

**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM
POLICY MANUAL**

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SECTION 1. MISSION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE MPA PROGRAM

1.1 Mission Statement

The Master of Public Administration program prepares students to competently and ethically lead public and/or nonprofit organizations. In addition, the program serves these community organizations through service-learning and applied research projects

1.2 Program Description

The Master of Public Administration degree is designed to help prepare an individual for career service in national, state or local government; in regional planning agencies, and in non-profit or voluntary organizations. It is a two-year program of study, which encourages post-baccalaureate students to utilize their education as a foundation upon which to build highly valued organizational and managerial skills. Clearly focused on the needs of *practitioners*, the MPA program seeks to respond in particular to the needs of public service professionals in our region, the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). Consequently, input from program graduates, public and non-profit managers in our region, and the Community Advisory Board is used to develop and refine the program's offerings and strategies.

1.3 Governance

The MPA program is understood to be an integral part of the Political Science Department, and is recognized as such by the university. The department maintains general human resources and supervisory standards and guidelines for the faculty. The director of the MPA program administers program directives and the program budget, and consults with faculty on issues relating to the program structure and administration. Responsibility for administration of ASU's MPA program rests with the Director of the program. The Director is appointed by the Chair of the Department of Political Science after appropriate consultation with the program's nucleus faculty and the Community Advisory Board. The administrative chain of command is as follows: Program Director, Political Science Department Chair, Dean of the Pamplin College of Arts and Sciences, Vice President for Academic Affairs, President of the University.

The policy directives of the program originate with the MPA Faculty Committee, which consists of the program's nucleus faculty. This includes those full-time faculty who 1) have primary responsibility for at least one of the core courses in the MPA program OR teach at least one course a year in the program; 2) are actively involved in student advisement OR the supervision of capstone papers or internships, and 3) contribute to the effective operation of the program through participation in activities needed to properly administer and govern the program.

1.4 History and Background

In 1991 Augusta College and Georgia Southern University entered into a memorandum of agreement in which Georgia Southern's Master of Public Administration program being offered in the Augusta metropolitan area would become a program offered in cooperation with Augusta College. This was initiated by Dr. Ralph Walker, Chair of the Department of Political Science. It was anticipated that the arrangement, which included a jointly-staffed faculty member, would extend for five years. By 1996, pending approval by the Board of Regents, the Augusta "satellite" MPA degree program of Georgia Southern would transfer to and become a new graduate offering of Augusta College. Dr. Gwen Wood joined the faculty as a joint appointment between Augusta College and Georgia Southern University. She served as site coordinator for Georgia Southern's graduate programs at Fort Gordon, Georgia and taught courses in public administration.

In 1994 the University System of Georgia Board of Regents staff indicated its willingness to consider the transfer approval if the new program would be structured so that it would be set on a course to meet the accreditation standards set by NASPAA (National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration).

In 1995 Augusta College engaged a consultant to determine the feasibility of having the planned new program meet the standards for accreditation set by NASPAA. Dr. Brian Fry was a member of the executive council of NASPAA. He was a member of NASPAA's Outcome Assessments Committee and he served as chair of the Section on Political Science-based MPA programs. Dr. Fry was a member of four site visit teams for schools seeking NASPAA accreditation. After his visit to the campus, he issued a report to the Regents. His findings concluded that the program, as designed, could be accredited if all went as planned during the four-year cycle in which the MPA program must be in existence before it is evaluated. The Regents' staff concurred after reviewing Augusta State's response to Dr. Fry's report and its plan of action for meeting accreditation standards. Dr. Wood and Dr. Walker guided the process of creating the separate program.

In 1996 the memorandum of agreement with Georgia Southern expired and a new one was reached which outlined an amicable separation of the two institutions so that, by August of that year, the Augusta State MPA program was ready to accept applications for its fall class in a new program. It also agreed to assist Georgia Southern students who had already begun their degree work and who wished to continue their MPA studies in Augusta. The first class enrolled in Augusta College MPA classes in September, 1996 and the first six graduates of the program completed their studies and graduated in June, 1998.

SECTION 2. CURRICULUM

2.1 Program of Study

The Master of Public Administration requires the satisfactory completion of 36 semester hours of course work. The program of study must include the prescribed nine courses (25 credit hours) of the core curriculum; three courses (nine credit hours) selected from among the elective courses, and the capstone course (two credit hours). The only exception involves students pursuing the Human Services Administration Track. Students who have little or no public or nonprofit agency experience will take the internship course (see section 2.4) in lieu of one elective course.

