

Assessment Plan for the AppState MPA Program

Adopted unanimously on March 2, 2015 by the nucleus faculty (Hur, Potter, Bush, Eskridge, Ruseva, Webb Farley, Bradbury)

AppState MPA Mission Statement:

The mission of the Appalachian State University Master of Public Administration program is to educate and prepare in-service and pre-service students to be public service leaders by fostering foundational knowledge, analytical and practical skills, and professional networks. To achieve this mission, the MPA program will emphasize the values of responsiveness, expertise, and accountability as it:

- Delivers a curriculum that reflects core disciplinary content and provides flexibility for student specialization,
- Develops collaborative relationships across the university and with local government, non-profit, and criminal justice professionals in the region and state,
- Promotes high-quality faculty teaching, scholarship, and service, and
- Sustains and enhances the program's governance, resources, and established strengths.

Public Service Values emphasized by the AppState MPA Program:

Expertise: to act with competence, skill, and knowledge to achieve effective outcomes

Accountability: to act with integrity and transparency in the lawful pursuit of the public interest

Responsiveness: to be respectful of the perspectives of citizens, colleagues, collaborators, and other stakeholders

MPA Program Goals indicated in the Mission Statement (with related NASPAA Standards noted):

- PG I. Delivers a curriculum that reflects core disciplinary content and provides flexibility for student specialization (1, 5)
- PG II. Develops collaborative relationships across the university and with local government, non-profit, and criminal justice professionals in the region and state (1, 3, 5, 7)
- PG III. Promotes high-quality faculty teaching, scholarship, and service (1, 3)
- PG IV. Sustains and enhances the program's governance, resources, and established strengths (1, 2, 4, 6, 7)

NASPAA Standards (as presented in the Self-Study):

Standard 1. Managing the Program Strategically (Mission Statement; Performance Expectations; Program Evaluation)

Standard 2. Matching Governance with the Mission (Administrative Capacity; Faculty Governance)

Standard 3. Matching Operations with the Mission: Faculty Performance (Faculty Qualifications; Faculty Diversity; Research, Scholarship and Service)

Standard 4. Matching Operations with the Mission: Serving Students (Student Recruitment; Student Admissions; Support for Students; Student Diversity)

Standard 5. Matching Operations with the Mission: Student Learning (Universal Required Competencies; Mission-Specific Required Competencies; Mission-Specific Elective Competencies; Professional Competence)

Standard 6. Matching Resources with the Mission (Resource Adequacy)

Standard 7. Matching Communications with the Mission (Communications)

Elements of the Mission Statement related to the assessment of Student Learning (underlined), with Objectives for Program Goal I and related NASPAA Universal Required Competencies noted:

PG I. Delivers a curriculum that reflects core disciplinary content and provides flexibility for student specialization

- A. Foundational knowledge: Students will apply disciplinary content in a convincing manner. (1, 4)
- B. Analytical and practical skills: Students will use appropriate strategies to solve problems and make decisions. (1, 2, 3)
- C. Professional networks: Students will communicate effectively in diverse professional contexts. (1, 5)

NASPAA – Universal Required Competencies

As the basis for its curriculum, the program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and public service values. The required competencies will include five domains:

1. the ability to lead and manage in public governance;
2. to participate in and contribute to the policy process;
3. to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
4. to articulate and apply a public service perspective;
5. to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Key to interpreting the Assessment Plan:

Program Goal (PG I, PG II, etc.)

Objective (A, B, etc.)

- Strategy (1, 2, etc.)
 - o Output (a, b, etc.)

PG I. Delivers a curriculum that reflects core disciplinary content and provides flexibility for student specialization

Objective I-A: Students will apply disciplinary content in a convincing manner.

Year 1

- Strategy I-A-1: Students will synthesize seminal works with current research to analyze a problem, policy, or organization.
 - o Output I-A-1-a: Students will write a research paper that applies both foundational and current research to a practical situation in PA 5060 and PA 5260.

