

Welcome to the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) in the College of Education and Social Sciences (COESS)! If you are a prospective student, this handbook will give you a view of our program's mission, the application process, curriculum, and potential long-term options for someone with an MPA degree. If you have been accepted into the program or are a current student, this handbook details our program requirements and information to help you connect to and be successful within our program.

The MPA at WTAMU is intended for professionals pursuing opportunities for growth and promotion within government and non-profit agencies, as well as for students who wish to pursue graduate training immediately after completion of an undergraduate degree. Courses are offered 100 percent online to suit the needs of both traditional graduate students and working professionals. The program provides training in administration applicable to multiple entities and will offer concentrations in rural/local government and criminal justice.

Students will learn from faculty in public administration theory, public management, public policy, public financial administration, ethics, research methods, and statistics. To expand on the core concepts, students will focus their education in either rural government administration or criminal justice administration or remain on a general public administration track. The rural concentration and online delivery will allow the program to benefit students from the Panhandle region, other rural areas in Texas, and students seeking a specialized master's program nationwide. Flexibility within our program is designed to allow students to cultivate the graduate experience that best meets their needs.

At West Texas A&M, the faculty is student focused and are intent on providing a rewarding graduate experience that advances local governance. We are glad you are considering or have joined us to advance your public administration training!

Sincerely,
Darrell Lovell
MPA Director
West Texas A&M University

Breaking Down the MPA Degree

WTAMU's MPA program is designed to offer flexibility to students regarding their path to obtaining a graduate degree. As a regional, rural serving institution, our faculty and institutional goals are to offer a curriculum that enhances area governance and service by providing a high-level education to those engaging in public service values.

Furthermore, the MPA program is dedicated to addressing issues within rural and local governance and criminal justice with a curriculum that addresses the needs of the student body from the Texas Panhandle and beyond. Our goal is to promote a diverse student population that services students from rural areas, low-income backgrounds, minority groups; students with accessibility needs, and those who are first generation graduate students to experience a quality and inclusive curriculum and program experience. Faculty and staff are dedicated to assessing approaches for course and program inclusivity and accessibility tools that address the needs for all students to integrate into graduate study and achieve an equitable academic experience.

Traditionally, MPA programs are designed to prepare students to take leadership roles in public and non-profit organizations. Our goal is to establish a culture of learning that allows student-practitioners a quality education through collaborative research and inquiry, faculty engagement, and a curriculum that represents the needs and challenges of the public sector.

The program will emphasize five core competencies: ethics, policy, finance, administration, and research methods. Student concentrations can be obtained in local/rural government, criminal justice, and public administration.

Program learning outcomes:

- Students will examine the core theories of public administration related to management and public governance.
- Students will identify and analyze the parts of the public policy process.
- Students will examine the factors and issues facing emergency management at the rural, urban, and state levels.
- Students will be able to conduct financial analyses consistent with the standards of political economy and administration.
- Students will be able to engage and articulate material from a public service perspective.

Accreditation and national objectives:

- Program faculty will be actively engaged in academic research as indicated by publications and working papers, and they will represent a diverse population.
- Students will be recruited from diverse backgrounds to represent the state population.
- Students will have access to online academic success resources provided by WTAMU, including writing, study, research, and library services.

- The program will focus on public governance, service, and management through its core curriculum and research.
- The program will have faculty and a core curriculum that focuses on the advancement of understanding and analyzing public policy.

Financial assistance and estimated cost

As a regional and rural serving institution, WTAMU is committed to offering an affordable graduate experience. Estimated tuition and fees to complete an MPA is \$14,900 for in-state students and \$16,600 for out-of-state students. Potential students can find the tuition and fees schedule at this [link](#).

Financial aid is available to support those students who would not be able to attend WTAMU without assistance. The primary source of this assistance is financial aid, managed by the WTAMU [financial aid office](#). Students seeking financial aid must file a FAFSA application and work with the WTAMU financial aid office. An FAQ page regarding financial aid can be found on the [graduate school website](#).

University scholarships are available based on need and fit. A list of scholarship opportunities is located at this [link](#).