The MPA program offers one specialized track in Human Services Administration (HSA). The HSA track is designed to prepare students for the challenges of working in agencies involved in providing human services to the community. Such agencies face unique challenges including mixed funding streams, board structures, dependence on volunteers, and infrequent planning. Students pursuing the Human Services Administration Track must complete 31 hours of prescribed course work, one elective course (three credit hours), and the two-hour capstone course.

The curriculum is designed to meet the standards for accreditation set by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) and prepare students for the practice of public and nonprofit management in our region. The responsibility for curriculum design rests with the MPA Faculty Committee. To ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the profession, the Community Advisory Board plays an active role in periodically reviewing the curriculum and making recommendations for change. In addition, surveys of public and nonprofit agencies in the region, and benchmark institutions in the region, are used as inputs for further review and refinement of the curriculum. All curriculum changes originate with the MPA Faculty Committee before proceeding through the normal curriculum approval process.

Writing is an important component of all MPA courses. The MPA program uses the American Psychological Association's style manual.

2.2 Core Curriculum Elements

Required Courses (core curriculum of nine courses):

- PADM 6000 History, Scope and Practice of Public Administration (3 hours)
- PADM 6010, Communication Skills for Public and Nonprofit Managers (1 hour)
- PADM 6100 Public Organization Theory and Behavior (3 hours)
- PADM 6200 Public Personnel Management (3 hours)
- PADM 6300 Public Budgeting (3 hours)
- PADM 6500 Research Methods in Public Administration (3 hours)
- PADM 6600 Quantitative Methods (3 hours)
- Choose either of the following:
- PADM 6050, Seminar on Constitutional and Administration Law OR
- PADM 6400 Ethics (3 hours)

Choose either of the following:

PADM 6700 Urban Government Administration and Policy Analysis or PADM 6800 State Government Administration and Policy Analysis (3 hours)

HSA Track Required Courses (core curriculum of 11 courses)

All of the above courses, with the exception of PADM 6300

PADM 6550, Human Services Administration (3 hours)

Choose either of the following:

PADM 6240, Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations OR

PADM 6250, Planning Resources and Administration (3 hours)

Choose either of the following:

PADM 6300, Public Budgeting OR

PADM 6301, Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations (3 hours)

Exit Requirement

PADM 7050 Thesis (Capstone course)

2.3 Elective Curriculum Elements

Electives: (number of courses required depends upon track, see description in section 2.1; all courses are three hours unless otherwise noted)

PADM 6020 Introduction to GIS (2 hours)

PADM 6030 Grant Writing (1 hour)

PADM 6050 Seminar in American Government with Emphasis on Constitutional Law (if not taken as part of the requirement noted above)

PADM 6240 Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations

PADM 6250 Planning Resources and Administration

PADM 6300 Public Budgeting (for students in the HSA track who wish to take PADM 6301 as well)

PADM 6301 Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations

PADM 6350 Emergency Management

PADM 6400 Ethics (if not taken as part of the requirement noted above)

PADM 6550 Human Services Administration

PADM 6650 Public Policy Analysis

PADM 6750 Public Program Evaluation

PADM 6800 State Government or PADM 6700 Urban Administration (Take one option as core curriculum; use the other as elective)

PADM 6850 Intergovernmental Relations

PADM 6950 Selected Topics in Public Administration

PADM 7000 Directed Readings

2.4 Internship

The purpose of an internship is to give students realistic exposure to an organizational/bureaucratic environment. The internship experience should enhance the student's awareness of the internal dynamics of a public or nonprofit organization and the values and attitudes of employees toward their clientele and their administrative or political superiors. The internship should give students the opportunity to become aware of their obligations as professionals and to those they will serve.

A student who has had little or no public or nonprofit agency experience will be required to take a 3-hour internship course (PADM 6900). This course will substitute for an elective course. The internship may not be scheduled until the student has completed at least three core courses in the program.

The MPA Director identifies students in need of an internship as they are admitted to the MPA program. Being a full-time employee does not automatically exempt a student from the internship requirement. Students whose work experience comes solely from the private sector, is limited in time (less than one year), in depth or breadth may be required to take the internship course.

The Director works with the Internship Director and the Community Advisory Board to identify appropriate internship opportunities and match students to them based on student interests and abilities. Internships may be undertaken only at organizations with which the university has a written agreement.

All internships last for a full semester, and will be scheduled for the fall or spring only. Internships begin on the first day of the semester and end on the last day of the semester. Student interns are expected to work at least 20 hours per week for the semester. Interns may be compensated for their work by the agency, if the agency has funding available. Students who already hold full-time jobs, but lack adequate exposure to the public and nonprofit sector may be required to take the internship course. In such a case, the student will be assigned to an agency and given a project to work on that will give them the needed exposure to the public/nonprofit sectors.

