

# FACT SHEET – MPA PROGRAM OF TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

*We are pleased to share these data in compliance with the expectations of our accrediting body for the MPA degree, NASPAA (Accreditation Standard 7: Communication).*

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## CONTENTS

- Degree Title ..... 2
- Organizational Relationship between Program and University..... 2
- Modes of Program Delivery ..... 2
- Number of Credit Hours..... 2
- Length of Degree..... 2
- List of Dual Degrees ..... 2
- List of Specializations ..... 2
- Fast-Track Info..... 2
- Student Body:..... 2
- Mission ..... 2
  - TSU Mission..... 3
  - College of Public Service Mission ..... 3
  - Mission Statement of the MPA Program ..... 3
- Admission Criteria: ..... 3
- Number of Faculty Teaching in the Program ..... 4
- Faculty Identified within the Unit Including Rank..... 4
- Tuition Cost (in state and out-of-state): ..... 4
- Description of Financial Aid Availability..... 6
- Internship Placement List: ..... 6
- Graduate employment outcomes:..... 7
- Completion Rates of cohort entering 5 years ago ..... 8
- Completion Rates of cohort entering 6 years ago ..... 9
- Completion Rates of cohort entering 7 years ago ..... 10
- Completion Rates of cohort entering 8 years ago ..... 11
- Relationships between Graduate Certificates and MPA..... 12
  - Graduate Certificate in Public Policy..... 12

Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management .....	12
Graduate Certificate In Local Government Management .....	12
Graduate Certificate in PA Executive Leadership .....	12
Other special cases: TGMI or LEAD .....	12

**DEGREE TITLE:** Master of Public Administration

**ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROGRAM AND UNIVERSITY:** The MPA program is offered by the Department of Public Administration, within the College of Public Service; its faculty are housed on the Avon Williams Off-Campus Instructional Site of Tennessee State University (downtown Nashville).

**MODES OF PROGRAM DELIVERY:** We have one mode of program delivery: 100%. See the [Graduate Catalog](#) and the [MPA handbook](#) for more details.

**NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS:** 36 hours of coursework (for in-service students with at least one year of professional experience in the public, nonprofit, or public affairs/governmental relations settings, as evaluated by advisor, who successfully complete the internship waiver process and paper) or 42 hours (36 hours of coursework as well as 6-hour internship; mandatory for pre-service students, optional for in-service students meeting the professional experience criterion but who desire to do the internship).

**LENGTH OF DEGREE:** MPA students in our program proceed through the program at different paces depending on their employment status and preferences. A common pattern our students follow is 2 courses per semester, for a total of six semesters for regular coursework (2 years), with another semester possible if the student is pre-service and must complete the internship (or they could pursue the internship during a semester in which they also take classes. Students should be aware that course offerings are variable depending on enrollments and staffing, particularly in summer. **To minimize time to degree, it is essential that students seek official advising in or prior to their FIRST semester of the program, and check in any deviation from the plan is made prior to registering during the duration of their studies.** Contact the department chair Dr. Meg Streams at [mstreams@tnstate.edu](mailto:mstreams@tnstate.edu).

**LIST OF DUAL DEGREES:** None.

**LIST OF SPECIALIZATIONS:** None. However, most students elect to also pursue the graduate certificate in public policy, nonprofit management, local government management, or public administration executive leadership. Those that do so take their three MPA electives in those respective areas. Choosing to seek a certificate as well as the MPA *without seeking appropriate advising* can affect time to degree. More detail on the relationship between our graduate certificates and the MPA curriculum is provided at the end of this Fact Sheet; questions may be directed to the department chair Dr. Meg Streams at [mstreams@tnstate.edu](mailto:mstreams@tnstate.edu).

**FAST-TRACK INFO:** None.

**STUDENT BODY:** Sixty-one (61) students admitted to the MPA program were taking classes in **Fall 2024**. Thirty-eight percent (38%) were male. Forty-four percent (44%) were African American Non-Hispanic, 48% were White Non-Hispanic, 2% were Asian, 2% were Hispanic, 2% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 3% were of two or more race/ethnicities, and 2% were race/ethnicity unknown. (data from TSU Institutional Research Office Enrollment Dashboard, accessed 10/2/2024. Categories are those used by TSU IR).