Focus of the MPA

MPA education at WTAMU is designed to be interdisciplinary. The core education will focus on traditional public administration. Development, implementation, and analysis of policy will be integrated into all of the programs, and all graduates will obtain an in-depth understanding of these components. The fully online program will require *36 credit hours—21 credit hours of required courses, 9 hours of prescribed electives in the student's chosen concentration, and 6 hours of free electives or 6 thesis hours with faculty approval.*

To better meet the needs of our students, the program offers three options for students:

1. The *public management concentration* will include courses in administrative theory, data and information management, and government finance. Courses in the public management concentration will focus on traditional management, policy implementation and evaluation, and budgeting concepts.

2. The *rural/local government concentration* will include courses on demographics of rural communities, rural non-profit organizations, and state and local government. This emphasis fits the region surrounding WTAMU – the majority of the 26 counties within the Texas Panhandle are rural. Additionally, the WT125 plan stresses the mission of WTAMU is to meet the needs of these communities as the university strives to become a regional research university. These

factors provide an opportunity to connect the program courses, research, and graduate students with rural needs that are common to areas of the Panhandle of Texas and similar rural regions. For students in the Panhandle and in similar areas around the nation, studying these unique communities and governance issues – such as bridging the digital divide and financial management and state oversight for rural communities – will provide added value to their degree and make graduates attractive to potential employees.

3. The *criminal justice administration concentration* will emphasize criminal justice administration and criminal justice in rural communities. The second unique approach is to pair public administration with criminal justice. Although this approach is not common, it is taking place nationally, most notably at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, but is not a direct focus of any other MPA in Texas currently. Offering a criminal justice curriculum along with traditional MPA courses will prepare students for administrative positions in criminal justice. Students who take this route will receive a concentration designation on the MPA degree. Students who choose to concentrate their graduate work in rural/local governments or criminal justice will receive a notification on their official transcripts.

These concentrations are designed to make our program the most student friendly offered to our students and to provide a high level of utility to government agencies. Students who complete their degree with the rural/local government or criminal justice concentration will have a designation placed on their official transcript.

Administration of the MPA

The MPA program director is the primary point of contact for the program. The director will be the primary contact for questions regarding recruitment, potential admittance into the program, curriculum questions, and the overall policies of the program.

Admissions and Application Requirements

Admissions Calendar

The MPA admissions committee will be made up of the MPA director and two members of the faculty chosen on a rolling basis. Applicants can apply for admission on a rolling basis each semester. The number of students admitted will be determined by student-to-faculty ratio and quality of the candidates. The following dates for submission of admission materials are for guaranteed review of applications:

<u>Semester to be admitted</u>	<u>Priority deadline</u>	<u>Final deadline</u>
Fall	March 15	July 1
Spring	October 15	December 1

Applicants should work to ensure submission of these materials by the preferred deadline. Applications received by the final deadline could be granted immediate admission pending on

program availability or receive admissions for the following semester. An application received after the final deadline will not be considered. Materials will be held in the application system and students can reapply for another semester without paying an additional fee.

Required application materials

Detailed requirements for applying to the MPA at WTAMU are detailed on the program website and in this section. Questions regarding application materials should be directed to the MPA program director. Application materials will be submitted online through the application portal at the [graduate school website](#). An application FAQ is found [here](#).

Minimum application requirements and materials for regular admissions:

- Undergraduate transcripts showing completion of a bachelor's degree with a minimum of a 2.75 GPA overall. An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher is preferred. Students with less than a 3.0 overall GPA with a 3.25 GPA in the last 60 hours will be given consideration.
- Statement of intent/purpose showing the student's intent to study public administration and their goals regarding public service of no more than two (2) pages. These statements can include explanations of public service, job experience, and/or potential areas of research interests as well as a potential intent regarding a concentration.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation (optional). These can be a combination of professional and academic recommendations. At least one letter from a faculty member with knowledge of the student's academic performance is preferred but not required.
- Writing sample that can include any of the following: an academic paper, term paper, publication, or other demonstration of writing ability.
- Official undergraduate transcript(s) from **all** institutions attended.
- If an applicant has completed graduate courses, official graduate transcripts are required.
- International students seeking admission must follow the graduate school requirements and application deadlines.
- The WTAMU MPA is a test-optional program. Students may provide GRE scores if available, but a score is **not required for admissions**. If a GRE score is submitted it will be included in the admissions evaluation.

Types of Admissions

The admissions committee will review applications following both the preferred and final deadlines. Applicants will be assessed holistically, meaning that applicants will be assessed on their entire package and how they fit in the program.

Students who meet all minimum application requirements and are evaluated positively by the admissions committee will be granted regular admissions to the program and will be able to enroll in the program the following semester.

