

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 2025-2026

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
Learning Outcome 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-based) 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 During the Fall 2025 semester, 17 students took the Entrance Assessment and 9 students took the Exit Assessment. In that semester, two students received scores above 70% on the Exit Assessment. However, two students also received scores of 66.66% on the Exit Assessment during that term as well. During the Spring 2026 semester, 12 students took the Entrance Assessment and 22 students took the Exit Assessment. In that semester, one student received a score above 70% on the Exit Assessment and three students received scores of 66.66% on the Exit Assessment during that term. Over the duration of the AY 2025-2026 reporting period, the average score on the Entrance Assessment was 50.57% and the average score on the Exit Assessment was 56.22%. The difference in these averages is reflective of an 11.17% increase in student knowledge from the beginning to the end of their time in the program.	<i>No actions have been added.</i>

General Outcome Actions

ACTIONS
Adopt or Expand Technologies Not Started Restrict access to the instructional materials on the POLS 501: Orientation and Assessment Blackboard course shell for new MPA students until after they have completed the Entrance Assessment. Recommended Due Date: 08/18/2026

Conclusion

This result is likely due to characteristics of the execution of the Entrance Assessment. During their first semester in the MPA Program, students are given access to many resources introducing them to key concepts in public administration and public policy within the same course shell as the Entrance Assessment. My communication with students in that stage of their studies indicates many of them are trying to maximize their scores on the Entrance Assessment; they may be studying for the Entrance Assessment and skewing the average score upward.

Written Communication 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

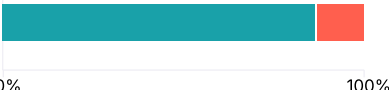
MEASURES	RESULTS	ACTIONS
Comprehensive Examination All graduating MPA students are required to take written comprehensive qualifying examinations in three of the substantive subfields of the discipline. MPA faculty members serving on each student's comprehensive examination committee (comprised of no 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. Direct - Exam (Course-based) Target 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. Comprehensive Exam Rubric sp2026.docx MPA 2021 Comps Scoring Rubric (used through fall 2025).docx	MET Analysis In the 2025-2026 academic year, MPA faculty voted to reduce the threshold for the Written Communication measure from 100% to 80%. The previous aspiration of 100% was admirable, but it was not a realistic goal. The new 80% threshold demonstrates a continued commitment to excellence along with informed reflection upon the Comprehensive Exam process. During the 2025-2026 assessment period, we met the revised benchmark developed during that reporting period. During the fall 2025 semester, 11 of the 12 students who took the Comprehensive Exam passed it, and 18 of the 24 students who took the exam in the spring 2026 semester passed as well. The Comprehensive Exam is only administered during long semesters, so the students assessed during the fall and spring terms were the only ones who took the Comprehensive Exam during the reporting period. Overall, 29 of the 36 attempts to pass the Comprehensive Exam were successful ones. Due to that abundance of student success, our overall pass rate for the reporting period was 80.5%.	<i>No actions have been added.</i>

Conclusion

Not every student attempt to pass the MPA Comprehensive Exam is a successful one. However, the vast majority of those attempts were successful in the 2025-2026 academic year. The high pass rate (80.5%) for Comprehensive Exam attempts during the reporting period indicates the MPA program has prepared students to apply the knowledge they have learned in the program to scenarios they could encounter in the practice of public administration.

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: 87% Not Met: 13% Met Total: 87% Not Met Total: 13% Analysis Of the Research Assignments submitted in POLS 5355: Applied Research Methods during the summer 2025 term, 41 of the 47 papers received a score of 80% or higher using the MPA Research Assignment rubric. This means 87% of the papers met or exceeded the standard in this goal. While we should always try to improve further, the program is meeting the critical thinking standard at this time.	<i>No actions have been added.</i>

Conclusion

As a program, we have exceeded our goal on this outcome. To maintain this success, we should continue to assess critical thinking through assignments in our courses.