**MISSION:** (this MPA program mission and values adopted February 2025, replacing the previous mission and values statement adopted in 2018; the five competencies at the program level are provided by the NASPAA accreditor of the

MPA program; the student learning outcomes were substantially updated in Spring 2018, with subsequent minor adjustments/revisions prior to full review and update in Fall 2024.)

The MPA mission and public service values statement are also available [online](#).

#### TSU MISSION

The mission of the Tennessee State University is available at the [President's webpage](#).

#### COLLEGE OF PUBLIC SERVICE MISSION

Our mission is to educate, socialize and serve students and employers of nonprofit, healthcare and urban organizations by: [think] providing educational programs that build skills in knowledge of social work, urban affairs, public administration, and leadership; [work] conducting scholarly and applied research activities supportive of these educational purposes; and [serve] consulting and applying research and knowledge of social programs.

#### MISSION STATEMENT OF THE MPA PROGRAM

Department of Public Administration, College of Public Service, Tennessee State University

**MPA Program Mission.** Our MPA program prepares public and nonprofit managers and leaders to meet societal needs. We recognize the goals of our students working in, or preparing for, public service by emphasizing flexibility and quality in an online teaching and learning environment. As scholars, we engage in research and service to the University, community, and profession in Middle Tennessee and beyond; these activities enhance our ability to develop students as professionals.

We teach the core concepts of public administration with a focus on real-world issues, analytical problem-solving, and management skills. Students may build specialized skills in public policy, leadership, nonprofit management, or local government management via completion of one of four graduate certificates. As instructors and advisors, we work closely with students to support classroom and career achievement; in return, students are expected to pursue academic excellence and demonstrate integrity.

**Public Service Values Statement.** The guiding public service values of the MPA program in the College of Public Service at TSU are:

- Public servants should practice impartiality and fairness in their daily work.
- Public servants should work in a competent, transparent, and accountable manner towards the public good.
- Public servants should be responsible and innovative stewards who seek to create the most public value out of scarce resources.
- Public servants should understand, value, and respect both individual differences and commonalities, working to create and maintain thriving organizations and communities.

**ADMISSION CRITERIA:** See the current [Graduate Catalog](#) for admission criteria to the Graduate School at Tennessee State University (catalog front matter) and to the MPA degree in particular (in the College of Public Service section). The current MPA admissions policy is summarized here: Requirements are (1) Graduate School Application; (2) application fee; (3) undergrad GPA of 2.7 or higher; (5) three recommendation letters from persons familiar with the applicant's potential for masters-level study in public administration (may be from academic personnel, professional supervisors/colleagues, or a mix); and (6) Statement of Purpose in seeking the MPA degree. Applicants with undergraduate GPAs between 2.5 and 2.69 may be considered for admission based on successful completion of a Graduate Certificate with the Department of Public Administration (with a certificate GPA of 3.0 or above). The courses from the certificate count towards your MPA once admitted to the degree program. Applicants must be eligible to take a

fully-online degree offered by a Tennessee institution. Additional requirements apply by TSU Graduate School policy, as detailed in the front matter of the Graduate Catalog. This overview does not replace the more detailed policies contained in the Graduate Catalog.

**NUMBER OF FACULTY TEACHING IN THE PROGRAM:** Five full-time faculty taught 50 percent or more of their teaching load in the MPA program in **2023-2024**. Seventy-six percent of all MPA courses were taught by full-time program faculty. Eighty-eight percent of all MPA required (“core”) courses were taught by full-time program faculty. All part-time (“adjunct”) faculty are qualified both by holding the doctorate in public administration, public policy and administration, or political science with a concentration in public administration; and by extensive professional experience in the public or nonprofit sectors.

**FACULTY IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE UNIT INCLUDING RANK:** Please see our [Faculty Directory](#) online.