If not admitted, students may receive a conditional acceptance based on availability, which will allow them to enroll in two core classes and “earn” their way into the program by receiving a B or better in each course. This means that students will be able to test their ability to handle graduate study and allow faculty to assess their potential admittance to the program. Students choosing to take this route must work with the MPA director to choose courses and will be assessed following their first six hours.

Initial advising and student services

Once admitted, students will be advised by the MPA director. The MPA director will monitor the progress of students as they work towards earning their MPA and be able to address any curriculum and degree questions.

All new students at WTAMU take part in a new student orientation that introduces the library resources, support services, and financial services available to students at the institution. This orientation is provided virtually, and students are introduced to the institution’s main system, BuffPortal, as well as the financial system that students will need to engage in during their time in the program.

Instructional support provides training for new students on WTCClass (Canvas Learning Management System). This training provides students with information on accessing their student account, the LMS, and navigating the LMS system. Students can also reach out to these offices for support in using programs such as Respondus and Turnitin.

MPA students will take part in a virtual onboarding orientation for the program. This orientation on-boarding will cover programs (faculty/student engagement, internet access requirements, course design and requirements, Blackboard) and university expectations related to the curriculum, time commitment, academics, and finances. It will introduce program faculty and allow for question and answer periods. Students will be able to engage with their future faculty, which allows them to connect to the program. While this program is fully online, fostering a connection between faculty and students and creating a high level of student engagement is paramount to a successful program. This onboarding will connect the student to the program to minimize any feeling of isolation that may occur with online graduate programs. By integrating program faculty into this session, students and faculty will be connected students at a level that goes beyond just email or phone introductions.

Students will engage with the MPA director regarding degree and curriculum topics. All graduate programs have an advisor that works with the graduate school to ensure that students have the information they need to navigate their degree plan, understand graduate school and program requirements, and successfully progress towards a timely graduation – which is a priority of the program faculty and institution. The program advisor will work as a conduit between faculty and students to ensure that MPA candidates can navigate the program and effectively meet the program expectations.

Students will be able to engage with their program advisor and faculty by email, phone, and VoIP services such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. WTAMU has existing contracts with these service providers. These avenues will allow students to engage with their advisor and create a learning and advising community that benefits the students' comfort and familiarity with the graduate school and program faculty.

The graduate school also conducts professional skills development workshops that aid students in navigating skills needed both at WTAMU and beyond. The program faculty will work with students over email and conferencing to navigate any IRB institutional processes needed. A workshop will be conducted for thesis students, and they will be introduced to this process during their methods training.

Once in the program, each student will be assigned a faculty advisor. Students may request a faculty advisor.

Readmission to the Program

Students who have been admitted to the MPA program must complete their course work within six years from the date of their first course. While this is ample time to complete the degree, there are times when students must interrupt their study. Extended interruptions may result in a student being designed as inactive or withdrawn from the program if they do not enroll after twelve (12) consecutive semesters. Also, students who do not enroll for classes for two consecutive semesters after being admitted will be designated as inactive unless they have requested and been granted a postponement of admissions to the program. If students are designated as inactive, they can apply to be readmitted to the program by submitting a full application.

MPA Degree Requirements

The MPA program is offered completely online. Courses will be offered in various formats – synchronous and asynchronous – to allow faculty to craft the best class material to support the curriculum. Students will need to have access to a stable internet connection and be able to attend synchronous lectures. Faculty will work with students to ensure a quality experience in the program.

Students will not be required to attend any program on campus. Students must complete their degree within six years of being admitted to the program.

Students are considered full-time if they take nine (9) course hours a semester or more. Students taking six (6) course hours or less are considered part-time.

To earn an MPA from WTAMU, students must:

- Complete 36 semester hours of graduate coursework with a total GPA of 3.0 or better.
 - Complete 21 core hours in public administration
 - Complete nine (9) hours in your preferred concentration of public management, rural administration, or criminal justice administration.
 - Complete six (6) hours of free electives or six (6) thesis hours with faculty approval.
- Students must earn a C or better in all courses.

Core courses (21 hours)

The required courses in the MPA program are designed to provide a grounding in administrative approaches, policy, methods, and theory. These courses provide the foundation for students in the program to move into their areas of concentration – criminal justice administration, rural/local government administration, or general administration. The seven core courses are listed below and are designed to achieve these goals and allow students to master these five competencies: ethics, policy, finance, administration, and research methods. Core courses will be offered on a consistent rotating basis.

