

Public Administration (M.P.A.)

Degree Offered: M.P.A.
Director: Dr. Michael Howell-Moroney
Phone: (205) 934-9019
E-mail: mpa@uab.edu
Web site: <http://www.uab.edu/mpa>

Faculty

Janet M. Bronstein, Professor (Health Care Organization and Policy): Health services utilization, health policy, community-based organizations; Co-coordinator of M.P.A.-M.P.H. degree program, School of Public Health.

Nevbahar Ertas, Assistant Professor (Government): Public policy, public and nonprofit budgeting, program evaluation.

Akhlaque U. Haque, Associate Professor (Government): Public administration theory, geographic information systems (GIS), information management, technology and governance, health policy.

Michael Howell-Moroney, Associate Professor (Government): Research methodology, statistics, urban policy and administration, community development.

Timothy Smith, Instructor (Government): Public administration theory, public law, human resource management and health policy.

Adjunct Faculty

Sam Gaston, MPA. City Manager, Mountain Brook: City and county management, state and local government.

Ellyn Grady, MPA. Senior Vice President, Agency Impact and Resource Development, United Way of Central AL: Nonprofit management.

Erin Melaney, MPA. Development Director, Girls Inc. of Central Alabama: Fundraising and marketing.

Sarah Newell, MPA. Vice President, Agency Impact Operations, United Way of Central Alabama: Program evaluation.

Joseph Packa, MPA. Service Area Executive (retired), American Red Cross Southeast Area: Nonprofit management and health, strategic planning.

MPA Program Mission

In line with the mission of the University, the MPA program is committed to excellence in graduate education through teaching, research and service. The program focuses on

building the next generation of responsible decision makers by enhancing their intellectual capacities through knowledge and skills provided within the NASPAA-based MPA curriculum. The Master of Public Administration Program prepares individuals for positions of leadership in the public and nonprofit sectors. It is a professional graduate degree for both pre-career students and in-service administrators. The program is designed to develop the insights and skills needed to plan and formulate policy, and to organize, manage, and implement programs and operations. The MPA program is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration ([NASPAA](#)). Its Board of Advisors consists of internal and external stakeholders comprised of community members, alumni and students.

The MPA curriculum is designed to ensure that students achieve competency in five domains:

- To lead and manage in public governance;
- To participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- To articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Degree Requirements

Students in the MPA program must complete a total of **39 semester hours** or the equivalent, with an overall grade average of at least B. The curriculum features a 9 course core sequence, plus 4 specialization/elective courses in either of two tracks; Nonprofit Management or Public Management and Planning. Students without professional public service experience are required to do a three hour internship in addition to required coursework. Previous graduate work at UAB or another NASPAA accredited MPA program may be credited toward the degree if it is directly applicable. Students may select the thesis option or the non-thesis option.

Joint Degree and Certificate Programs

- For students who are interested in both public administration and the delivery of public health services, a coordinated [MPA/MPH dual degree](#) is offered.
- For students who are interested in both public administration and the law, a coordinated [MPA/J.D dual degree](#) is offered
- For students interested in criminal justice and public administration a coordinated [MPA/MSJ dual degree](#) is offered.
- For non-traditional students interested in managing nonprofit organizations the program offers a [Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management](#).

Admission Requirements

Because of its multi-disciplinary nature, persons from all undergraduate majors are considered for admission to the program. The program adheres to a standardized admission score criterion based on the candidate's GPA and GRE scores. The formula

for the admission score is (Undergraduate GPA * 100) + (Average GRE verbal and quantitative).

- A combined score of 800 or higher is required for full admission.
- Candidates may be accepted on probation if the standardized admission score is between 700 and 799.
- Candidates with scores below 700 are not accepted in the program.

Three letters of reference are also required. Application for admission should be made online through the UAB Graduate School website <http://www.uab.edu/graduate> (UAB, Birmingham, Alabama 35294-1150; telephone 205-934-8227) Admissions will be made fall and spring semester. Deadlines for submitting application for admission are listed on the UAB Graduate School website.

Additional Information:

Deadline for Entry Term(s):	Each semester
Deadline for All Application Materials to be in the Graduate School Office:	Fall: July 1 Spring: November 1 Summer: April 1
Number of Evaluation Forms Required:	Three
Entrance Tests	GRE (TOEFL and TWE also required for international applicants whose native language is not English.)

Financial Aid

The Department of Government has a limited number of graduate assistantships awarded on a competitive basis, which can be awarded during any semester as vacancies occur. The Department has two scholarships which are awarded on a competitive basis each spring. Other financial resources are available through the Office of Student Financial Aid.

Curriculum

A total of 39 hours are required to complete the MPA program. For pre-career students an additional 3 credit hours of internship (20 hours/week) is also required. A full time student, taking 3 courses per semester, plus one additional course over the summer, should be able to complete the program within two years. All courses are offered in the evenings to accommodate working professionals.