**TUITION COST (IN STATE AND OUT-OF-STATE):** [Updated tuition and fee costs](#) are published online by the TSU Bursar for in-state graduate students and out-of-state graduate students. The MPA became a 100% online program in Fall 2020. Students with out-of-state residency who *only register for online courses* at TSU are eligible for the “out-of-state eRate,” which is lower than standard out-of-state tuition if all conditions are met. Visit the Bursar’s website and the out-of-state eRate for details. A sample total tuition estimate follows, but this would be affected by variation in student course-taking patterns and actual fee changes over time.

**[FACTSHEET CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE]**

	<u>MPA degree</u>	<u>MPA degree</u>	
	<i>In-service, no internship required; attend full-time with estimated annual increase</i>	<i>Pre-service, 6-credit internship required, attend full-time with estimated annual increase</i>	
	36	42	credits hours to degree
	2	2	years to complete degree (if attend full time)
<i>Per credit hour, Fall 2024/Spring 2025 rates</i>	10%	10%	estimated annual tuition increase for Year 2
\$575	\$21,735	\$25,358	IN-STATE GRADUATE*
\$824	\$31,147	\$36,338	OUT-OF-STATE GRADUATE eRATE**

\*2024-2025 IN-STATE TSU graduate tuition and fees per <https://www.tnstate.edu/bursar/Fall%202024%20and%20Spring%202025.pdf>

\*\*2024-2025 OUT-OF-STATE TSU graduate eRATE tuition and fees per <https://www.tnstate.edu/bursar/eRates%202024.pdf>

*If students choose to attend at a slower pace within overall degree time limits, that could expose them to more annual tuition changes.*

*For simplicity, this estimate does not take into account leveling-off of program service fee (one component of total tuition and fees) if more than 8 credits taken in a single semester for in-state. See Bursar fee sheet for full details. Our program is designed to be part-time, so that situation rarely arises and only with dept. chair permission.*

**Assumptions:** 2024-2025 fees are per the [Bursar's fee site](#) as of February 2025. The calculations shown above assume the student attends full-time and completes the program in two years. The TSU Bursar website as of February 2025 recommends estimating tuition increases at 2-5% per year; to be conservative in our estimate a higher outside estimate of 10% is used here for the second year of study. These values do not include textbooks which are necessary for graduate education. Please see this [notice about textbooks](#) for more information. These figures and estimates are provided for informational purposes; current official rates and fees are published and broken out in more detail at the [Bursar's site](#).

**Overall credit requirements:** Students with no professional public or nonprofit sector experience are required to complete a 6-credit internship yielding a total MPA credit requirement of 42. Those with at least one year of professional-level public or nonprofit sector experience may have the internship requirement waived by the advisor, for a total MPA credit requirement of 36, with successful documentation of work experience and relationship to MPA content. Also, students choose to take varying amounts of courses per semester, which affects time to degree and the number of annual changes in tuition rates which may apply.

**Financial assistance:** We do not currently offer graduate assistantships or scholarships. Tennessee state government employees may have access to state tuition waivers which cover the cost of one course per semester. Employees of Tennessee public higher education institutions may also have access to state tuition waivers via their institution. Ask your HR office about applicability of the waiver or other employer support for graduate study. **[FACTSHEET CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE]**

**DESCRIPTION OF FINANCIAL AID AVAILABILITY:** Financial aid information for graduate students is available from the [TSU Financial Aid site](#). The department does not have scholarships or graduate assistantships available at this time.

**INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT LIST:** Below are recent placement types and locations for MPA interns in our program; a six-credit internship is required of “pre-service” students who do not yet have one or more years of professional-level public, nonprofit, or public affairs/governmental relations work experience.

Most students in our program *do* already have this level of experience and are therefore considered “in-service.” In-service students may apply for a waiver of the internship requirement, a process discussed with the advisor. If the experience is judged appropriate by the advisor, the student must submit the internship exemption application which includes documentation of the positions held, job tasks, and relationship of MPA core and elective course content to the professional experience. This documentation must be approved by the advisor for the waiver to be granted.

As most of our students are in-service, in a typical academic year there are 0 to 2 MPA students per academic year who are pre-service completing internships. For more internship locations including older data, plus organization links, visit the [MPA internship page](#).

