UNIVERSITY of ALASKA SOUTHEAST

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Graduate Student Handbook

Greetings from the Master of Public Administration (MPA) Faculty & Staff

Welcome to new students, and congratulations to those approaching graduation. We are proud of our program and excited to have you all be part of our diverse MPA family of students, staff, faculty, and alumni. It is a great opportunity for you to receive not only your education but also to gain a broad expanded professional network and lifelong friends. This handbook provides the information and guidance needed to complete the MPA degree. Our mission, values, program level competencies and learning goals, and expected student learning outcomes are all included. The requirements and various procedures for the MPA degree are also listed.

The handbook further includes information about the Higher Education Leadership Graduate Certificate, and links to additional information on courses and completing your journey at UAS. Note the MPA handbook is supplemental to policies, processes, requirements, and related information found in the [UAS Academic Catalog](#) and other official university governing documents; if there is a conflict with this handbook they will govern.

Revitalization. In 2024, UAS launched a process to update and refresh the graduate curriculum. The revision has been guided by our program advisory board which consists of alumni and industry experts. UAS Master in Public Administration courses are designed to prepare students for positions of leadership and responsibility. We seek to open doors to job opportunities, networking, and career advancement. Utilizing online technologies, students can participate in the MPA program from their home community.

Partnerships. The UAS MPA program has established formal cooperative agreements with other master programs within the UA system. In addition to the MPA program's course offering, now the UAS MPA students can take advisor approved electives from online master programs at UAF, including their Master of Business Administration, and Master of Security and Disaster Management. UAS MPA students may also take advisor approved classes from the Master of Public Policy at UAA (up to 15 credits) and in the UAF and UAS developed Master of Marine Policy.

The Future. We are excited about creating an educational journey that gives you knowledge, skills, and competency for the present and future job market, but that also inspires you to continue learning, The MPA program is a great stepping stone not only for the next stage of your career, but also for you to be a successful public servant, which is a truly honorable role in our society. When you finish, you will join the program's former students in governments, agencies, non-profits, and non governmental organizations (NGOs) in the US and around the world.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, we wish you much success and joy in your MPA program educational journey, learning experience, and the next stage of your career.

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INTRODUCTION

Description

The public sector plays a vital role in the economy of Alaska. As of early 2025, one fifth of Alaska's GDP is directly due to the public sector and over a quarter of Alaska's employment is provided by the public sector. For many businesses, the public sector is the largest customer base around. Whether students work for themselves, a business, or in the public sector, understanding how the government works will be critical to student success. We seek to provide students with added flexibility and additional opportunities to customize the degree to their interests by removing the former concentrations. This ensures that we are incorporating industry input to the curriculum to keep it fresh, relevant, and competitive for our student body. Within the 36 credit hours to completion, there are opportunities for new elective courses and to enroll in classes in other graduate programs throughout the UA system. This ensures that each student can create a pathway that is relevant to their specific career goals.

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) is a professional management degree for individuals interested in public service careers. The MPA deals with management under current political realities and public interest goals. The MPA is designed to assist students in developing the skills and techniques leaders and managers use to design, implement, and evaluate policies, projects, and programs that promote ethical, democratic governance while addressing organizational, human resource, and budgetary challenges.

UAS also offers a **12-credit Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Policy & Administration**. Higher Education Policy & Administration is a key driving force in our quest for systemic-level educational excellence and evidence-based change in support of student success and achievement. In this four course graduate certificate students are introduced to a survey of the core policy and public administrative functions related to the delivery of public education. Students go on to build foundational skills in the key areas of related education policy and law. Students can customize this certificate to their specific area of interest and professional development with the opportunity to choose one course from a list of additional electives. This degree is a useful, strategic complement to the study of other disciplines for purposes of career readiness and intentions for future advancement into organizational leadership roles. Students can choose to begin with this certificate and all 12 credits can be applied to the electives in the student's MPA degree should they decide to go on.

Program Mission

The University of Alaska Southeast Master of Public Administration program prepares students to be competent, ethical, and effective public and nonprofit administrators and leaders for a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry. The MPA program is committed to practitioner-oriented instruction, and flexible and convenient online learning.

Values

The core public service values of the MPA Program are reflected in the commitments articulated in the Code of Ethics of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA):

1. Serve the public interest
2. Respect the constitution and the law
3. Demonstrate personal integrity
4. Promote ethical organizations
5. Strive for professional excellence
6. Value equity, inclusion, and dignity for all

The Master of Public Administration Degree Program - Why Get an MPA?

