

Public Administration (MPA)

Degree Requirements

Master of Public Administration (MPA)	Credit Hours
To qualify for the degree of Master of Public Administration, all candidates must satisfactorily complete.	36
PSC 130, Introduction to US Government, or its equivalent, with a minimum grade of C; or a score of 50 or higher in the "American Government" exam through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). Students must satisfy this requirement no later than the end of their third semester in the program, including summer semesters. Failure to complete the requirement of PSC 130/its equivalent /satisfactory CLEP credit by the end of the third semester will prohibit registration for remaining core curriculum courses. Note that the course does not contribute credit to the required 36 graduate credit hours.	
Twenty-four hours in the following eight core courses in the core curriculum: (Note: The core curriculum cycle should ideally commence in the Fall Semester)	
PSC 500	
PSC 510	
PSC 520	
PSC 530	
PSC 540	
PSC 550	
PSC 570	
PSC 580	
Students must select one of the following four concentrations to complete the remaining twelve hours of graduate electives:	
Non-thesis Concentration: Students must take an additional twelve hours of graduate electives as approved by the Director of the MPA.	
Healthcare Concentration: In addition to the core courses, students must take 12 hours of PSC healthcare administration and policy graduate courses.	
Geographical Information Technology (GIT) Concentration: In addition to the courses, students must take 12 hours of GIT graduate courses.	
Thesis Concentration: In addition to core courses, students must take 6 to 9 hours of graduate elective courses as approved by the Director of the MPA program and 3 to 6 hours of PSC 599 (Thesis). Students must have a minimum of 12 hours of graduate elective and thesis credit combined. They must also complete a thesis in compliance with Graduate School requirements.	
Any substitutions for the above requirements must be approved in writing by the Director of the MPA Program.	
A candidate for the MPA degree must complete successfully a comprehensive written examination covering the eight core courses listed previously. To be eligible to take this examination, a student must have achieved at least a 3.00 (B) grade-point average on the core curriculum course work. Normally, the examination will be administered during the Fall and Spring Semesters. The comprehensive examination may be attempted no more than twice.	

Internship

Students in the MPA Program who are not suitably employed full-time in public agencies may be allowed to enroll in PSC 596, Graduate Internship in Public Administration, for a maximum of six semester hours.

Normally, admission to the Internship Program will be dependent upon the following prerequisites:

1. Satisfactory completion of at least six of the required core courses;
2. Approval by the internship professor of the prospective intern's qualifications and proposed project; and

3. Placement of the student in an appropriate agency of the government or other public service institution.

The length of the internship and corresponding credit (at the rate of three to six hours per semester), not to exceed a total of six hours, will be determined for each student on the basis of the student's particular needs and opportunities.

Each intern will be required, in consultation with the intern professor, to develop a research design for the project to be undertaken during the internship. Each intern will also be required to write a paper showing how that research design has been carried out. Particular emphasis will be placed in the paper upon the relationship between the internship experience and academic course work. Close and continuing supervision of each intern's progress will be provided by the intern professor.

Department Information

Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice website
<https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/pscj/>

Undergraduate Studies

The courses offered in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice are designed to achieve three important objectives:

1. To provide a broad and comprehensive education with exceptional social science training---promoting critical thinking, analytic, oral communication, and writing skills.
2. To help students advance toward professional careers in a diversity of fields including law enforcement; education; government; law; corrections; public policy; business; journalism; NGOs and non-profits; and more.
3. To prepare students to be leaders in their communities and to seize meaningful opportunities to effect positive changes locally, nationally, and globally.

Criminal Justice

The curriculum in Criminal Justice provides students interested in law enforcement, criminal law, corrections, and the criminal court system with a broad educational background emphasizing social science and the University's general education skills of critical thinking, writing, communication, and analysis. Students in the department acquire knowledge of the criminal justice field. The program addresses issues relating to the entire criminal justice system, from the nature of crime and delinquency to society's varied responses to crime. Such a focus includes the organization and operation of each of the components in the field.

Political Science

Political Science is a broad discipline that includes studies of governments, politics, and policies. Political scientists may focus on political behavior, decision making, processes, institutions, and public policies. Inquiry in political science addresses the domestic and international policies of the United States and all other countries and regions. Political scientists study the political values, attachments, and activities of people, individually and in groups. Political science examines both what preferences people share and how they differ according to their personal attributes and positions in the economy and society. Political science also studies how people regard and trust each other as well as their leaders and governments.

First Year Experience Requirement

All first-time freshmen must successfully complete CAS 100: First Year Experience as a degree requirement. Students must enroll during their first term at USA, except for summer-entry students who must enroll in the fall semester following entry.

Technological Competency Requirement

Research Methods (PSC 310 (W)/CJ 310 (W)) will satisfy the technology competency requirement for both political science and criminal justice majors. Enrollment in PSC 310 (W) or CJ 310 (W) is required for both political science and criminal justice majors.

Departmental Honors

The Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice offers an opportunity for students in Political Science or Criminal Justice who are not in the University's Honors College to graduate with departmental honors. In order to graduate with departmental honors, the student needs to have at least a 3.50 grade point average (overall and in the major) and maintain that average upon graduation. In addition, the student must complete a two-semester departmental honors thesis project with a faculty mentor and a committee.

Graduate Studies In Public Administration

The Master of Public Administration degree (MPA) curriculum in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice is a professional degree program designed principally for present and future administrators, officers in government, other public related organizations, not for profit agencies, and agencies that interact with governmental institutions and funding. It is a broad discipline, open to qualified students after completion of their undergraduate degree.

Students entering the program come from varied academic and vocational backgrounds. Accordingly, no specific undergraduate major is required for admission to the MPA Program. However, certain course prerequisites must be satisfied prior to enrollment in any of the required core courses of the curriculum.

Requirements For Admission To The MPA Program

Students are admitted each semester. The following criteria supplement the Graduate School criteria (see Categories of Admission).

Regular Admission To The MPA Program

1. Students must have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.5 on all undergraduate work (on a 4-point scale) or a GPA of 2.75 over the last 60 hours of undergraduate work.
2. Students must have taken PSC 130, Introduction to US Government, or its equivalent, with a minimum grade of C; or have received a score of 50 or higher in the "American Government" exam through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). Students must satisfy this requirement no later than the end of their third semester in the program, including summer semesters. Failure to complete the requirement of PSC 130/its equivalent/satisfactory CLEP credit by the end of the third semester will prohibit registration for remaining core curriculum MPA courses.
3. Students are encouraged to apply in the fall semester, but are admitted each semester.