the knowledge, skills and abilities to demonstrate proficiency in the ability to synthesize, analyze, and think critically about scholarly theories in the discipline of Public Administration. Graduating MPA students will be able to demonstrate the ability to apply theoretical concepts to the practice of public administration, through written communication of hypothetical and actual problems that arise in the practice of public administration



General Outcome Actions

ACTIONS

Additional Training

Not Started

When Dr. Dan Qi taught POLS 5330: Public Administration Theory and Methods in the summer 2025 term, she added some additional material to the class to help prepare students for comprehensive exams. POLS 5330 is often the first course students take in the MPA Program. The program is currently developing additional preparation for students in the lead-up to comprehensive exams.

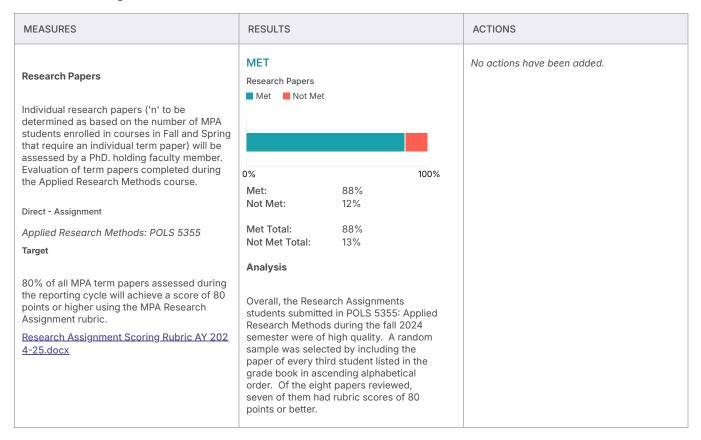
Recommended Due Date: 07/29/2025

Conclusion

In the 2024-2025 academic year, over 80% of MPA students who took their comprehensive exams passed those exams. While that is a very high percentage, it is below our current goal of 100%. While the outcome was not met, the data indicated student success in a vast majority of cases.

Critical Thinking MET

To provide a solid understanding for students to demonstrate proficiency in the skills needed to conduct research and critically evaluate research in public administration. Obtaining skills to conduct and critically evaluate research in public administration expands students repertoire of resources available to them after graduation.



Conclusion

Among the Research Assignments submitted in the POLS 5355: Applied Research Methods class that were reviewed to assess this outcome, 88% of them received rubric scores of 80 points or better (on a 100-point scale). This indicates that students in the primary research course within the MPA Program are doing a great job of developing research skills.