MPA interns are expected to be doing work that is appropriate and supportive of the students' educational goals. Thus, students should be in an applied learning experience to gain management and analytical skills. Appropriate work includes:

- Conducting research
- Developing or revising regulations, policies, or plans
- Evaluating the effectiveness of programs, policies or regulations
- Facilitating meetings or group discussions
- Writing technical or nontechnical documents
- Training others in specific skills

- Setting up information systems
- Developing standards and measures for agency performance
- Drafting agency budgets, preparing grant applications, or assisting in other fund raising initiatives

All interns are supervised by the site supervisor and the Internship Director. The Internship Director will visit each worksite at least twice during the semester to assess the student's performance and progress. The site supervisor will evaluate the intern at least twice during the semester—once at mid-term and again at the end of the semester. These reports will be used as part of the grading process for the internship. The site supervisor is required to share the contents of the mid-term assessment with the intern, as part of the process of helping the intern improve his or her performance. In addition to work performance, the Internship Director will require the intern to write a major paper on some aspect of the internship experience. The precise topic will be determined by the Internship Director and the intern.

2.5 Directed Readings

PADM 7000 is not a regularly scheduled course; rather, it is an opportunity for a student to do intensive study into an area that is NOT covered in the regular curriculum. Students wishing to do a directed reading must propose the topic to the MPA Director at the beginning of the fall semester (for the spring semester), the beginning of the spring (for the summer term), or the beginning of the summer term (for the fall semester). If the proposal is suitable, the MPA Director will assist the student in locating a faculty member to direct the reading.

2.6 Course Scheduling

The MPA Director will develop a course rotation in cooperation with the program faculty to ensure students can graduate in a timely manner. In support of this goal,

- All core courses (with the exception noted below) and PADM 7050 will be taught at least once per academic year. For purposes of this manual, the term “academic year” includes the summer term.
- Core courses which have an associated option will be taught every other year.
- All elective courses will be taught at least once every two years. Elective courses which cannot be taught at least once every two years will be considered for elimination by the MPA Faculty Committee.

The course schedule will be presented to the Chair of the Political Science Department to be balanced against the needs of the undergraduate schedule prior to becoming part of the final course schedule. In addition, if the course is to be taught by a faculty member from another department, the MPA Director or Department Chair will negotiate this with the appropriate department chair.

SECTION 3. ADMISSIONS

3.1 Application Portfolio and Standards for Acceptance

The applicant is responsible for having the following materials to the Admissions Office of Augusta State University by the established deadline:

1. Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended by the applicant. The applicant must have completed requirements for the bachelor's degree in a regionally accredited college or university. Admission to the program requires a minimum cumulative grade average equivalent to 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
2. Official scores on the Graduate Record Examination. The GRE scores must be recent (applicant having taken the Graduate Record Examination within the last five years).
3. Two letters of recommendation. The letters of recommendation should come from persons familiar with the applicant's academic and/or employment experience.
4. A current resume.

When the portfolio is completed with each of the items listed above, the applicant's record will be reviewed by the Director of the MPA Program. The MPA Program Director calculates an admission score for applicants as follows:

GRE Verbal score + GRE Quantitative score + (GRE analytical score X 100) + (undergraduate GPA X 100)

If the total for this score is greater than 1500 points, the MPA Program Director may admit the applicant as a regular student in the program. If the total is less than 1500, the MPA Program Director forwards the application and supporting documents to the MPA Admissions Committee. If the admission score is between 1400 and 1499, the Admissions Committee may elect to admit the student as a probationary student. The Admissions Committee may impose conditions on students admitted in a probationary status. These conditions may include, but are not limited to, provisions that the student maintain at least a "B" average on the first three courses taken in the MPA Program, or that the student take an undergraduate course in quantitative methods as a pre-requisite in order to remedy a deficiency in his or her performance on the quantitative subtest of the Graduate Record Examination. The Admissions Committee makes its decision and conveys it in writing to the MPA Program Director, who then contacts the applicant by letter to inform him or her of the decision. The MPA Program Director supervises the conditions of the probationary acceptance and monitors the student's progress. When each of the conditions has been satisfactorily addressed, the director notifies the student in writing of his or her change in status from probationary to regular acceptance.

3.2 Admissions Appeals

Students who are not accepted for regular or probationary admission to the Master of Public Administration program and who believe that there are extenuating circumstances which affect their eligibility may request in writing an appeal of the decision of the MPA Admissions Committee. The appeal should be addressed to the MPA Director who will forward the appeal to the Admissions Committee for reconsideration. In such a situation, the Chair of the Political Science Department will become a voting member of the Admissions Committee.