Core Courses (21 hours; Required):

- POSC 6350 Seminar in Public Administration
- POSC 6351 Seminar in Public Policy (cross-listed as CRIJ 6351)
- POSC 6388 Statistics for Social & Criminological Research (cross-listed as CRIJ 6388 and SOCI 6388)
- POSC 6348 Seminar in Public Service Ethics
- POSC 6387 Seminar in Research Methods (cross-listed as CRIJ 6387)
- POSC 6353 Seminar in Administrative Management
- POSC 6355 Seminar in Public Financial Administration

Concentrations (nine hours)

These concentrations are designed to offer students the ability to focus their studies in areas that fit their post-graduate career goals. Students who enroll in the criminal justice concentration will take nine hours of courses related to criminal justice system administration, management, and policy. For those seeking to enter administration in local and rural communities, students will examine administration to better understand how to engage a diverse rural population in nonprofit management, emergency response, e-governance, and municipal service delivery. Students seeking to concentrate on public management will complete courses that cover data analytics, finance, theory, and policy. These concentrations allow students to tailor their courses and take ownership over their degrees, which will benefit them in the post-graduation employment and advancement process.

Students are automatically assigned to public management upon admission. If a student wishes to switch to one of the other concentrations, they must declare their intention to do so no later than 15 hours in the program. Information to complete each concentration is below:

Criminal Justice Concentration (Required nine hours):

- CRIJ 6340 The Criminal Justice System: An Overview
- CRIJ 6346 Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration & Public Policy
- CRIJ 6355 Seminar in Rural Criminal Justice

Rural/Local Government Concentration (Select nine Hours):

- SOCI 6315 Demographics of Rural Communities
- POSC 6306 Advanced Topics in State & Local Government
- EMA 6310 Emergency Management & Response
- POSC 6356 Seminar in Rural Non-Profit Organizations and Management

Public Management Concentration (Select nine hours):

- CIDM 6350 Data and Information Management
- CRIJ 6346 Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration & Public Policy
- ECON 6332 Problems in Government Finance & Fiscal Policy
- EMA 6310 Emergency Management & Response
- POSC 6354 Administrative Theory & Behavior

Electives & comprehensive exam or thesis option (6 hours)

To graduate from the program, students will have two choices: 1) take six additional hours of classes and pass a comprehensive exam, or 2) complete a 6-credit hour thesis option.

Option 1: Elective and Comprehensive exam

Students will be automatically enrolled in a non-thesis degree plan and fall under option 1. On this degree plan, a student will take six hours of electives and a comprehensive exam in addition to core and concentration requirements to complete the program. These electives can be any course not included in a student's concentration or core classes. Options for electives include all classes in the section above as well as:

Additional Electives & Comprehensive exam

- CRIJ 5328 Terrorism
- CRIJ 6312 Problems in Social and Political Institutions (cross-listed as POSC 6312)
- SOCW 6310 Advanced Social Policy

Comprehensive exam

During their final semester a student can petition to take their comprehensive exam. Students choosing to take electives must complete a comprehensive exam to obtain an MPA from WTAMU. Comprehensive exams are designed to allow students to show their deep knowledge of the major concepts and theories in general public administration and their chosen concentrations.

The comprehensive examination tests a student's level of knowledge and understanding. Students will take an exam composed of two questions from their core study and one question from their concentration. Answers will be no longer than 2,000 words and will cite all relevant literature that the student was exposed to during the course of their study.

Students will have five days to complete the three questions and can use resources from their course work and other scholarly (peer-reviewed and academic books) resources. Successful answers will:

- Address the question clearly with an identified thesis statement, sufficient support from the literature, and an in-depth analysis of the topic in question.
- Be formatted using APA 7th edition
- Be submitted to a designated dropbox by the designated time

Students who fail to complete and submit their exam by the stated deadline will be assigned a failing grade for the exam automatically.

Students will be assessed per question. Grades will be: “P” for mastery of the content, “I” for an incomplete answer that needs work, or “F” for failing to display mastery of the question topic. To pass the exam, a student must receive a “P” for all three questions.

Students who receive an “I” will be given the chance to orally defend their answers in person or via Zoom or other technology. Students who receive an “I” will be given feedback in preparation for their oral defense. If the answer is successfully defended the student’s grade will be adjusted to show a “P”. If the student fails the oral defense, they will be assessed an “F”. Oral defenses will take place within two weeks of the original test grade being received. Students will be provided feedback for the “F” grade.