The University of Alaska Southeast Master of Public Administration program prepares students to be competent, ethical, and effective public and nonprofit administrators and leaders for a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry. Whether you are in the midst of your career or just out of college, graduate school might be the next step for you to pursue. This may be one of the most important decisions of your professional life. Part of the decision is weighing the short-term costs of graduate studies against long-term benefits. As more and more people acquire undergraduate degrees, the top positions in organizations are being filled by individuals who have further developed their understanding of their field through a master's degree. The MPA degree program at the University of Alaska Southeast is committed to practitioner-oriented instruction, flexible and convenient e-Learning, and courses relevant to students in Alaska, the Yukon Territory and beyond!

Why an MPA is a Great Educational Investment

The public sector plays a vital role in the economy of our region:
● One-fifth of Alaska's GDP and over a third of Yukon's is directly due to the public sector.
● Over a quarter of Alaska's employment and over forty percent of Yukon's is provided by the public sector.

For many businesses, the public sector is the most extensive customer base!
● Whether you work for yourself, a business, or in the public sector, understanding how government works will be critical to your success.

The public sector builds the critical social and economic infrastructure that makes Alaska and Yukon such beautiful places to live:
● There are fantastic career opportunities in various areas, such as technology and telecommunications, transportation, energy, natural resources, education/training, and social services.
● Having an MPA will help you develop your career in these and other areas.

Networking is an essential part of career development.
● In the MPA program, you will have the opportunity to meet and learn from public sector leaders across Alaska, the Yukon Territory and beyond.
● Your contacts can help you be more effective in your job and help develop your career.

You can make a difference
● The MPA program teaches the value of community and the importance of public service.

Why UAS?

The MPA at the UAS is tailored for busy public and non-profit managers who seek to enhance their credentials and broaden their horizons. The UAS MPA program comes to you where you live and work in and is delivered through synchronous and asynchronous classes. In the MPA program, you have the opportunity to access a quality master's program learning from home, engage with a community of public administrators through a stable and supportive e-Learning environment, and build relationships with peers and faculty lasting far beyond the semester and graduation. Having an MPA opens doors for career advancement possibilities.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Design

The MPA degree prepares students for leadership at all levels of government and in non‑profit organizations. It is designed for working professionals who seek to increase knowledge, competencies, workplace skills, and credentials in public administration. The MPA program combines the relationships and structure of the traditional classroom with the accessibility of a distance-delivered program to create a stable, supportive, and high-quality education. The MPA program is committed to practitioner-oriented instruction, and flexible and convenient e-Learning.

Program Goals: Developing Workplace Competencies

The MPA Program's learning goals are based on the program mission, our public service values, and competencies required by professional standards (NASPAA – Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration). A set of more detailed student learning outcomes for each of our courses are associated with our program-level competencies.

The MPA curriculum is developed to include required workplace competencies in five domains, including the ability to:

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

Program Level Student Learning Outcomes

Upon graduating from the MPA program, students will be able to learn, value, and demonstrate the following:
1. Identify and analyze a current issue in public policy or public administration through integrating relevant theory and practice.
2. Integrate knowledge across public administration areas and select and apply appropriate frameworks to identify and address public administration problems and opportunities.

3. Examine specific topics in public administration through the lens of core MPA program areas, especially addressing the interconnected nature of public organizations.
4. Integrate findings on democracy, including the political environment and civic engagement, using multiple perspectives and praxis as a framework to analyze a public program or organization.
5. Demonstrate professional writing skills, effective communication, and the ability to present, using best practices in public administration.

Accreditation

The University of Alaska Southeast is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). The UAS MPA program is an Institutional Member of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Institutional Membership provides access to their resources, the ability to seek their guidance and to align evaluation of the MPA program with national standards. Due to the size of the MPA program, we are ineligible for national accreditation with NASPAA.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

MPA Requirements

The UAS MPA requires 36 credits consisting of eight required courses (including a final capstone), and four electives. Each of the listed classes is worth three (3) credit hours. For a complete list of the program and descriptions of each course, please see the [UAS Program Catalog](#).

