

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
<p>Learning Outcome</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Direct - Exam (Course)</p> <p>Target</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>NOT MET</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p>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.</p> <p>One of the four students who took the MPA Exit Assessment in the spring 2025 semester earned a score 70% or higher (95.23%).</p>	<p>Gather Additional Data</p> <p>Not Started</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Recommended Due Date: 09/12/2025</p>

General Outcome Actions

ACTIONS
<p>Modify Policies / Procedures</p> <p>Not Started</p> <p>We need to develop a new policy to ensure that students complete the MPA Entrance Assessment during their first semester in the program.</p> <p>Recommended Due Date: 09/12/2025</p>

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.

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

MEASURES	RESULTS	ACTIONS								
<div>Comprehensive Examination</div> <div>All graduating MPA students are required to take written comprehensive qualifying examinations in three of the substantive subfields of the discipline. MPA faculty members serving on each student's comprehensive examination committee (comprised of no less than three faculty members each holding a Ph.D. in Political Science or an equivalent Public Administration subfield) will assess the written examination in their respective field of expertise using the Written Examination rubric.</div> <div>Direct - Exam (Course)</div> <div>Target</div> <div>One hundred percent of all graduating MPA students are expected to pass written comprehensive examinations. One hundred percent is selected as a goal because the department expects any student who have passed all required courses in the MPA program to be able to pass comprehensive examinations.</div>	<div>NOT MET</div> <div>Comprehensive Examination</div> <div><div><div>Met</div><div>Not Met</div></div><div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div>0%</div><div>100%</div></div><table><tr><td>Met:</td><td>84%</td></tr><tr><td>Not Met:</td><td>16%</td></tr><tr><td>Met Total:</td><td>84%</td></tr><tr><td>Not Met Total:</td><td>16%</td></tr></table><div>Analysis</div><div>In the fall 2024 semester, 16 of the 18 students who took comprehensive exams passed the exams. The remaining 2 students failed their comprehensive exams in the fall.</div><div>In the spring 2025 semester, 5 of the 7 students who took their MPA comprehensive exams passed. In that same semester, 2 students failed their comprehensive exams.</div><div>During the 2024-2025 academic year, a total of 25 MPA students took comprehensive exams (18 in the fall; 7 in the spring). The vast majority (21/25) of those who took the comprehensive exams passed the exams. However, a few students (4/25) failed comprehensive exams.</div><div>While the program did not reach its goal of each graduating MPA student passing the exams, we had a passage rate of over 80%. Improvement is possible, and we are in the process of adding more discussion of comprehensive exams to the beginning of a student's time in our program. This additional emphasis is designed to ensure students understand the cumulative nature of their work in the MPA Program, and to discourage them from seeing success in each class as a standalone accomplishment.</div></div>	Met:	84%	Not Met:	16%	Met Total:	84%	Not Met Total:	16%	<div>Revise Benchmark / Target</div> <div>Not Started</div> <div>While a 100% pass rate is a laudable goal, it is unrealistic to expect such great performance by all students on comprehensive exams in every academic year. The program will change the threshold to a plausible percentage.</div> <div>Recommended Due Date: 10/15/2025</div>
Met:	84%									
Not Met:	16%									
Met Total:	84%									
Not Met Total:	16%									

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.

MEASURES	RESULTS	ACTIONS
Research Papers Individual research papers ('n' to be determined as based on the number of MPA students enrolled in courses in Fall and Spring that require an individual term paper) will be assessed by a PhD. holding faculty member. Evaluation of term papers completed during the Applied Research Methods course. Direct - Assignment <i>Applied Research Methods: POLS 5355</i> Target 80% of all MPA term papers assessed during the reporting cycle will achieve a score of 80 points or higher using the MPA Research Assignment rubric. Research Assignment Scoring Rubric AY 2024-25.docx	MET Research Papers ■ Met ■ Not Met 0% 100% Met: 88% Not Met: 12% Met Total: 88% Not Met Total: 13% Analysis Overall, the Research Assignments students submitted in POLS 5355: Applied Research Methods during the fall 2024 semester were of high quality. A random sample was selected by including the paper of every third student listed in the grade book in ascending alphabetical order. Of the eight papers reviewed, seven of them had rubric scores of 80 points or better.	<i>No actions have been added.</i>

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.