If a student receives an “F” for any question on their first attempt or after an oral defense they have one make-up opportunity to achieve a pass on the exam. The make-up opportunity will be offered the following semester. Students will repeat the test process for all three questions. If the student fails to successfully pass all questions after two attempts they will be dismissed from the graduate school.

Option 2: Thesis option (six hours)

- POSC 6301 Thesis (cross-listed as CRIJ 6301)
- POSC 6302 Thesis (cross-listed as CRIJ 6302)

Students can elect, with approval from the program director and a faculty member willing to lead the project, to take six hours of traditional thesis work; this may be particularly beneficial for students who plan to apply to doctoral programs or plan to take a job that is data driven. This choice will allow students to explore a unique topic and produce an original and strong academic product. The process of completing the thesis will expose them to research and other work common in academia. Students will gain experience that will benefit them if they decide to eventually study in a doctorate program in public affairs or administration.

The thesis must meet the following criteria:

- Be original research conducted by the student
- Follow all institutional review board protocols as stated by West Texas A&M University
- Follow APA 7th edition formatting
- Have an accepted thesis prospectus before collecting data
- Be of high academic quality - defined as a work that could be published in a peer-reviewed journal in the field of public administration and policy or related fields

Students seeking to take the thesis route must gain approval from the MPA director. The MPA director will discuss the project and eligibility of the student and confirm that both meet the criteria above. After gaining approval from the director, the student must work with a faculty member willing to serve as a thesis mentor. To be eligible for the thesis option, a student must have a 3.5 GPA or better in their MPA coursework and identify a specific research area and question they want to explore.

To gain permission to write a thesis, a student must submit a research proposal offering a central focus and question for the project, justification for the project (brief literature review), preliminary methods to be used in the project, and a preliminary assessment of findings and literary contribution.

The thesis proposal must be approved by the student's thesis mentor and committee. Thesis committees are composed of three faculty members, one of whom is the student's faculty thesis mentor. The thesis mentor will oversee the program and meet regularly with the student to guide their research. The thesis mentor must be a faculty member at WTAMU and teach in the MPA program. The two other thesis committee members will serve as experts in specific content or methodology areas. At least one of these two additional members must be a WTAMU faculty member who teaches in the MPA program. One external faculty member from outside WTAMU or the MPA program who is a field expert can be included on the committee. All committee members serve at their own will. It is the student's responsibility to seek out these members.

Once approved by the program director and thesis mentor, the student will have the ability to enroll in thesis hours. Per the graduate school, thesis hours must be taken in consecutive semesters. Special approval will need to be given to take thesis hours in the summer.

Students will also need to complete the graduate school requirements regarding writing a thesis. At this [link](#), students will find information from the graduate school regarding the thesis, including a thesis guide to assist in being prepared for this project.

Students will work closely with the thesis committee to develop their project and produce original research. The thesis committee, led by the faculty advisor, will monitor the student's progress and will grant permission for progress to the defense stage once all requirements for the written portion are completed.

Thesis defenses will take place via Zoom and must include all members of the committee. To receive final approval, students will present their research and field questions about their study from the committee and those in attendance. Students will be assessed on the academic quality of their work, the originality of their work, their ability to present and engage in meaningful discussion, and exhibit expertise in the topic area.

Committees can make three decisions: 1) pass - the student has addressed all concerns completely and there are no edits that are needed. 2) pass dependent on edits – the student has successfully met the standards of the thesis committee but will be required to make minor edits. 3) fail – the student has failed to defend their thesis and will be provided with detailed feedback.

If successfully completed, the three committee members and MPA director will sign off on the thesis project as passing and students will have completed the requirement. Final approval will come from the West Texas A&M University graduate school once it is submitted and meets their requirements.

If a student fails to successfully defend their thesis, they will be provided specific feedback and granted a semester extension to improve their project and repeat the defense. In this case, a student will be required to enroll in a thesis hour for the additional semester per institutional requirements. If the student fails to successfully defend after the second time, they will be assigned a failing grade and be removed from the program.

After the first three thesis hours, each student will have a meeting with their faculty mentor to confirm successful progress. If the student is not found to have made successful progress, they will be given the option or directed to shift their degree program to a non-thesis option. If this happens, they will have to take six hours of electives and their comprehensive exam. Per the graduate school, thesis hours do not count as electives.