Type	Internship Location
Local	City of Tullahoma, TN (2021 graduate)
State	TN Department of Transportation (2019 graduate)
Federal	US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Nashville Office (2019 graduate)
Nonprofit	TN County Technical Assistance Service (2018 graduate)
State	Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Affairs (2015 and 2018 graduates)
Nonprofit	Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (DC; 2017 graduate)
Nonprofit	Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce (2017 graduate)
Local	City of Duluth, GA (2016 graduate)
Local	Metro Nashville Police Department (2015 graduate)
Nonprofit	Blood: Water (2015 graduate)
Local	City of Spring Hill, TN (2015 graduate)
State / Higher Education	University of Memphis Office of Governmental Relations (2014 graduate)
Nonprofit	National Women’s Survivor Convention (2013 graduate)
Healthcare / Nonprofit	The Good Shepherd Residential Services, Nashville (2013 graduate)
State	Tennessee Legislative Internship (multiple recent graduates)
Nonprofit	Nashville International Center for Empowerment (multiple recent graduates)

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**GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES:** Recent alumni employment data for all graduates of each academic year as of 1/27/2024 are shown below and posted on the [MPA program page](#).

**Number of MPA alumni by academic year of graduation**

<b>Employment Field</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	
PUBLIC SECTOR - STATE	3	6	3	7	4	16	<b>39</b>	<b>38%</b>
NONPROFIT SECTOR	1		2		3	9	<b>15</b>	<b>15%</b>
PRIVATE SECTOR			1	2	4	1	<b>8</b>	<b>8%</b>
PUBLIC SECTOR - LOCAL	1		1	2		2	<b>6</b>	<b>6%</b>
EDUCATION FIELD (ANY SECTOR)	1	1	2		1	2	<b>7</b>	<b>7%</b>
PUBLIC SECTOR - FED		3		1		1	<b>5</b>	<b>5%</b>
FURTHER GRADUATE STUDY	2					1	<b>3</b>	<b>3%</b>
HEALTHCARE ADMIN FIELD (ANY SECTOR)	1	1			1		<b>3</b>	<b>3%</b>
PUBLIC AFFAIRS/GOV'TL REL'NS (ANY SECTOR)				1		1	<b>2</b>	<b>2%</b>
LEGAL FIELD (ANY SECTOR)					1		<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
PUBLIC SECTOR - INT'L							<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
UNKNOWN		1	1	1		1	<b>4</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

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**COMPLETION RATES OF COHORT ENTERING 5 YEARS AGO [these data are updated in Fall each year]:** **NOTE** – In general, completion time depends on the number of courses students choose to take per semester: for example, to finish within six semesters, students must choose to take full course loads each semester. It may also depend on whether a student was required to do the internship based on professional experience. The program is designed to be part-time and year-round (2 courses per semester for fall/spring/summer) to meet the needs of our working student population, however some students choose to only take 1 course per semester due to the structure of tuition support from their employer and that is permitted. It will of course prolong time to graduation.

5-year Cohort = all students enrolling for the first time in MPA program in 2019-2020 – all unconditionally admitted

**Cohort graduation rate, across conditional and unconditional admits = 90%** (18 graduates out of 20 enrolled admits)

For details on the speed of graduation, see table below.

	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Percent of cohort</b>
<b>COHORT: students enrolling in MPA for first time in academic year 2019-2020</b> (admitted to MPA in calendar year 2019)	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total cohort members graduated with MPA by 10/31/2024</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>90%</b>
Graduated within 6 semesters	12	60%
Graduated within 7-9 semesters	3	15%
Graduated within 10-12 semesters	3	15%
Graduated in more than 12 semesters	0	0%
<b>Cohort member(s) still taking courses or completing final program requirements as of 10/31/2024 *</b>	<b>1 *</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Cohort member(s) who stopped taking courses and did not complete the MPA degree as of 10/31/2024</b>		
left in good standing with GPA=4.0 to switch to TSU MBA program, graduated 2021	1	5%
inactive, GPA < 3.0 or other hold	0	0%



**COMPLETION RATES OF COHORT ENTERING 6 YEARS AGO [these data are updated in Fall each year]:** NOTE – In general, completion time depends on the number of courses students choose to take per semester: for example, to finish within six semesters, students must choose to take full course loads each semester. It may also depend on whether a student was required to do the internship based on professional experience. Most students in the program choose *not* to take a full graduate course load (3 courses per semester) due to work obligations, and some choose to only take 1 course per semester due to the structure of tuition support from their employer.