Required Courses (24 Semester Hours)
- PADM S601 Introduction to Public Administration
- PADM S604 Applied Research Methods
- PADM S614 Public Policy and Accountability
- PADM S616 Leadership & Ethics
- PADM S622 Human Resources & Organizational Development
- PADM S628 Public Financial Management
- PADM S688 Program Evaluation
- PADM S690 Public Administration Capstone

Electives: In addition to the required courses, students must take up to 4 electives (12 Semester Hours), from the following sample list of options:

- PADM 650 Strategic Planning
- PADM 697 Independent Study
- PADM 691 Internship
- PADM 698 Directed Research
- PADM 662 Governance/Board of Directors
- PADM 663 Public Social Marketing

- PADM 661 Social Entrepreneurship
- PADM 693 Special Topics
- PADM 660 Social Capital: Networks and Community Development
- PADM 611 Ethics and Public Administration
- PADM 613 Public Sector Employment Law
- PADM S651 Introduction to Higher Education
- PADM S655 Higher Education and Public Policy
- PADM S657 Higher Education Law
- PADM S625 Economics & Public Policy
- PADM S635 Natural Resource Policy
- Other advisor approved graduate electives*

*The UAS MPA program has established cooperation with some other master programs in the University of Alaska system. The MPA students can choose some of the advisor approved courses as electives from the following programs in the UA system:
- UAA – MPA/MPP (Master of Public Administration/ Master of Public Policy)
- UAF – MBA (Master of Business Administration)
- UAF – MSDM (Master of Security and Disaster Management).

Graduate Certificate Requirements

The UAS 12-credit Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Policy & Administration has three required courses and one elective. Each of the listed classes is worth three (3) credit hours. For a complete list of the program and descriptions of each course, please see the [UAS Program Catalog](#).

Required courses (9 hours)
- PADM S651 Introduction to Higher Education
- PADM S655 Higher Education and Public Policy
- PADM S657 Higher Education Law

Elective - select one additional course from this list (3 hours)
- PADM 662 Governance/Board of Directors
- PADM 663 Public Social Marketing
- PADM 693 Special Topics
- Other advisor approved graduate level electives

INNOVATIVE ONLINE PROGRAM

How We Teach: The Virtual Classroom

MPA classes are taught all online in either a synchronous or asynchronous format. Synchronous classes are webcast through the Internet-based online meetings application Zoom and students participate in a live, dynamic classroom each week, interacting with faculty and students from across the regions. Each class meets weekly from 6:00 – 9:00 pm Alaska Standard Time (AKST), with options for asynchronous participation as well. Broadband (DSL/Cable) is highly recommended for

TV-quality video. Anything less than broadband or satellite is not sufficient for most students' needs. Refer to the Technology & Help Desk section for information about the required technology.

UAS Online & Blackboard

UAS Online - www.uas.alaska.edu/online is the main portal for current students, providing access to Blackboard and UAS courses home sites, resources, student portfolios, and a personalized dashboard. Once logged into the [learning management system](#), the main page provides a link to the course home sites for classes a student is registered for in a given semester. It should be noted that if the student bookmarks the individual page of the course, they may not have full access to all the changes that take place in that course within a given semester.

By clicking on the link for course home sites, a student is connected to Blackboard, UAS' course management system. This is the primary method for instructors in the program to communicate course expectations to their students. Blackboard provides students access to the course syllabus, class assignments, class announcements, and other resources throughout the semester. The e-mail address listed in the student's profile on Blackboard is the primary way instructors will communicate with students. Students are responsible for providing current information for instructors to disseminate pertinent course information.

ADMISSION

Enrollment in the MPA & Graduate Certificate

UAS reviews the complete application packet submitted by the student to determine admission status. Work experience demonstrated on a resume, and a statement of professional objectives are considered. Standardized tests, such as the GRE or GMAT, are not requirements for admission to the UAS MPA degree program. These programs allow students to take up to two courses before applying to ensure a good fit. Admission to the program must be in progress before registering for the degree program's third course.

Apply for Admission

Applications to the MPA program are accepted year-round. All of the following steps are required:

✔ Submit an online application and application fee. The online application can be found at UA Online https://uaonline.alaska.edu. Upon accessing the UA Online page, click on Apply for Admission or Check on Status of Application. From there, follow the links for whether you are a Current/Prior Student or New Student.

✔ Submit your official academic transcript showing the completion of a baccalaureate degree. To obtain your official academic transcript, contact the university from which your degree was granted and request that they send an official transcript to the UAS Admissions office (address listed below).

✔ Submit a current Professional Resume or Vitae

✔ Submit a statement of professional objectives (approximately 1,000 words) describing past public and non-profit experiences, outlining your professional goals, and stating how the MPA program will help you achieve your professional objectives. Please reference all four of the prompts below in your statement. Remember, the statement is a formal academic essay. You will not just list the questions and respond; you will need to address the prompts in the context of a cohesive essay discussing your professional goals.