Year 2

- I-A-2: Students will connect and contrast concepts from across the curriculum.
 - o I-A-2-a: Students will integrate content from at least two (of the five) core seminar courses in the final Capstone project.
 - (Note: the five core seminar courses are PA 5060, 5180, 5260, 5360, & 5460)

Year 3

- I-A-3: Students will apply core concepts in an applied setting.
 - o I-A-3-a: Students will integrate content from at least one (of the five) core seminar courses in the PA 5010 Field Based Research reflection paper.
 - (Note: the five core seminar courses are PA 5060, 5180, 5260, 5360, & 5460)
- I-A-4: Students will demonstrate a proficiency in content specific to their chosen concentration.
 - o I-A-4-a: Students will integrate content from required courses in their chosen concentration in the final Capstone project.

Objective I-B: Students will use appropriate strategies to solve problems and make decisions.

Year 1

- I-B-1: Students will utilize rigorous methodology in the completion of academic research
 - o I-B-1-a: Students will prepare a research proposal in PA 5000 that identifies and integrates key components of the research process in a logical and consistent manner.
 - o I-B-1-b: Students will utilize rigorous methodology in the Capstone project.

Year 2

- I-B-2: Students will reflect critically on the nature and extent of the skills and abilities of others
 - o I-B-2-a: Students will complete peer assessments in a PA 5180 group project.
 - o I-B-2-b: Students will analyze the performance of others in the Internship paper (per the following paper prompts).
 - Discuss and analyze the most effective strategies and behaviors exhibited by your supervisor and/or other managers in your host organization that you would hope to replicate as a manager.
 - Discuss and analyze strategies and behaviors exhibited by your supervisor and/or other managers in your host organization that concerned you or that you would not like to emulate.

Year 3

- I-B-3: Students will reflect critically on the nature and extent of their skills and abilities.
 - o I-B-3-a: Students will reflect upon the results of a self-assessment exercise on strengths-based leadership in the Capstone course.
 - o I-B-3-b: Students will submit a Statement of Interest on the initial MPA application that draws upon the four domains in the strengths-based leadership exercise.
 - o I-B-3-c: Students will analyze their own performance in the Internship paper (per the following paper prompts).
 - Discuss something that you did especially well and/or that you are especially proud of during the internship.

- Discuss a mistake that was made, a short-coming that was revealed, and/or a task that was beyond your skills and abilities during the internship.
- I-B-4: Students will perform systematic data collection and analysis in practical endeavors
 - I-B-4-a: Students will write a Field Based Research paper that utilizes systematic data collection and/or analysis

Objective I-C: Students will communicate effectively in diverse professional contexts.

Year 1

- I-C-1: Students will give organized and convincing oral presentations.
 - o I-C-1-a: Students will give multiple oral presentations in the core seminar courses.
 - o I-C-1-b: Students will deliver a presentation at the Capstone conference.

Year 2

- I-C-2: Students will demonstrate appropriate behavior in professional settings.
 - o I-C-2-a: Students will have their performance evaluated by their Internship supervisor.
 - o I-C-2-b: Students will have their behavior and disposition at professional meetings evaluated by the alumni, esp. at the NCCCMA & ASULGAA conferences.
 - o I-C-2-c: Students will have their in-class contribution/participation/demeanor evaluated.

Year 3

- I-C-3: Students will demonstrate the ability to write convincingly, concisely, and precisely.
 - o I-C-3-a: Student papers will be evaluated throughout the core seminar courses
 - o I-C-3-b: The quality of writing in the culminating Capstone paper will be evaluated as an indicator of communication in written form.

PG II. Develop collaborative relationships across the university and with local government, non-profit, and criminal justice professionals in the region and state

Year 1

Objective II-A: The Faculty will pursue collaborative and applied research opportunities.

- II-A-1: Faculty will collaborate on academic research with colleagues within, and external to, the Department and University.
 - o II-A-1-a: At least one such collaborative project will be submitted for peer-reviewed publication each year from among the nucleus PA faculty.
- II-A-2: Faculty will pursue applied research projects with professionals external to the University.
 - o II-A-2-a: At least one such collaborative project will be initiated each year from among the nucleus PA faculty.