5-year Cohort = all students enrolling for the first time in MPA program in 2018-2019 – all unconditionally admitted

**Cohort graduation rate, across conditional and unconditional admits = 58%** (7 graduates out of 12 enrolled admits)

For details on the speed of graduation, see table below.

	Number of students	Percent of cohort
<b>COHORT: students enrolling in MPA for first time in academic year 2018-2019</b> (admitted in calendar year 2018)	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total cohort members graduated with MPA by 10/25/2023</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>58%</b>
Graduated within 6 semesters	5	42%
Graduated within 7-9 semesters	2	17%
Graduated within 10-12 semesters	0	0%
Graduated in more than 12 semesters	0	0%
<b>Cohort member(s) still taking courses or completing final program requirements as of 10/25/2023</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Cohort member(s) who stopped taking courses and did not complete the MPA degree as of 10/25/2023</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>42%</b>
left in good standing with GPA $\geq$ 3.0, personal circumstances (job change, relocation, family, etc.)	2	17%
left in good standing with GPA $\geq$ 3.0, personal circumstances (job change, relocation, family, etc.), finished a certificate	2	17%
switched while in good status to PhD in Public Policy & Administration at TSU (changed career goals), in progress	1	8%
inactive, GPA < 3.0 or other hold	0	0%

**COMPLETION RATES OF COHORT ENTERING 7 YEARS AGO [these data are updated in Fall each year]:** **NOTE** – In general, completion time depends on the number of courses students choose to take per semester: for example, to finish within six semesters, students must choose to take full course loads each semester. It may also depend on whether a student was required to do the internship based on professional experience. Most students in the program choose *not* to take a full graduate course load (3 courses per semester) due to work obligations, and some choose to only take 1 course per semester due to the structure of tuition support from their employer.

5-year Cohort = all students enrolling for the first time in MPA program in 2017-2018 – all unconditionally admitted

**Cohort graduation rate, across conditional and unconditional admits = 38%** (3 graduates out of 8 enrolled admits)

For details on the speed of graduation, see table below.

	Number of students	Percent of cohort
<b>COHORT: students enrolling in MPA for first time in academic year 2017-2018</b> (admitted in calendar year 2017)	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total cohort members graduated with MPA by 10/26/2022</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>38%</b>
Graduated within 6 semesters	1	13%
Graduated within 7-9 semesters	1	13%
Graduated within 10-12 semesters	0	0%
Graduated in more than 12 semesters	1	13%
<b>Cohort member(s) still taking courses or completing final program requirements as of 10/26/2022</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Cohort member(s) who stopped taking courses and did not complete the MPA degree as of 10/26/2022</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>63%</b>
left in good standing with GPA ≥ 3.0, personal circumstances (job change, relocation, family, etc.)	3	38%
inactive without completing any coursework in MPA successfully (ex. withdrew from first semester)	1	13%
switched while in good status to a different master's program at TSU (changed career goals), graduated	1	13%
inactive, GPA < 3.0 or other hold	0	0%

**COMPLETION RATES OF COHORT ENTERING 8 YEARS AGO [these data are updated in Fall each year]:** NOTE – In general, completion time depends on the number of courses students choose to take per semester: for example, to finish within six semesters, students must choose to take full course loads each semester. It may also depend on whether a student was required to do the internship based on professional experience. Most students in the program choose *not* to take a full graduate course load (3 courses per semester) due to work obligations, and some choose to only take 1 course per semester due to the structure of tuition support from their employer.

5-year Cohort = all students enrolling for the first time in MPA program in 2016-2017 – all unconditionally admitted

**Cohort graduation rate, across conditional and unconditional admits = 70%** (7 graduates out of 10 enrolled admits)

For details on the speed of graduation, see table below.