- Please describe your academic background. Make sure you discuss any coursework that would have prepared you for master's level courses in Public Administration.
- Please describe any experience you may have had in public administration (including non-profit administration).
- Please explain why you want to pursue an MPA, including how the degree would influence your career path.
- How did you hear about the UAS MPA program?

✔ Submit contact information for three references (at least one must be professional).

Submit materials electronically through the admissions portal.

For Non-Degree Seeking Students

Students may take up to two courses before applying for admission to a program. However, a student ID is still required to register. To obtain a UA Student ID #, if you do not already have one, first apply as a "non-degree seeking" student through the UAS Admissions page.

TUITION AND FEES

The tuition and fees students will be responsible for will depend on the number of classes taken in a given semester. For the tuition and fees schedule, please refer to the UAS Academic Catalog for the current academic year and reference the Fees & Expenses section. Additional information is available at UAS Financial Aid. Tuition prices vary based on a student's Resident or Non-resident status. The Resident tuition rate applies to State of Alaska, Yukon, and Northwest Territories residents.

PLANNING YOUR DEGREE

There is no mandatory order of classes that students will take. However, there are course sequencing issues that should be paid attention to. Upon entering the degree, students should meet with the MPA Program Coordinator or their Faculty Advisor or Student Advising Coordinator to create a tentative degree plan. This plan is structured to enable students to develop an individualized roadmap to keep track of what classes they need to take that will account for course sequencing. An individual degree plan will help ensure the most productive course of action for graduation. Students should remember that the average amount of time expected to be devoted to a single class per week is between 12 and 15 hours. Depending on the family, work, and other obligations, you will have to budget your time
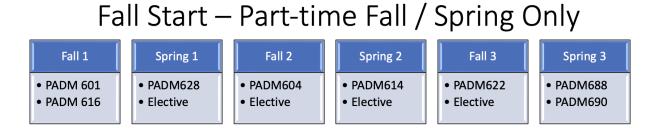
well. The primary advice is to take the introductory course (PADM 601) in the first semester of attendance and the capstone (PADM 690) for the last semester in the program.

Table 1: Required Course Offering Schedule

COURSE	SUMMER	FALL	SPRING
PADM S601 - Intro to PADM	X	X	X
PADM S604 – Research Methods		X	
PADM S614 - Public Policy & Accountability			X
PADM S616 - Leadership and Ethics	X	X	
PADM S622 – HR and Org Devel		X	
PADM S628 - Public Financial Mgmt			X
PADM S688 - Program Evaluation	X		X
PADM S690 - Capstone	X	X	X
PADM S651 - Intro to Higher Education		X	
PADM S655 - Higher Ed & Public Policy			X
PADM S657 – Higher Education Law	X		

The MPA program can be customized to how quickly or slowly a student would like to move through the program, and when you'd like to begin taking courses. Some students prefer to take classes only during the fall and spring semesters, whereas others prefer to go year round. If you take 2 classes per term, you can expect to complete the program in six semesters. Here are examples of potential sequencing options to move through the program on your pace, starting whichever semester you'd like to:

Figure 1: Options for students only enrolling during Fall and Spring

Fall Start – Part-time Fall / Spring Only

Fall 1	Spring 1	Fall 2	Spring 2	Fall 3	Spring 3
• PADM 601 • PADM 616	• PADM628 • Elective	• PADM604 • Elective	• PADM614 • Elective	• PADM622 • Elective	• PADM688 • PADM690

Spring Start – Part-time Fall / Spring Only

Spring 1	Fall 1	Spring 2	Fall 2	Spring 3	Fall 3
• PADM601 • PADM628	• PADM604 • PADM616	• PADM614 • Elective	• PADM622 • Elective	• PADM688 • Elective	• PADM690 • Elective

Figure 2: Options for students enrolling in courses year-round

Fall Start – Part-time Year Round

Fall 1	Spring 1	Summer 1	Fall 2	Spring 2	Summer 2
• PADM 601 • PADM 616	• PADM628 • Elective	• Elective • Elective	• PADM604 • PADM622	• PADM614 • Elective	• PADM688 • PADM690

Spring Start – Part-time Year Round

Spring 1	Summer 1	Fall 1	Spring 2	Summer 2	Fall 2
• PADM 601 • PADM 628	• Elective • Elective	• PADM604 • PADM622	• PADM614 • Elective	• PADM616 • PADM688	• PADM690 • Elective

Summer Start – Part-time Year Round

Summer 1	Fall 1	Spring 1	Summer 2	Fall 2	Fall 2
• PADM 601 • Elective	• PADM622 • Elective	• PADM614 • PADM628	• PADM616 • Elective	• PADM604 • Elective	• PADM688 • PADM690

NEXT STEPS - ONCE YOU'VE BEEN ADMITTED

Registering for Courses

Students must consult with the MPA Program Coordinator or a faculty member before registering for courses. After receiving approval, students will be cleared to register for courses. Registration will require a UA Student ID # and department approval. You may register for classes several months before class begins. However, all students in the degree program must obtain department approval to be cleared to register for courses. Payment of tuition is not required until the semester starts.

