

# 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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**DEGREE TITLE:** Masters 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 Campus of Tennessee State University (downtown campus).

**MODES OF PROGRAM DELIVERY:** We have one mode of program delivery: 100% online (program shifted to 100% online beginning Fall 2020); this is a permanent change, not a pandemic-related change. 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 healthcare sectors 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 their FIRST semester of the program, and EACH semester prior to registering during the duration of their studies.**

**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, public administration executive leadership, or healthcare administration and planning. 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. Rodney Stanley at [rstanley1@tnstate.edu](mailto:rstanley1@tnstate.edu).

**FAST-TRACK INFO:** None.

**STUDENT BODY:** Forty-eight (48) students admitted to the MPA program were taking classes in **Fall 2020**. Twenty-nine percent (29.2%) were male, 91% were part-time students, and the average student age was 35. Forty-three percent (43.8%) were African American Non-Hispanic, 35.4% were White Non-Hispanic, 0.2% were of other race(s)/ethnicities, and 16.7% were of unknown race/ethnicity. (based on data from TSU Institutional Research Office, received 2/2021).

**MISSION, VALUES AND COMPETENCIES:** (this MPA program mission and values adopted May 2018; program competencies have been in place since 2010 though the associated detailed student learning outcomes were substantially updated in Spring 2018)

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

### TSU MISSION

Tennessee State University, through its legacy as an HBCU and land grant institution, transforms lives, prepares a diverse population of leaders, and contributes to economic and community development by providing affordable and accessible educational programs at various degree levels promoting academic excellence through scholarly inquiry, teaching, research, lifelong learning, and public service.

### 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

**Our MPA program prepares students, as ethical public and nonprofit managers and leaders, to respond equitably, effectively, and efficiently to the needs of a diverse society.** We recognize the goals of our students working in, or preparing for, public service by emphasizing flexibility and quality in teaching and learning. We teach the core concepts of public administration with a focus on practical application, while strengthening students' ability to solve problems analytically. Students may build specialized skills on one of the program's areas of expertise: public policy, leadership, or nonprofit management. As instructors and advisors, we work closely with students to support both their classroom and career achievement; in return, students are expected to pursue academic excellence and demonstrate integrity. As scholars, we engage in research and service to the University, community, and profession. By building relationships with public and nonprofit organizations in Middle Tennessee and beyond, we enhance our ability to develop students as professionals.

### PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES STATEMENT OF THE MPA PROGRAM

The guiding public service values of the MPA program are:

- **EQUITY** – *Public servants should practice impartiality and fairness in their daily work, while balancing that pursuit with the need for effectiveness and efficiency.*
- **EFFECTIVENESS** – *Public servants should work in a proficient and productive manner towards the common good, setting transparent performance outcomes to measure progress while balancing that pursuit with the need for equity and efficiency.*
- **EFFICIENCY** – *Public servants should be careful and innovative stewards who seek to create the most public value out of scarce resources, while balancing that pursuit with the need for effectiveness and equity.*
- **DIVERSITY** – *Public servants should understand, value, and respect both individual differences and commonalities, working to create and maintain inclusive organizations and communities.*

## COMPETENCIES

MPA graduates in our program are expected to achieve the following five overarching Program Competencies (PCs), consistent with our [mission](#) and based upon the standards of our accrediting organization, NASPAA:

1. Each MPA graduate will be competent to lead and manage in public, nonprofit, or public affairs governance.
2. Each MPA graduate will be competent to participate in and contribute to the policy process.
3. Each MPA graduate will be competent to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions appropriate to public and nonprofit administration settings.
4. Each MPA graduate will be competent to articulate and apply a public service perspective.
5. Each MPA graduate will be competent to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workplace and citizenry.

A set of more detailed student learning outcomes (SLOs) are associated with each of the five PCs above. To understand what specific skills, abilities and knowledge areas are included in the MPA degree at TSU, review our [competency and learning outcomes by course](#) (this most recent version of our student learning outcomes and course mapping was adopted by program faculty in March 2018).

**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). Also check the [Graduate Catalog webpage](#) for any updates/revisions to the current catalog. The current MPA admissions policy as of the [2019-2021 Graduate Catalog](#) is summarized here: Requirements are (1) Graduate School Application; (2) application fee; (3) undergrad GPA of 2.7 or higher; (5) three recommendation letters; 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. Financial aid is available for our certificate programs if all University and Federal requirements for eligibility are met and maintained by students, just like a degree. 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:** Six full-time faculty taught 50 percent or more of their teaching load in the MPA program in **2019-2020**. 95 percent of all MPA courses were taught by full-time program faculty. 97% 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 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 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 “eRate,” which is lower than standard out-of-state tuition if all conditions are met. Visit the Bursar’s website 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.