	Number of students	Percent of cohort
<b>COHORT: students enrolling in MPA for first time in academic year 2016-2017 (admitted in calendar year 2016)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total cohort members graduated with MPA by 10/25/2021</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>70%</b>
Graduated within 6 semesters	2	20%
Graduated within 7-9 semesters	2	20%
Graduated within 10-12 semesters	2	20%
Graduated in more than 12 semesters *	1	10%
<b>Cohort member(s) still taking courses or completing final program requirements as of 10/25/2021</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Cohort member(s) who stopped taking courses without completing the MPA degree **</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30%</b>

\* This student chose to take 1 course per semester throughout their studies due to the structure of tuition support from their employer.

\*\* Of the 3 cohort members who left program or became inactive, 2 became inactive with GPA < 3.0 or another type of hold; 1 left for personal/relocation/job reasons.

[FACTSHEET CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE]

## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GRADUATE CERTIFICATES AND MPA

Most students who are admitted to the MPA also choose to complete a six-course graduate certificate, which will then dictate the three electives taken in the MPA. The certificates are “stacked” with the MPA curriculum, so those who desire to complete a certificate prior to deciding to seek the MPA may also do so and bring their certificate coursework with them into the MPA. The certificate can also serve as a bridge to the MPA as follows: the MPA requires an undergraduate GPA of 2.7 or above. However, students with an undergraduate GPA between 2.5 and 2.69 who complete all six courses required for a graduate certificate in the TSU Department of Public Administration with a certificate GPA of 3.0 or better may be considered for unconditional admission to the MPA degree, without meeting the 2.7 undergraduate GPA requirement. Students must still meet the other admission requirements of the MPA, and admission cannot take place until after the six courses are showing on the transcript and the GPA threshold is met.

The way in which the curricula of the certificates are stacked with that of the MPA is detailed below for each certificate. Note that credits used towards a different, completed graduate *degree* cannot be counted towards the MPA; but credits earned in the course of a graduate *certificate* may. Students who completed a certificate in the past under a different curriculum may not be able to bring all courses into the MPA curriculum, they should consult the Department Chair for their situation.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PUBLIC POLICY – ([link](#)) three courses are MPA core courses (6410, 6210, 6130); the other three courses count as the three MPA electives (6430, 6450, 6390). Therefore, all SIX certificate courses may be counted towards the MPA if a student has completed or is pursuing the Public Policy certificate concurrently.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT – ([link](#)) three courses are MPA core courses (6210, 6130, 6240); the other three courses count as the three MPA electives (6190, 6950, 6960). Therefore, all SIX certificate courses may be counted towards the MPA if a student has completed or is pursuing the Nonprofit Management certificate concurrently.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT – ([link](#)) Three courses are required core courses in the MPA (6210, 6230, 6240). The remaining courses may be counted as MPA electives (6290, 6420, 6440). Therefore, all SIX certificate courses may be counted towards the MPA if a student has completed or is pursuing the Local Government Management certificate concurrently.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PA EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP – ([link](#)) PADM 6240 and PADM 6310 are already MPA core courses. With department chair permission, PADM 6270 Seminar in Administrative Leadership may be substituted for MPA core course PADM 6490 Politics of Administration. The other three certificate courses (PADM 6400, PADM 6420, and PADM 6260) may be used to fill the three elective slots in the MPA curriculum. Therefore, all SIX certificate courses may be counted towards the MPA if a student has completed, or is pursuing the Exec. Leadership certificate concurrently. (Students may have taken PADM 6320 Org. Analysis instead of PADM 6310 Org. Theory under an earlier pattern; 6320 can be substituted for 6310.)

OTHER SPECIAL CASES: TGMI OR LEAD – TGMI and LEAD are intensive TN state government leadership curricula for which individuals are selected competitively. Individuals admitted to a relevant program who successfully completed one or both of these programs at the state may be eligible to receive credit for a *single* course, PADM 6270 Administrative Leadership (required for the Graduate Certificate in PA Executive Leadership) and which may count towards the MPA curriculum with department chair permission). If a student wants to pursue this option they must contact the department chair. **[END FACTSHEET]**