Potential for transfer and competency credit

MPA students will be allowed to transfer **no more than** nine (9) hours of graduate credit into the program. Those seeking transfer credit will provide a written justification for transferring credit, describe how the potential transfer course overlaps with a course in the WTAMU MPA program, submit the syllabus with contact information of the professor, and finally, present an unofficial

graduate transcript listing grades for the course to the program director. A committee will review the application and rule on the applicability of the transfer credit.

For students who have no prior credit but seek an outside perspective, students will be able to take six (6) hours of credit from a separate institution. The institution must be accredited, the course must be part of a graduate degree program, and the course must not be offered by WTAMU faculty within a two-year span and must be approved by the program director and committee. This will allow students to progress at an accelerated pace. To receive approval, a student must submit the most recent syllabus for the course to the MPA program director to ensure it meets the requirements for the program.

In lieu of transfer credit, a student may petition for up to six (6) hours of competency-based credit. Students will be able to petition that their work experience provided them with the core knowledge, theory, and practical application that would be gained through a traditional course. Students wishing to receive competency-based credit must submit the following to the program director: A 3-to-5-page summary of core theories in the course and how the work experience provided the same training as the course for which it is being substituted, the most current syllabus for the course, written support from the professor of that course, and evidence that they had a minimum of five (5) years of experience in the position. A faculty committee will decide on competency-based credit.

Students will be allowed a total of six (6) hours of transfer and competency-based credit pending approval.

Program completion and graduation

Students who meet the following requirements will be eligible for graduation:

- Have a GPA of 3.0 or better
- Complete all courses with a C or better including:
 - Twenty-one (21) core semester hours
 - Nine (9) concentration hours
 - Six (6) hours of free electives and pass the comprehensive exam OR completed thesis defense including six (6) hours of thesis credit.

Students who meet these requirements must apply for graduation through the TRCOESS and graduate school

Policies of the Program

Grading policies

Grades will be assigned based on the traditional scale of A-F. Grades will be assigned the following GPA points per course hour:

- A = Work beyond the level of a typical graduate student; exemplary work. (A equals 4 grade points)
- B = Work typical of a graduate student; indicates student has attained the knowledge and skills intended for the course. (B equals 3.0)
- C = Performance is below graduate-level expectations. (C equals 2.0)
- D = Substandard performance in all aspects of the work of the course; inadequate comprehension of assigned reading material. (D equals 1.0 grade point)
- F = Level of performance demonstrably below that expected of a graduate student; little or no indication that the student can succeed in a graduate program.

Pursuant to academic freedom, faculty are assigned courses where they have expertise and have the ability to assess students consistent with their academic and professional training.

Academic grievance policy and honor code

If a student has an issue with a grade, they can follow the prescribed code to challenge grading. However, as graduate students, those who have a conflict are required to speak with the faculty member teaching the course first and then to the MPA director. Grade appeals are a right of the student and the MPA program follows WTAMU's guidelines stated in part below:

Individuals who wish to file a complaint regarding a department or member of the WTAMU community should make every effort to resolve the issue. Students should attempt an informal resolution by interacting directly with the individual(s) involved or with the first-line supervisor of the individual, department, or office. If satisfactory resolution is not reached through this informal interaction, a student may submit a formal written complaint using the online University complaint form, www.wtamu.edu/complaintprocess.

All formal complaints submitted on the University complaint form will be routed to the applicable department for resolution.

Please see the complaint flow chart, www.wtamu.edu/complaintprocess, for specific steps in the process. Should students need assistance in determining how or where to proceed with filing a complaint, they may contact the Office of Student Enrollment, Engagement and Success in the Jack B. Kelley Student Center, Suite 102, or by phone 806-651-2050.

Within the MPA program, students are required to follow the student honor code. If a student is found in violation of that code and caught committing acts of academic dishonesty, they will be subject to disciplinary action by the faculty of record or MPA program. Faculty have the ability to set procedures for academic dishonesty within their syllabus for each course. If a student is found to have been academically dishonest, the decision can be a failing grade for a course, academic probation, and potential dismissal from the program.