3.3 Conditions for Provisional Admission

Those applicants who have at least a 3.0 undergraduate grade average and are awaiting their scores on the Graduate Record Examination may enter into a contract with the MPA program which states that they are provisionally accepted until such time as the portfolio is completed. Provisionally accepted students may take one course. If the student's completed application is subsequently accepted after the GRE scores are known and course is successfully completed, the course will count toward his or her degree requirements.

3.4 Waiver of GRE Scores; Acceptance of GMAT Scores

The requirement for scores on the Graduate Record Examination will not be waived. The only exceptions to this rule will be those persons who have completed a master's degree in another field. Completion of a master's degree indicates a competency and preparation for graduate level work which would compensate for the lack of a GRE score as an indicator. This waiver would not apply to those students who have been accepted into another graduate degree program, taken courses, but not completed the degree.

Scores on the GMAT may be substituted for the requirement of scores on the Graduate Record Examination. A minimum GMAT score of 400 is required.

3.5 Pre-requisites for the MPA Program

An applicant's academic transcript must list a course in American Government. If it does not, the student must either complete the POLS 1101 course (American Government) offered by Augusta State University, complete a comparable course at another institution, or take the CLEP test in American Government and achieve a score of at least 46.

3.6 Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships may be provided to students. To be eligible, students must apply for

the assistantship, be regularly admitted, and in full-time status. Application packages must be submitted to the MPA Director in accordance with the MPA Program Graduate Assistant Manual. Applications will be reviewed by the MPA Graduate Assistant Committee, which will make the final decision on which students will be awarded assistantships. The membership of this committee will include the MPA Director, and two other MPA Faculty Committee members. Once the selections are made, the MPA Director will match the selected students to faculty supervisors based on 1) the student's abilities and interests, and 2) identified faculty needs. The MPA Director will always be assigned a graduate assistant to help with program administration tasks.

3.7 International Students

MPA applicants from other countries must meet additional criteria for admission. These includes a minimum TOEFL score of 213, and a completed and signed certification of financial support and attached documentation (bank statements, scholarship letters, etc.). International students should consult the ASU web site, www.aug.edu, for complete application information. Because of the additional processing time needed for international students, such students should ensure all documents are in the ASU Admissions Office at least 90 days prior to the start of the semester they wish to enter the program. Special note: The Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20) cannot be forwarded until an offer of acceptance has been extended. If it is determined that an applicant is academically eligible to attend ASU, he or she will be required to pay a NON-REFUNDABLE tuition deposit of \$2,000. U.S. dollars by bank check payable to Augusta State University before ASU will issue the I-20.

SECTION 4. DEGREE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

4.1 General Requirements

In order to become eligible for the degree of Master of Public Administration, a candidate must have: a) completed the core courses specified in the curriculum summary with a grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale; b) completed the required number of elective courses with a grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale; and c) be certified as satisfactorily completing the capstone paper, and d) completed all requirements for the portfolio.

4.1.a. Specified period of time for degree completion

Only that course work completed within the six calendar years prior to completion of the degree requirements will apply toward graduation. The age of a course will be calculated from the date when the course would be expected to have been completed—the last day of class of the term in which registration for the course occurred. Under rare and exceptional circumstances, the MPA Director may grant an exception to this policy.

4.1 b. Residency and Transfer Credits

No more than nine semester credit hours shall be transferred from another institution for the purpose of earning credits for the Master of Public Administration degree. The institution from which the credits are transferred must be an accredited one, and each transfer course is subject to review in order to determine its equivalency in the Augusta State University MPA Program.

4.1 c. Minimum number of credit hours required; course substitutions

The MPA degree consists of 36 semester hours. No more than two course substitutions are allowed in the MPA Program. A course substitution consists of having a graduate-level course taken at ASU or at another accredited institution in a subject area related to public management counted as an elective course for purposes of the requirements of the MPA degree. Requests for course substitutions must be approved by the MPA director.

4.1 d. Maintenance of Acceptable Grade Point Average

A student enrolled in the MPA Program is limited to two “C” course grades (2.0 on a 4.0 scale), whether earned at ASU or transferred from another institution. A student who earns a second “C” grade will be placed on academic probation. Should a student on academic probation earn a third “C,” the student will be suspended from the program. A student who earns a grade lower than a “C” in any class will be expelled from the program without right of appeal.

A student who is suspended may apply for readmission after one year by writing a letter to the MPA Director to request reinstatement. The Admissions Committee will consider the letter, the circumstances surrounding the suspension, and the student’s record in making a reinstatement decision. Should the committee choose to reinstate the student, the student will be

required to re-take courses where a “C” was earned. The Admissions Committee’s decision will be final. A student who is reinstated will be placed on academic probation, and remain on probation for the remainder of his or her time in the program. Should the student earn another “C” grade, the student will be expelled without right of appeal.