Accessing Your Online Course

Your UAS computer account will be created within 24 hours after registering for classes (or applying for admission). At that time, find your UAS user ID, password, and student number at ELMO. Your user ID and password are for UAS Online. Your student number is permanent and accesses your University records at UAOnline. For tutorials and additional information, visit the Blackboard Course Management site.

Order Books

After logging on to the course home site, there will be a list of the books required for your class on your Blackboard course site and in the course syllabus. Books can be purchased through the [UAS Online Bookstore](#) or through your preferred method of purchasing. You can find the required books in the course Syllabus too. For your protection, order by ISBN number to ensure you have the correct book and edition when ordering from another bookseller. Students should place their orders early to allow time for shipping.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Advising

We encourage all prospective students to meet with the MPA Program Coordinator or Faculty Advisor for academic advising prior to registration. It is highly recommended that admitted students communicate frequently concerning their degree plan.

Disability Support Services

No otherwise qualified individual will be denied reasonable access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated by the University of Alaska because of disability. (See the [University of Alaska Policy on Disabilities](#)). Students with documented disabilities must make an appointment with the DSS coordinator at the start of each semester to determine if academic accommodations are necessary. Qualified students will receive a faculty notification letter outlining necessary academic accommodations. For more information, contact Disability Support Services at (907) 796-6400 or email uas.disabilityservices@alaska.edu.

Financial Aid

The University of Alaska Southeast is committed to providing the best possible financial aid customer service to our students and their families. Graduate students are required to carry at least six credits a semester to qualify for financial aid. For more information about financial aid options please contact a Financial Aid Advisor with the [UAS Financial Aid](#) Department at (907) 796-6255 or by emailing finaid@uas.alaska.edu.

UAS Egan Library

The [Egan Library](#) on the UAS campus provides several different avenues for distance students to access most of the resources provided at the on-campus site. Students in the MPA and graduate certificate program have access to journals and books through both online delivery and through an interlibrary loan program. The online journal searches provide students access to almost all journals subscribed to by the main UAS campus library. In addition, students have access to over 20,000 books via the Electronic Books program. An interlibrary loan system is a free service provided that allows students to order books or journal articles and have them shipped to the student's home. This vast network of libraries helps to create an environment of open access to hard-to-find materials. It

ensures that those students in distance communities have access to the resources necessary to complete the degree.

Students can contact the Egan Library with any questions they may have concerning available resources. Here you will be able to ask questions that will be answered by one of the Egan Library librarians. The library staff is particularly good at responding back to students, so please access this resource for questions you may have.

Technology & Help Desk

Tips for Setting up Your "Virtual Classroom" - Before MPA courses begin, take time to set up your "virtual classroom." You will want to dedicate space, free from distractions at your home or office that is conducive to learning. Your "virtual classroom" will require an internet-connected computer, preferably broadband.

Zoom - Most synchronous classes are delivered through Zoom, a web conferencing platform. To participate in the web conference, you will need to use a designated Zoom link for every course. Students watch and participate in the class in real time through the video, audio, and chat options of the Zoom platform. A headset with a microphone is recommended. If you plan to take numerous e-Learning courses, purchasing a quality headset would be a useful investment.

IT Help Desk - The UAS IT Services Department provides technical support and information via the Help Desk. Please contact the staff at the Help Desk for all your technology and computer setup questions. The Help Desk staff can be contacted at 1-877-465-6400 and uas.helpdesk@alaska.edu.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND LINKS

UAS Website: https://www.uas.alaska.edu/
UAS Admission: https://uas.alaska.edu/apply/
UA Online Services: https://www.alaska.edu/uaonline/
Academic Catalog: https://catalog.uas.alaska.edu/
Academic Calendar: https://uas.alaska.edu/calendar/academic.html
UAS Academic Regulations: https://catalog.uas.alaska.edu/academic-regulations/#text
Students Rights and Responsibilities: https://catalog.uas.alaska.edu/student-rights-responsibilities/
The MPA Program: https://uas.alaska.edu/apply/programs/mpa.html