Core Courses: All students are required to take the following nine courses:

- MPA 600 Ethics and Morality in Public Service
- MPA 601 The Public Policymaking Process
- MPA 602 Administrative Theory and Behavior
- MPA 603 Public and Nonprofit Budgeting
- MPA 604 Human Resources Management

MPA 605	Information Technology for Government
MPA 606	Foundations of Public Administration Research
MPA 607	Quantitative Methods for Public Administration*
MPA 697	Graduate Research Paper (Capstone)**

*Pre-requisite MPA 606 (Foundations of Public Administration Research)

**Should be taken last term. Not required for students pursuing thesis option

Specializations

Students should select a specialization based upon their career goals and interests. The specializations are **Nonprofit Management** or **Public Management & Planning**. Students must take three courses in their specialization. In addition to three specialization courses, students must take one elective course. Generalists must take (2) courses from each specialization.

Nonprofit Management Specialization Requirements (choose 3 courses)

Students interested in improving their organizational management, fundraising and grant management skills for nonprofits should select this specialization. This specialization prepares students for a wide range of careers within the nonprofit sector including middle and upper management positions, fundraising and development, grant management and program management/evaluation.

MPA 667	Public and Nonprofit Law
MPA 671	Marketing and Fundraising
MPA 672	Nonprofit Management
MPA 674	GIS for Managers
MPA 678	Strategic Planning
MPA 684	Grants Management
MPA 689	Program Evaluation
MPA 691	Community Development

Public Management and Planning Specialization Requirements (choose 3 courses)

Students interested in public management or planning should select this specialization. This specialization prepares students for a wide variety of positions including federal, state and local government management, budget and financial management, planning, economic development, community development, program analysis and evaluation.

MPA 662	State and Local Government Administration
MPA 667	Public and Nonprofit Law
MPA 674	GIS for Managers
MPA 678	Strategic Planning
MPA 681	Local Government Planning
MPA 689	Program Evaluation
MPA 695	Community Health Mapping

Generalist MPA Degree (2 courses from each specialization)

As an alternative to selecting one of the above specializations, students may pursue a generalist MPA degree. This degree should be chosen if the student desires a broadly based degree and some familiarity with subjects in each of the specializations. Students who desire a public administration education transferable to many different public or nonprofit settings may want to take this course of study. To complete this degree, students must take the core curriculum and at least two (2) required courses from each of the two specializations.

Graduation Research Paper and Thesis Options

During the last semester of study, students opting for the non-thesis (Plan II) must register for MPA 697, Graduation Research Paper, and successfully complete a graduation research paper. Such a paper will require the student to synthesize material learned over the course of the program.

Students taking the thesis option (Plan I) must take three hours of Independent Study under the guidance of the thesis chair and six thesis hours.

Internships and Placement

Students may apply for an internship placement at any time. A few paid opportunities do arise, although the majority of internships are non-paid. Typical placements are in city and county government, planning departments, public health agencies, social service agencies, state government agencies, and various nonprofit organizations. The Department has placed several students in the prestigious Presidential Management Internship Program, which provides an excellent opportunity for eventual employment in the federal government. Students are also encouraged to use the services of the UAB Student Development Office in the University Center for career planning and placement. The faculty in the program also assists students in job placement. Please [click here](#) to see what some of our graduates are doing now.

JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMS

Coordinated MPA/MPH Program

The MPA/MPH is designed to train individuals for administrative positions in public health and related health organizations. The Master of Public Administration degree prepares students for careers as administrators in public and nonprofit agencies, and the Master of Public Health provides a background in public health principles and programs. Students must apply and be accepted into both programs, meeting each program's entry requirements. Students are required to complete a total of 60-64 semester hours for the coordinated degree. Core requirements of 21 hours from the MPA program and 39-43 hours from the MPH program are required. Full-time students should be able to complete all degree requirements within three years.

Coordinated MPA/JD Program

The MPA program at UAB and the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University offer a coordinated MPA/JD program. The offering of this dual degree reflects recognition of the complex interrelationship between the legal system, public policy analysis, and public management. It will be particularly applicable to those pursuing careers in government and/or public interest law. Students must apply and be admitted to the MPA and JD programs separately. The requirements for each degree must be met. Close communication with both programs is required. Depending on prior experience, a field placement may be required.

Coordinated MPA/MSJ Program

The MPA/MSJ is targeted toward individuals who wish to gain competencies in public management and the theory/practice of criminal justice. Students must apply and be accepted into both programs, meeting each program's entry requirements. Students are required to complete a total of 60 semester hours for the coordinated degree. Core requirements of 24 hours from the MPA program and 18 hours from the MSJ program; an additional 12 hours of electives, 3 hours of internship and a 3 hour capstone course are required. Full-time students should be able to complete all degree requirements within three years.

MPA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

An active alumni association welcomes graduates of the program into membership. The association makes both advisory and financial contributions to the program and seeks to elevate the level of professionalism in public administration through a variety of projects and services.