4.2 Capstone Project

The Capstone project is the culminating written work for the MPA program. The purpose of the capstone project is to have the student demonstrate his or her ability to apply the knowledge acquired in the program of study and to utilize skills of observation and analysis as demonstrated in a formal paper. It is written by a degree candidate when he or she is in the process of completing the nine core courses and is within one semester of graduation. The paper is written as the course requirement for PADM 7050. A student may register for PADM 7050 only after submitting an acceptable project proposal and with the permission of the MPA Director.

4.2.a Capstone Project Format

Students may conduct either an applied or a theoretical research project. An applied research project may take the form of a program evaluation, a needs assessment, or some other form of practical, applied research undertaken for a public or nonprofit agency in the area. Students desiring to do such a project for an agency other than the one they work at may ask the MPA Director for assistance in locating a suitable project. A theoretical research project will involve the empirical testing of theory using primary or secondary data.

For purposes of critiquing the capstone project, there are two READERS. The FIRST READER is the instructor for the PADM 7050 course. The student may request a particular faculty member to serve as SECOND READER. However, the MPA Program Director will make the final selection of the SECOND READER based on the 1) subject matter to be covered in the capstone paper, 2) the research methodology to be used, and 3) the availability of faculty to serve. Alterations and clarifications suggested by the two readers are then incorporated by the student into the capstone project in a series of drafts submitted according to a time table set by the instructor of the PADM 7050 course. At regular intervals throughout the course, the student revises the project paper according to critiques made by the readers. The final polished copy is turned over to the course instructor no later than the last day of classes for the term.

4.2.b Capstone Project Proposal

In the semester prior to enrollment in the capstone course, the MPA Director will identify those students eligible for enrollment in the course. The Director will notify each of these students in writing of the requirement to submit a suitable proposal, and the deadline for that submission. As a minimum, the proposal must include a clear statement of the research question, a brief summary of relevant literature, and the proposed methodology. If the proposal is acceptable, the MPA Director will grant a course permission for enrollment. If the proposal is not suitable, the MPA Director may either reject the proposal or return it for corrections.

4.2.c Capstone Project Evaluation

The course instructor, along with the second reader, determines the mark for the project. There are three choices of assigned marks: “pass with distinction” “pass” or “fail.” If the project is not completed within the semester in which it is commenced, then the student is given an “IP” and is notified that the project must be completed within two semesters or the capstone course will have to be retaken. The grade for the capstone course will be listed as either pass or fail.

4.2.d Capstone Project Certification

The first and second readers certify to the MPA Program Director and to the Chair of the Department of Political Science that the degree candidate has successfully completed the capstone project and has been given a mark for the project. This certificate is forwarded to the Office of the Registrar as part of the degree completion requirement.

4.3 Portfolio

4.3.a. Portfolio Purpose

A portfolio is a compilation of a student’s work over the course of his or her MPA studies. The portfolio should demonstrate the student’s skills and abilities as they have evolved over time. The portfolio provides

- a means for students to evaluate and see their progress over time.
- a source of information for faculty about students. Learning more about students as individuals enhances the teaching and advising process. In addition, the portfolio can help faculty provide more meaningful references for students.
- information and documentary evidence to support the evaluation of the MPA program itself.

The MPA Director begins a portfolio for each student when they are admitted in provisional, probationary, or regular status. Portfolios will not be started when students are in post-bac status. The initial document to open the portfolio is the student’s resume.

4.3.b. Portfolio Composition

1. As part of PADM 6000, the student will have two assignments that become part of the portfolio:
 - a. A reflective essay that answers three questions: 1) where am I now in my life, 2) where do I want to be in five years, and 3) how do I think the MPA program will help me get there. This assignment will not be graded.
 - b. A major research paper, which will be graded. This paper will provide a “benchmark” to see how the student’s writing and research abilities improve over time.

The instructor for PADM 6000 will submit both of these documents to the MPA Director at the end of the semester for filing.