Academic Probation

Students who fall below a 3.0 overall GPA in the program will be placed on academic probation. Student GPAs and progress will be assessed every semester. After 18 hours, a student with less than a 3.0 GPA will meet with the MPA director and be put on academic probation. Working with the MPA director, the student will be allowed to take six hours the following semester and must come into compliance by the end of that semester. Students who fail to rise to a 3.0 GPA or above after 24 hours will be withdrawn from the program.

Withdrawals and retaking courses

Students who receive less than a C in a course or who seek to improve their grade are allowed to retake up to two courses in the program and have that grade replace the previous grade. Students who wish to withdraw from a course must meet WTAMU’s withdrawal date and are responsible for their own withdrawal. A student can withdraw from no more than three courses in the program before being placed on academic probation.

Potential positions for MPA graduates

Graduate education is designed to enhance a student’s ability to improve their employment and open options for graduates. Students that have earned an MPA from WTAMU have a number of options regarding career fields and promotion opportunities. Below is a list of position areas/types and their job and salary outlook:

Table 1. Median Wage and Job Outlook by Occupation from Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupation	Median Wage (2019)	Job Market Outlook (2019–2029)
Social and Community Services Managers	\$67,150	17%
Urban and Regional Planners	\$74,350	11%
Administrative Services Managers	\$94,940	6%
Emergency Management Directors	\$74,590	4%
Budget Analysts	\$76,540	3%
Human Resources Managers	\$116,720	6%
Postsecondary Education Administrators	\$95,410	4%
Medical and Health Services Managers	\$100,980	32%
Management Analysts	\$85,260	11%

State-level data indicates Texas has a high demand for employees with training in public administration. According to the Texas Workforce Commission, there are 7,986 positions open in public administration as of September 2020. Common job skills associated with these positions are interacting with the public, serving customers, solving problems, analyzing data and budgets, attending to details, and making quality decisions. These skills are emphasized heavily in the proposed MPA curriculum, which includes seminar courses in data analytics, personnel, and financial management.

Additionally, students with an MPA have the ability to apply to doctoral programs as well as enter careers as professors at certain institutions.

There is an advantage to seeking an MPA at WTAMU. We look forward to working with you on this journey!

Appendices

Appendix A: Faculty

<i>Faculty</i>	<i>Degree</i>	<i>Role</i>
Lovell, Darrell Assistant Professor of Political Science	DPA in Public Administration and Policy, West Chester University	MPA Director
Bang, Brandon Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice	PhD in Criminal Justice and Criminology, Washington State University	Criminal Justice (BS/BA) Director
Lavistida, Vicki Assistant Professor of Political Science	PhD in Public Administration, University of Oklahoma	Faculty
Kim, Sohee Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice	PhD in Criminal Justice & Criminology, Washington State University	Faculty
Rausch, David Professor of Political Science	PhD in Political Science, University of Oklahoma	Faculty
Pjesky, Rex Professor of Economics	PhD in Economics, University of Oklahoma	Faculty

Appendix B: Course descriptions and proposed full-time course sequence

CIDM 6350 – Data and Information Management

Principles of database design and structure. Analysis and implementation of database systems with emphasis on the relational model. Detailed study of data modeling concepts and techniques. Topics include physical and logical design, normalization, SQL, transaction and concurrency control, security and data integrity.

CRIJ 5328 - Terrorism

Terrorism in our world. Understanding what terrorism is, why it occurs and why it will continue into the future.

CRIJ 6312 - Problems in Social and Political Institutions

Critical investigation of social conditions affecting the structure and functioning of contemporary social and political institutions and analysis of public policy solutions to these problems.

CRIJ 6340 - The Criminal Justice System-An Overview

Intensive overview of the criminal justice system as a system, including theory, current issues and trends.

CRIJ 6346 - Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration and Public Policy

Advanced study of organizational theories with application to complex criminal justice organizations in the areas of human resource management, financial management, intergovernmental relations, planning and evaluation of programs. With permission of instructor, may be repeated once for a maximum of six hours when topics vary.

CRIJ 6348 - Seminar in Criminal Justice Ethics

Major moral theories, application of ethical principles and moral dilemmas in policing, the courts and corrections.

CRIJ 6355 - Seminar in Rural Criminal Justice

An examination of how the criminal justice system operates and functions in rural America. Along with an overview of the basic functions and institutions of the criminal justice system, students will study the major issues, controversies, and evidence-based practices in each major criminal justice institution—policing, courts, and corrections—in rural communities.