Course Descriptions

Public Administration (MPA)

600. Administrative Ethics. Ethical and moral foundations of public service behavior. 3 hours.

601. The Public Policymaking Process. Public policy as a decision-making process. Examines environmental and organizational factors, the choice of alternatives, and the implementation and evaluation of public policy, with applied references to specific functional areas, e.g., housing, pollution, energy, and transportation. 3 hours.

602. Administrative Theory and Behavior. Theories of organization, management, and administration. Examines both institutional and behavioral elements of organizations as they apply to public, private, and nonprofit agencies. Covers administrative and organization behavior, decision-making and democratic values, along with a treatment of bureaucratic practices and behavior. 3 hours.

603. Public and Nonprofit Budgeting. Examines the institutions, principles and techniques of governmental budgeting, including the practices and fundamental concepts of public budgeting, the budgeting process and financial management. 3 hours.

604. Human Resources Management. Examines the major concepts, theories, procedures and themes needed for effective management of human resources in the public and nonprofit sectors. Emphasis is on the urban and sub-national settings. Topics may include merit and civil service systems, organized public labor, recruitment, classification, performance appraisal, disciplinary and grievance procedures, training and staff development, diversity and anti-discrimination policy and strategies, ethics/morality and personnel law. 3 hours.

605. Information Management for Government. Theory and applications of information management, technology applications and policy. Focus is on social, organizational, political and constitutional impacts of information today. Emphasizes policy and applications related to building knowledge economy, E-government applications and geographic information systems. 3 hours.

606. Foundations of PA Research. An introduction to research methodology presenting quasi-experimental and experimental research designs, exposition of qualitative and basic survey methods, and basic data analysis. 3 hours.

607. Quantitative Methods for PA. Using a pragmatic and applied approach, this course introduces statistical techniques used to analyze data in the social sciences including simple and multiple regression and nonlinear models. Pre-requisite MPA 606. 3 hours.

662. State and Local Government Administration. This course is designed to introduce students to the study of state and local government administration. Introduces key concepts related to state and local government political structures and institutions; regional, state and county economic performance and state/local government finance. 3 hours.

667. Public and Nonprofit Law. Explanation of law in society and the legal setting of public administration. Examination of substantive areas of the study of law including regulatory process, administrative adjudication, the administrative procedures acts, administrative due process, judicial review, liability, and citizen's rights. 3 hours.

671. Marketing and Fundraising. The use of marketing and fundraising strategies for nonprofits. Incorporates both theory and practice as students learn the fundamentals of marketing and resource development and apply them to hands-on projects.

672. Nonprofit Management. The day-to-day challenges faced by managers of nonprofit agencies, including the challenge of fund raising, balancing competing values as related to efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. 3 hours.

674. GIS for Managers. Examines the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) using GIS software. It integrates theory and socioeconomic applications of GIS in the public and nonprofit sector. 3 hours.

678. **Strategic Planning.** Presents the strategic planning process as it is utilized in contemporary settings. Focuses on how the strategic planning process is applied in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. 3 hours.

681. **Local Government Planning.** This course examines the historical roots of modern land use planning and explores contemporary issues in planning such as sprawl and smart growth. 3 hours.

684. **Grants Management.** Covers the essentials of grant-writing and the management of grants. 3 hours.

689. **Program Evaluation.** Analytic tools for evaluating public and nonprofit programs and services. 3 hours.

691. **Community Development.** Examines the evolution of the modern community development from its early roots in community organizing. The course presents several models of successful community development and covers many areas of relevant policy and interest including neighborhood revitalization, housing development, social capital formation and urban sustainability. 3 hours.

693. **Internship in Public Administration.** Supervised field placement in public or nonprofit agency for directed work experience arranged by the MPA Director and as per the guidelines in the internship manual. 3 hours.

695. **Special Topics in Public Administration.** Special topics seminar based on the research and substantive interests of the MPA faculty and students. 3 hours.

696. **Independent Study in Public Administration.** One-on-one learning experience between student and an instructor. Permission of Program Director required. 1 - 6 hours.

697. **Graduation Research Paper.** Graduation Research Paper- Capstone project. Permission of Program Director required. 3 hours.

698. **Internship in Public Administration.** Supervised field placement in public or nonprofit agency for directed work experience arranged by the internship coordinator and as per the guidelines in the internship manual. Permission of Program Director required. 3 hours.

699. **Thesis Research.** Credit for research and writing of thesis. Permission of Program Director required. 3-6 hours.

Contact Information

For additional information refer to the web site of the UAB MPA program: www.uab.edu/mpa. Inquiries concerning program admission or other questions about the program should be directed to the MPA Program Director:

Dr. Michael Howell-Moroney
Associate Professor and Director

Graduate Studies in Public Administration
Department of Government
University of Alabama at Birmingham
HHB416, 1530 3rd Avenue South
Birmingham, Alabama 35294-3350.
Telephone (205) 934-9019 or email: mpa@uab.edu

Last updated *8/10/2011*