2. Additional documents will then be added to the portfolio as follows:
 - a. The *instructor* for PADM 6500 will submit the assigned capstone abstract paper. This will provide a second benchmark for illustrating how the student's analytical and research skills improve over time.
 - b. The *instructor* for PADM 6200 will submit a praxis journal paper or a case study paper to illustrate that the student can effectively link course concepts to personnel management practices in the field.
 - c. The *instructor* for PADM 6300 or 6301 will submit a case study paper or other suitable assignment to illustrate that the student can effectively link course concepts to financial management practices in the field.
 - d. The *instructor* for PADM 6500/6600 will submit a summarized peer evaluation form to demonstrate the students' ability to work in a team.
 - e. The *instructor* for PADM 6010 will submit an evaluation of the student's oral presentation skills and writing abilities. These will serve as a benchmark for evaluating a student's progress over time in the program.
 - f. The *student* will submit the following items:
 - i. Two graded oral presentations of his or her choice from any course.
 - ii. One additional research paper of his or her choice from any course.
3. As part of the capstone course, the student will be given one final assignment that becomes part of the portfolio. This assignment is a reflective essay that answers these questions: 1) What have I gained from being an MPA student? 2) How well did the program meet my expectations? This assignment will not be graded. The instructor of the capstone course will submit this paper to the MPA Director for filing at the end of the semester.
4. The portfolio will be structured as follows:
 - Resume
 - Reflective essay from PADM 6000
 - Written communication skills
 - Benchmark assignment from 6010, research paper from 6000, one additional research paper chosen by the student
 - Oral communication skills

- Benchmark assignment from 6010, two additional assignments chosen by the student
- Teamwork and teambuilding skills
 - Summary of peer evaluation scores compiled by the instructor of PADM 6500/6600
- Linking theory to practice
 - Appropriate assignments from PADM 6200 and 6300
- Analytical and research skills
 - Capstone abstract from the PADM 6500 course and final capstone paper
- Reflective essay from PADM 7050
- Additional student accomplishments
 - Includes conference presentations, publications, or other forms of special recognition earned by the student, including internship assessments

4.4. Application for Graduation

A student submits an application for graduation at the mid-point of the semester immediately preceding the semester in which he or she anticipates completing all degree requirements (course work and capstone paper). The graduation application is completed in consultation with the MPA Program Director, who certifies the courses completed (graduation checksheet); courses yet to be completed, and approximate time frame for completion of the capstone paper. Upon approval by the Director and the Chair of the Department of Political Science, the application is given to the Registrar by the student along with payment of graduation fees.

4.4. Certification for Graduation

The student is certified for graduation at the time a) his or her transcripts indicate the completion of all courses required in the program of study; b) the grade point average is at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale; c) there is certification on file that the student's capstone paper was completed with a satisfactory mark; and d) completed all requirements for the portfolio.

SECTION 5. ADVISING AND ORIENTATION

5.1 Advising

Each prospective student in the MPA Program is given the opportunity to confer with the MPA Program Director in order to answer questions which he or she may have about program requirements, the program of study, time frame for completion of the degree, or general requirements for admission. This is also an opportunity for the prospective candidate to discuss career options and possible ways in which the MPA degree would further the advancement of one's career goals.

At the time the applicant is accepted, the MPA Program Director gives a written notification of his or her acceptance and in this letter the Director informs the new student that she or he will initially serve as the student's academic advisor. This letter also informs the new student of the procedures for registering for the academic semester in which he or she intends to enroll. If the registration period is eminent, the student is provided with a list of the courses being offered, the designation of the course as required or elective, the name of the instructor, the dates and times of class meetings, and the course registration number (CRN). For each student, the Director recommends a course load depending upon whether the student has indicated part-time or full-time enrollment. The Director of the program assumes the initial role of academic advising until such time as the student is actually enrolled and is in a position to request other MPA faculty members to serve as advisor.

The MPA Director will insure each student is given a written plan of study clearly outlining those required courses and the elective options which a student will take during the course of this or her program of study, and the approximate time frame when each of those courses will be offered. This written plan will be reviewed with each student during the advising period designated by the University. Review of such plans with students may be done by the MPA Director, or any full-time MPA faculty member.

5.2 Advisement Practice Assessment

On a periodic basis, students will be surveyed to determine the level of satisfaction with and effectiveness of the advisement and orientation practices of the MPA program.

5.3 Student Orientation

Each year, prior to the start of the fall semester, the MPA Director, in concert with program faculty, will organize an orientation to the program for new students. The orientation will cover program requirements, including exit requirements, standards, and other program policies. This will include a formal orientation to the library and its services. New students will be given their initial plan of study during this period. The orientation will also provide an opportunity for students to meet program faculty.

SECTION 6. PROGRAM FACULTY

6.1 Faculty Qualifications

Each of the full-time faculty members of the Augusta State University MPA program should hold the doctorate in a discipline directly related to his or her course offerings in the program. The MPA program MAY hire new faculty prior to the award of the candidate's doctorate (ABD), provided that the degree requirement is met within one year of the hire.

6.2 Faculty Load

The normal course load for full-time faculty in the MPA program is 3-3.

6.3 Faculty Diversity

The faculty of the ASU MPA program is sensitive to the ways in which racism has shaped our community's history. Recognizing that an important facet of the mission of ASU and of our MPA program is to serve the local community, the faculty is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and to promoting dialogue and understanding among all people. Consequently, the faculty believes diversity enriches our program and enhances our ability to serve the community.