Objective II-B: The Program will offer career development assistance for students and graduates.

- II-B-1: The Capstone course will incorporate career development content.
 - o II-B-1-a: A representative from the University's Career Development Center will make a presentation to pre-service students in the Capstone course.
 - o II-B-1-b: Students will produce a resume that conforms to best practices and professional expectations in the Capstone course.
- II-B-2: The Program will assist students and graduates to find professional positions.
 - o II-B-2-a: All students will be employed in the profession within six months of graduation.

Year 2

Objective II-C: The Program will expose students to public service professionals.

- II-C-1: Faculty will employ experiential learning strategies and interactive experiences with professionals.
 - o II-C-1-a: The group project in PA 5180 will be based on a public policy program.
 - o II-C-1-b: Practitioners will present in the Personnel, Budgeting, and Capstone courses.
- II-C-2: Students will gain practical experience within the curriculum.

- II-C-2-a: Pre-service students will complete an internship for academic credit (i.e. PA 5900) and have their performance evaluated by the academic instructor and site-based supervisor.
- II-C-2-b: In-service students will complete an applied, field-based research project for their current employer in PA 5010.
- II-C-3: Students will be encouraged to participate in professional organizations and meetings.
 - II-C-3-a: A student will serve on the Executive Committee of the ASULGAA.
 - II-C-3-b: Students will attend the NCCCMA annual winter conference.
 - II-C-3-c: Students will attend, and contribute to, the ASULGAA annual fall conference.
 - II-C-3-d: The Program will support the ICMA Student Chapter.

Year 3

Objective II-D: The Program will offer inter-disciplinary opportunities for students.

- II-D-1: Students will enroll in a course outside of the Program that relates to their chosen concentration.
 - II-D-1-a: Ensure that all pre-service and in-service students complete a non-PA course.
- II-D-2: The Program will implement formal dual degree agreements, especially with the Masters programs in Business Administration and Appalachian Studies.
 - II-D-2-a: Enroll at least one student in each dual degree program per academic year.
- II-D-3: The Program will guide the implementation of an inter-disciplinary graduate certificate in non-profit administration.
 - II-D-3-a: Enroll a requisite number of students in a non-profit certificate program.
- II-D-4: The Program will encourage MPA students to apply for graduate assistantships from units other than the Department of Government and Justice Studies.
 - II-D-4-a: At least two MPA students will work in non-GJS assistantships per academic year.

PG III. Promote high-quality faculty teaching, scholarship, and service

Year 1

Objective III-A: The Program will hire qualified, diverse, active, and professionally-oriented nucleus faculty.

- III-A-1: The Program will prefer the hiring of faculty with significant, relevant professional experience.
 - o III-A-1-a: Nucleus faculty will have prior professional experience relevant to the course(s) delivered.
- III-A-2: The Program will recruit a demographically diverse faculty.
 - o III-A-2-a: The Program will make deliberate efforts to recruit and hire applicants from historically disadvantaged groups.

Year 2

Objective III-B: The Program will deliver an effective educational experience.

- III-B-1: Students and alumni will provide evaluations of instruction and inform curricular content.
 - o III-B-1-a: Student evaluations of core courses will be reviewed.
 - Student evaluations of core courses will be aggregated each semester and compared against an identified benchmark.
 - o III-B-1-b: Pre-service students will evaluate the MPA Program in their Internship paper
 - What did the internship experience teach you that you did not learn in MPA classes?
 - o III-B-1-c: Students will evaluate the curriculum in an Exit Survey
 - What classes/content were not offered that you would have been interested in taking/learning about?
 - o III-B-1-d: Alumni will provide suggestions for curricular content in a triennial survey.

Year 3

Objective III-C: The faculty will remain professionally active and engaged.

- III-C-1: The faculty will maintain active research agendas.

