

# Public Administration MPA

## Written Comprehensive Exams

**Goal Description:**

Students will gain knowledge and skills that are associated with advanced degrees in public administration.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Written Comprehensive Exams**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Students must demonstrate competency in the some of the core areas of public administration including financial management, research methods, and ethics.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Successful Completion Of Written Comprehensive Exams**

**Indicator Description:**

We utilize written comprehensive exams as a tool for measuring students' knowledge and skills. Prior to graduation students complete three written comprehensive exams in areas relevant to their coursework. Exam questions are written by faculty with expertise in the students' areas of study and the questions are based on the comprehensive exam reading lists and the content of the overview courses (see department level goal of revise written comprehensive exam process for more information on the reading lists and overview courses). Students' exams are graded by at least two faculty members (more when possible) who have expertise in the areas of study pursued by students. Exams are assigned one of the following scores: high pass, pass, and no pass. If the two faculty members issue conflicting scores (e.g., pass and no pass), a third faculty member will be asked to score the exams and issue a final ruling.

**Criterion Description:**

We expect that at least 80% of our students will pass their exams on the first attempt and that 100% of the students who have to take the exam a second time will pass.

**Findings Description:**

15 students took comprehensive exams. All 15 passed on the first attempt and all 15 received a score of pass.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Written Comprehensive Exams**

**Action Description:**

The Director of the Masters of Public Administration (MPA) and MPA faculty will meet to discuss if there is a need to improve the comprehensive exam process and, if so, how best to go about improving the process.

## Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

**Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):**

The following action will be taken:

1. Incoming students will be required to submit a professional statement that gives the MPA director insight into students' skills prior to entering the program. Upon graduation students will be asked to complete a survey which will include a set of self-assessment questions designed to capture students' opinion of how the program improved their skills.
2. The MPA director and faculty will complete an internal assessment of the MPA program. Part of the assessment will focus on student learning objectives in the context of specific courses, the concentration, and the overall degree plan.

**Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

All actions linked to student learning objectives will be implemented. In addition, the department faculty will use this coming year to address a number of questions relevant to the development of the undergraduate program: What skills and knowledge should students possess upon graduating from the program? How does a public administration degree fit into today's employment market? Etc.

## Plan for Continuous Improvement

**Closing Summary:**

**Department progress on student learning objectives and the public administration graduate program**

Note: The political science graduate program underwent an external review in spring of 2016. This coming year the new graduate co-directors will work with faculty to implement the suggestions offered by the external reviewers.