The faculty diversity goal is to strive to reflect the diversity of the Central Savannah River Area. To this end, the faculty have committed to take the following actions steps:

- The MPA program will include a statement of its diversity goal in all its position announcements.
- Position announcements will be disseminated both within the academic community and to relevant professional associations.
- Recruitment procedures will include outreach to minority communities.
- The program may employ candidates for tenure-track faculty positions prior to the award of the candidate's doctorate, provided that the degree requirement is met within one year of the hire.
- When recruiting guest speakers from within or without the university, faculty will make every effort to recruit speakers from underrepresented groups.
- When recruiting for part-time faculty, every effort will be made to recruit members of underrepresented groups.

6.4 Faculty Searches

Searching for full-time faculty members for the MPA program is an important task, and

demands that all the program's stakeholders take an active role. As a result, each search committee will insure each of these stakeholders have an opportunity to participate. During a candidate's visit to campus, every effort will be made to ensure that all members of the MPA Faculty Committee have the opportunity to meet and interview the candidate. This input will be considered in the search committee's final recommendation. In addition, each candidate will be required to interview with students and one or more members of the Community Advisory Board (at their discretion). Students and Board members will be asked for their assessment of the candidate; this input will be considered by the search committee in its deliberations.

6.5 Part-time Faculty

The MPA Director is responsible for recruiting and recommending for selection part-time faculty for the program. In doing so, the MPA Director will actively seek highly qualified practitioners in the region, to bring practical experience into the classroom. The MPA Director will evaluate each part-time faculty member's application materials, and determine which MPA courses the applicant can be certified to instruct. Finally, the Director will ensure all required documentation is completed and filed in the appropriate offices.

6.6 Evaluating Professional Development of Full-Time Faculty in the MPA Program

Full-time MPA faculty members are evaluated in accordance with institutional and appropriate departmental policies. Graduate programs are expected to have faculty who are actively engaged in research. Consequently, MPA nucleus faculty members are expected to generate three juried publications or applied research equivalents in their appropriate disciplines within any given five year period. "Applied research" consists of community-based problem-solving or program evaluation projects requested by agencies outside the university. These projects consist of program design, implementation, evaluation or policy analysis by means of faculty consultation on various projects. Such research is more reflective of the practitioner-oriented basis of the MPA Program, and should be recognized as legitimate research in the promotion and tenure process.

SECTION 7. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Multiple assessment methods are used to monitor program performance. These methods are designed to evaluate the program's progress towards meeting its stated goals, and ultimately, fulfilling its mission statement.

7.1 Program Goals.

Program goals are set by the MPA Faculty Committee. Goals are presented, discussed, amended, and approved at the first meeting of the MPA Faculty Committee in the fall semester. These goals become the basis for the annual program evaluation. When a goal is set, an appropriate method of measuring goal achievement will be identified. Goals which cannot be measured will not be set. At a minimum, programmatic and student learning goals will be set.

7.2 Assessing Student Learning

In addition to course grades, the following tools are used to assess student learning. Data collected from all of these sources will be used in conducting the annual program evaluation.

7.2.a. Capstone paper. The capstone paper requires students to integrate what they have learned over the course of their participation in the program. Thus, the capstone paper is an ideal venue for evaluating student learning. Certification of successful completion demonstrates that the student has mastered the material presented in the program.

7.2.b. Portfolio assessment. Throughout the course of the MPA program, students submit materials for inclusion in their portfolios. In addition, the MPA Director will arrange for an outside expert to review all portfolios every five years. The purpose of such review is to ensure that the program is providing students with the quality of education they deserve.

7.2.c. Agency evaluation of service-learning projects. Faculty who engage in service-learning projects are required to solicit feedback from the agency benefiting from the project. This feedback provides another valuable tool for assessing student learning in a particular course.

7.2.d. Agency evaluation of intern performance. Agency evaluation of student intern performance is another valuable way of assessing a student's progress in mastering the applied skills taught in the MPA program.

7.2.e. Student feedback. At the end of each fall and spring semester, students evaluate each course and its instructor. This feedback is provided to the appropriate faculty member following each semester.

7.2.f. Graduate feedback. Graduates of the program are surveyed through the use of an exit survey. The questionnaire, which is completed by graduates in the same month in which they receive their degrees, is designed to elicit student evaluation of the curriculum content and instructional effectiveness of the entire program of study. In addition, program graduates are

periodically surveyed to get their evaluation of the program when more time has elapsed, and they have had the opportunity to observe how the program has affected their careers and job performance.