- III-C-1-a: Consistent with Departmental by-laws, each nucleus faculty member will produce one scholarly product per year.
- III-C-2: The nucleus faculty will be active in service opportunities beyond the Program and Department.
 - III-C-2-a: Each nucleus faculty member will participate consistently in service to the College, University, profession and/or community.

PG IV. Sustain and enhance the program's governance, resources, and established strengths

Year 1

Objective IV-A: The Program will secure adequate resource support.

- IV-A-1: The Department will support the Program and its accreditation.
 - o IV-A-1-a: The Department will fund the Program Director's attendance at the annual NASPAA conference.
 - o IV-A-1-b: The Department will dedicate the necessary number of faculty positions to the Program to fulfill its mission.
 - o IV-A-1-c: The Department will dedicate a graduate assistantship to assist with Program management.
- IV-A-2: The Department will provide adequate resource support to the nucleus faculty.
 - o IV-A-2-a: The Department will support the attendance of each nucleus faculty member at one academic conference per year.
 - o IV-A-2-b: The Department will assign a graduate assistant to each nucleus faculty member who desires such support.

Year 2

Objective IV-B: The Program will maintain a sustainable and collaborative governance structure.

- IV-B-1: Faculty will participate in program governance.
 - o IV-B-1-a: Nucleus faculty will attend programmatic meetings.
 - o IV-B-1-b: Nucleus faculty will assist with the development and implementation of the program's assessment plan.
 - o IV-B-1-c: Nucleus faculty will serve on Capstone committees.

Objective IV-C: The Program will maintain meaningful relations with alumni and stakeholders.

- IV-C-1: The Program will assist alumni efforts that support students.
 - o IV-C-1-a: The Program will encourage new alumni to join the ASULGAA.
 - o IV-C-1-b: The Program will coordinate the alumni-supported attendance of students at professional conferences, esp. NCCCMA and ASULGAA.
 - o IV-C-1-c: The Program will initiate and maintain a recognized network of alumni in the non-profit sector.

- IV-C-2: The Program will receive feedback from the alumni via a triennial survey.
 - o IV-C-2-a: The Program will reflect upon its reputation.
 - o IV-C-2-b: The Program will reflect upon the extent and quality of engagement with the alumni.
- IV-C-3: The Program will communicate regularly with alumni and stakeholders.
 - o IV-C-3-a: The Program will maintain a current and informative website.
 - o IV-C-3-b: The Program will update the alumni via an annual newsletter.

Year 3

Objective IV-D: The Program will recruit, support, and retain high-quality in-service and pre-service students.

- IV-D-1: The Program will recruit and support pre-service students.
 - o IV-D-1-a: The Program will enroll at least three pre-service students via the accelerated admission program each academic year.
 - o IV-D-1-b: A nucleus faculty member will recruit students from a historically black college or university (HBCU) each year.
 - o IV-D-1-c: The Program will provide a graduate assistantship to a majority of interested pre-service students.
- IV-D-2: The Program will recruit in-service students.
 - o IV-D-2-a: The Program will maintain in-service cohorts in Catawba and Forsyth.
 - o IV-D-2-b: The Program will implement a recruitment plan for in-service students in Boone.

Matching the Assessment Plan to the Public Service Values emphasized by the MPA program

Program Goal, Objective, Strategy, Output(s) (year to be assessed)

Expertise: to act with competence, skill, and knowledge to achieve effective outcomes

I, A, 2, a (2)

I, B, 1, a & b (1)

II, D, 1, a (3)

III, A, 1, a (1)

IV, B, 1, a – c (2)

Accountability: to act with integrity and transparency in the lawful pursuit of the public interest

IV, B, 1, a – c (2)

I, B, 3, a – c (3)

II, B, 1, b (1)

III, B, 1, a (2)

IV, C, 3, a & b (2)

Responsiveness: to be respectful of the perspectives of citizens, colleagues, collaborators, and other stakeholders

IV, B, 1, a-c (2)

I, C, 2, a - c (2)

II, C, 1 - 3 (2)

III, B, 1, b - d (2)

IV, C, 2, a & b (2)