ECON 6332 - Problems in Government Finance and Fiscal Policy

Analysis of various problems and theories concerning government revenue, expenditures and fiscal policies. May be repeated when topics vary for a maximum of six credit hours.

EMA 6310 - Emergency Management and Response

Prerequisite(s): Admission to a doctoral program at WTAMU. Developing response strategies for natural disasters and socially and environmentally generated hazards. Principles of emergence management include vulnerability analysis, hazard mitigation, emergency response, and disaster recovery.

POSC 6306 - Advanced Topics in State and Local Government

Selected functions, institutions and processes of state and local governments in the United States. With consent of department head, may be repeated once when topics vary for a maximum of six credit hours.

POSC 6350 - Seminar in Public Administration

Development and role of administration in the governmental process; principles and problems of administrative organization and coordination; financial and personnel management; problems of administrative control and responsibility.

POSC 6351 - Seminar in Public Policy

Cross-listed with CRIJ 6351.

Selected aspects of American public policy, theory, organization, administration and administrative procedures in government. With consent of department head, may be repeated once when topics vary for a maximum of six credit hours.

POSC 6353 - Seminar in Administrative Management

Methods of applying administrative principles to the operating process of governmental agencies. Relevance of administrative theory to management procedures in government. Development and role of public service; basic principles, practices and problems in public personnel management. With permission of instructor, may be repeated once when topics vary for a maximum of six credit hours.

POSC 6354 - Administrative Theory and Behavior

Interaction of individuals and groups in government organizations. Topics include individual behavior in organizations, group dynamics, communication in the working environment and concepts of motivation. Fall of odd years.

POSC 6355 - Seminar in Public Financial Administration

Budgeting problems and internal practices in American government. Problems in administrative organizations in fiscal activities.

POSC 6356 - Seminar in Rural Non-profit Organizations and Management

This course aims to provide a better understanding of non-profit and voluntary organization management in rural communities. Along with the basic knowledge and concepts such as governance, planning, evaluation, volunteer, and financial management, this course encourages students to establish a vision of rural community development and non-profit capacity building.

POSC 6387 – Seminar in Research Methods

Nonparametrics; measurement; surveys, research, design; scale construction; methodology.

POSC 6388 - Statistics for Social and Criminological Research

Cross-listed with CRIJ 6388/SOCI 6388.

Prerequisite(s): undergraduate social statistics or equivalent. Statistical techniques most commonly used in social science research with emphasis on probability, estimation, hypothesis methods, sample techniques and use of SPSS.

SOCI 6315 - Demographics of Rural Communities

Prerequisite(s): Admission to a doctoral program at WTAMU. Understanding dynamics of rural communities. Course will focus on issues of increasing poverty and diversity in rural populations and navigating the political and social climate to establish short and long-term planning goals.

SOCW 6310 - Advanced Social Policy

Conceptual frameworks are investigated for analyzing and evaluating social welfare policies and programs; policy advocacy is explored.

Proposed sequence

Public Management Concentration

Fall Year 1	Spring Year 1
POSC 6350	POSC 6348
POSC 6351	POSC 6353
CRIJ 6387	POSC 6388

Fall Year 2	Spring Year 2
POSC 6355	CIDM 6350/CRIJ 6346/EMA 6310/ECON 6332/POSC 6354
CIDM 6350/CRIJ 6346/EMA 6310/ECON 6332/POSC 6354	Elective or Thesis
CIDM 6350/CRIJ 6346/EMA 6310/ECON 6332/POSC 6354	Elective or Thesis

Criminal Justice Concentration

Fall Year 1	Spring Year 1
POSC 6350	CRIJ 6348
POSC 6351	POSC 6353
CRIJ 6387	POSC 6388

Fall Year 2	Spring Year 2
POSC 6355	CRIJ 6355

CRIJ 6340 Elective or Thesis

CRIJ 6346 Elective or Thesis

Rural and Local Government Concentration

Fall Year 1 Spring Year 1

POSC 6350 CRIJ 6348

POSC 6351 POSC 6353

CRIJ 6387 POSC 6388

Fall Year 2 Spring Year 2

POSC 6355 EMA 6310/POSC
6306/SOCI 6315/POSC
6356/CRIJ 6355

EMA 6310/POSC 6306/SOCI
6315/POSC 6356/CRIJ 6355 Elective or Thesis

EMA 6310/POSC 6306/SOCI
6315/POSC 6356/CRIJ 6355 Elective or Thesis