7.2.g. Student publications and participation in conferences. Publication of student research in appropriate trade or peer-reviewed journals, coupled with presentation of such work at academic conferences, is another important measure of students' mastery of knowledge in the discipline.

7.3 Assessing Curriculum

In addition to using the evaluation tools above, the adequacy of curriculum is assessed in three other ways.

7.3.a. Community Advisory Board evaluation. The Community Advisory Board will be requested to form a subcommittee to evaluate the curriculum at least every three years. This evaluation will be based on their expert opinion of the relevance of the courses offered to the current practice of the discipline. The results of these evaluations will be considered by the MPA Faculty Committee in its curriculum development decisions.

7.3.b. Survey of Local Public and Nonprofit Managers. Every three years, the MPA Director will survey local public and nonprofit managers as a further measure to ensure that the curriculum stays relevant to the needs of the region. The results of these evaluations will be considered by the MPA Faculty Committee in its curriculum development decisions.

7.3.c. Benchmarking. Every three years, the MPA Director will evaluate course offerings, admission standards, and exit requirements from other institutions in the region that are similar in size and mission to Augusta State. The results of this review will be considered by the MPA Faculty Committee in its curriculum development and policy decisions.

7.4 Other Assessment Methods.

The MPA Director will use other appropriate methods to assess progress towards program goals. The precise method will be determined based on the goal. For example, if the goal is to "increase enrollment by X%," then enrollment figures become the appropriate assessment tool.

7.5 Program Evaluation.

Each spring, a designated MPA faculty member will conduct an evaluation of the program's progress towards achieving its goals and its compliance with NASPAA standards. The results of this evaluation will be presented to the MPA Faculty Committee at the first

meeting in the fall semester. These results will then be used to adjust goals, create new goals, modify curriculum or program policies, or take other steps needed to move the program towards goal achievement.

SECTION 8. COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

The MPA Community Advisory Board is established as a consultative body which lends expertise to the degree program, and it will serve as an advisory panel on the program's policies and operations. The Community Advisory Board interacts with the MPA Director, the Chair of the Department of Political Science, the Dean of the Pamplin College of Arts and Sciences, and the President of the University in its advisory and consultative roles.

8.1 Purpose of the Community Advisory Board

The purpose of the Community Advisory Board is to assist the MPA program in fulfilling its mission statement. Specifically, the board's role is to assist in 1) designing curriculum that will help the program and its graduates meet regional needs for professionals in the discipline, 2) locating appropriate internship and applied research opportunities, 3) promoting the program, 4) providing practitioner insight into faculty selection, and 5) evaluating program performance.

8.2 Composition of the Community Advisory Board

The Community Advisory Board shall consist of at least nine members. At least five of the board members shall be holders of Master of Public Administration degrees, either from Augusta State University or from other institutions. At least six of the board members shall be administrators in public or non-profit sector work settings.

8.3 Method of Appointment of the Community Advisory Board

At least six of the Community Advisory Board members will be nominated by the MPA Faculty Committee of the MPA Program, at least two members will be nominated by the Department of Political Science, and one board membership slot is reserved for a representative of the program's alumni. In the event any vacancy occurs, the appointing authority who initially appointed the member whose position is now vacant shall fill such vacancy. The Board shall elect its Chairperson and adopt such by-laws as it may deem necessary to perform its mission.

8.4 Terms of Service of the Community Advisory Board

After the initial establishment of the board, the term of office shall be three years. The members of the charter board will serve terms which differ in length so that there will be some continuity after the initial three years and the board can avoid a complete turnover in membership.

8.5 Scheduling of Meetings of the Community Advisory Board

The Community Advisory Board will meet *at least* two times per academic year. The fall meeting will take place in October or November, and the spring meeting will take place in March or April. The meetings can take place either on campus or at another location in the community. The meetings will be called by the board chairperson.

8.6 Liaison with the MPA Program

Staff assistance to the Community Advisory Board will be provided by the Director of the Master of Public Administration Program and the Department of Political Science. Staff assistance consists of issuing meeting notices and the preparation of agenda items as assigned by the board chairperson; preparation of reports as needed; and other tasks which may arise.

8.7 Board Reports and Activities

The Community Advisory Board may prepare such written reports as it deems necessary and appropriate from time to time. It may direct its reports and recommendations to the MPA Program Director, the Chair of the Department of Political Science, the Dean of the Pamplin College of Arts and Sciences, or to President of the University. The Board may wish to schedule meetings with MPA student classes or groups in order to find out their perspectives on various matters. The board may deem it appropriate to sponsor or host sessions at which MPA students meet practitioners and community leaders, or provide opportunities wherein students could visit work sites and interview public managers who are engaged in the types of skill areas in which students hope to work (human resources management, budgeting, planning functions, information technology).