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	<u>MPA degree</u> <i>In-service, no internship required; attend full-time with estimated annual increase</i>	<u>MPA degree</u> <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 2020/Spring 2021 rates</i>	10%	10%	estimated annual tuition increase for Year 2	
\$	523	\$19,769	\$23,064	IN-STATE*
\$	749	\$28,312	\$33,031	OUT-OF-STATE eRATE**

\*2020-2021 IN-STATE tuition and fees per <https://www.tnstate.edu/bursar/docs/FY%2020-21%20Graduate%20Tuition%20and%20Maint%20Fees.pdf>

\*\*2020-2021 OUT-OF-STATE eRATE tuition and fees per <https://www.tnstate.edu/bursar/docs/FY%2020-21%20eRate%20Graduate.pdf>

*Students may choose to attend part-time which 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.*

**Assumptions: 2020-2021** fees are per the [Bursar's fee site](#) as of 2/12/2021. The calculations shown above assume the student attends full-time and completes the program in two years. The TSU Bursar recommends estimating tuition increases at 5-10% per year; the higher 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:** Graduate assistantships may be available on a competitive basis for the MPA degree; please see this [FAQ on financial assistance](#) for more information. Tennessee state government employees may have access to state tuition waivers which cover the cost of one course per semester. 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, INCLUDING ASSISTANTSHIPS:** Financial aid information for graduate students is available from the [TSU Financial Aid site](#). A limited number of Fall/Spring graduate assistantships involving a 20-hour per week work commitment may be available for qualifying MPA students; this is a selective process and only individuals who have been unconditionally admitted to the MPA may apply. The application form is linked on the [MPA handbook page](#) in the area for prospective students. Information on various scholarship possibilities is offered on the [CPS site](#).

**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 healthcare administration 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 1 to 3 MPA students who are pre-service completing internships. For more internship locations including older data, plus organization links, visit the [MPA internship page](#).

Type	Internship Location
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:** Data on MPA employment outcomes for all alumni with known employment status are available on the [MPA program page](#). Recent alumni employment known as of 3/16/2021 is shown below (also posted on the program page).

### Field of MPA Alumni Employment, by academic year of graduation

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Grand Total
PUBLIC SECTOR - STATE	2 (22%)	3 (33%)	6 (50%)	3 (30%)	14 (35%)
PUBLIC SECTOR - LOCAL	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	1 (8%)	2 (20%)	5 (13%)
EDUCATION FIELD (ANY SECTOR)		2 (22%)	1 (8%)	2 (20%)	5 (13%)
NONPROFIT SECTOR	2 (22%)	1 (11%)		1 (10%)	4 (10%)
PRIVATE SECTOR	2 (22%)			1 (10%)	3 (8%)
PUBLIC SECTOR - FED			2 (17%)		2 (5%)
HEALTHCARE ADMIN FIELD (ANY SECTOR)		1 (11%)	1 (8%)		2 (5%)
PUBLIC SECTOR - INT'L	1 (11%)				1 (3%)
FURTHER GRADUATE STUDY		1 (11%)			1 (3%)
SEEKING WORK				1 (10%)	1 (3%)
UNKNOWN	1 (11%)		1 (8%)		2 (5%)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9 (100%)</b>	<b>9 (100%)</b>	<b>12 (100%)</b>	<b>10 (100%)</b>	<b>40 (100%)</b>

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**COMPLETION RATES OF COHORT ENTERING 5 YEARS AGO [these data are updated in Fall each year]:** NOTE – these data include *both* those students who achieved unconditional admission at the time of enrollment as well as individuals who were permitted to begin MPA coursework with only conditional admission status under rules in place at that time. Students admitted conditionally who did not satisfy all conditions within the specified time limit (see Graduate Catalog) may not continue in the program or complete the degree. 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 course load due to work obligations.

5-year Cohort = all students enrolling for the first time in MPA program in 2015-2016 – whether conditionally or unconditionally admitted

**Cohort graduation rate, across conditional and unconditional admits = 52%** (14 graduates as of 10/2020 out of 27 admitted students).

**Graduation rate for those attaining unconditional admission = 61%** (14 graduates as of 10/2020 out of 23 unconditionally-admitted students)

For details on the speed of graduation, see table below which includes the percentages based on all cohort members including conditional admits.

	Number of students	Percent of cohort
<b>COHORT: students enrolling in MPA for first time in academic year 2015-2016</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total cohort members graduated with MPA by 10/29/2020</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>52%</b>
Graduated within 6 semesters	4	15%
Graduated within 7-9 semesters	5	19%
Graduated within 10-12 semesters	4	15%
Graduated in more than 12 semesters	1	4%
<b>Cohort member(s) who stopped taking courses while in CONDITIONAL admission status*</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Cohort member(s) who stopped taking courses after attaining UNCONDITIONAL admission status**</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33%</b>

\* Of the 4 cohort members who became inactive or left the program prior to satisfying admission conditions, 1 became inactive with GPA < 3.0; 1 left after 1 or 2 semesters without successfully completing any MPA coursework, due to withdrawing from courses; and 2 left in good standing.

\*\* Of the 9 cohort members who left program or became inactive *after* attaining unconditional admission status, 1 became inactive with GPA < 3.0; 1 switched into the PhD program and is continuing in that program; 1 changed career goals and switched to a different graduate program at TSU and graduated; and 6 left for personal/relocation/job reasons.

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## 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 HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING – ([link](#)) Three courses are required core courses in the MPA (6110, 6130, 6210). The remaining courses may be counted as MPA electives (6190, 6515, 6550). Therefore, all SIX certificate courses may be counted towards the MPA if a student has completed or is pursuing the Healthcare Administration and Planning 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 TN state government special leadership curricula for which individuals are selected competitively. Individuals who successfully completed one or both of these programs at the state will receive credit for a single course, PADM 6270 Administrative Leadership, that is required for the Graduate Certificate in PA Executive Leadership, and which may count towards the MPA curriculum with department chair permission. The exact nature of the substitution depends on the student’s program and should be discussed with the department chair. **[END FACTSHEET]**