

# Assessment Plan: Political Science, Master of Public Administration (MPA)

---

9/16, Eric Austin

**MPA Mission Statement:** The MSU MPA Program provides students with professionally relevant and theoretically grounded training, enabling them to become effective and ethically reflective practitioners, guided by values of integrity and service as they pursue careers in the diverse settings of democratic governance.

## Program Learning Outcomes

Our graduates will gain knowledge to:

1. Lead and manage in public, nonprofit and other governance organizations.
2. Participate and contribute to the policy process.
3. Analyze, synthesize, and think critically in order to solve problems and make decisions.
4. Articulate and apply a public service perspective.
5. Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.
6. Recognize relevant theoretical and normative orientations and their practical consequences for public policy and administration.

## Curriculum Map

	Cr	Outcomes					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
PSCI 554 - Foundations of Public	3	D	D	D	D		D
PSCI 520 - Leadership and Ethics	3	M					M
PSCI 558 - Organization Dynamics	3	M			M		
PSCI 552 - Public Policy Processes	3		M				
PSCI 551 - Research Methods	3			M			
PSCI 553 - Research Methods II	3			M		M	
PSCI 559 - Program Evaluation	3					M	

## Student Performance: Data Sources

	Outcomes					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Comprehensive Exams	X	X		X		X
Professional Papers			X		X	

## Response Threshold

*At least 90% of students will be rated “Acceptable” or higher on every category of the scoring rubrics.*

<b>Performance Thresholds by Outcome Area</b>			
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>
<i>Leadership and Management</i>	Failure to meet threshold of “Acceptable”	Demonstrated knowledge of research and theory	Synthesis of research and theory into appropriate and effective action strategies
<i>Participate in Policy Processes</i>	Failure to meet threshold of “Acceptable”	Understanding of standard policy processes	Strategic understanding of policy dynamics and leverage points
<i>Problem Solving and Decision Making</i>	Failure to meet threshold of “Acceptable”	Description of appropriate modes and methods and techniques of inquiry	Strategically and normatively applied inquiry and action
<i>Articulate and apply public service perspective</i>	Failure to meet threshold of “Acceptable”	Identification of distinguishing factors of public and governance organizations	Applied knowledge of distinguishing features into critical or institutional operations
<i>Communicate with diverse stakeholders</i>	Failure to meet threshold of “Acceptable”	Articulation of basic communication skills, strategies and audience concerns.	Understanding of and demonstrated capacity to craft effective and appropriate communications and/or engagement approaches
<i>Recognize theoretical and normative orientations and impacts</i>	Failure to meet threshold of “Acceptable”	Demonstrated understanding of core theoretical and normative orientations of governance	Capacity to both understand the implications of normative and theoretical orientations, AND demonstrated ability to operate within and/or across those orientations

## Schedules

### *Outcomes*

	Year					
Outcome	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1	X			X		
2	X			X		
3		X			X	
4			X	X		X
5		X			X	
6			X			X

### *Assessment Plan Elements*

	Year					
Element	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Outcomes	X			X		
Rubric		X			X	
Schedule			X			X

**Course Review**

Course	Year					
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
PSCI 554 - Foundations of Public Administration			X			X
PSCI 520 - Leadership and Ethics			X			X
PSCI 558 - Organization Dynamics				X		
PSCI 552 - Public Policy				X		
PSCI 551 - Research Methods					X	
PSCI 553 - Research Methods II					X	

**Process for Assessing the Data**

**Annual Assessment Process**

1. Data is collected from identified courses.
2. Collected assignments are assessed by two faculty members using prepared established rubrics.
3. The assessment coordinator compiles assessments. Areas where the acceptable performance threshold has not been met are highlighted.
4. The scores are presented to the faculty for assessment.
5. The faculty reviews the assessment results, and makes decisions on how to respond.
  - If an acceptable performance threshold has not been met, a faculty response is required. Possible responses:
    - Gather additional data next year to verify or refute the result.
    - Change something in the curriculum to try to fix the problem.
    - Change the acceptable performance threshold.
    - Choose a different assignment to assess the outcome.
  - Faculty can respond to assessment results even if the acceptable performance threshold has been met.
  - It is OK to determine that changes are not needed when students are demonstrating proficiency with each learning outcome.
6. A summary of the year’s assessment activities and faculty decisions is reported to the Provost’s Office in your Department’s Annual Assessment Activities report.

**Submit Your Assessment Plan to**

Ron Larsen, Associate Provost  
212 Montana Hall 406-994-  
4371

[ronl@montana.edu](mailto:ronl@montana.edu)

Please cc Diane Heck, at [dheck@montana.edu](mailto:dheck@montana.edu).