

MPA Examinations

Each candidate for the MPA degree must pass a two-part examination process. The first part of the examination process depends on whether the student has selected the internship or thesis option. For students selecting the internship option, the first part of the examination entails the successful completion of the Proseminar in Public Administration (GOVT 519) with a grade of B- or higher. For individuals selecting the thesis option, the first part involves the writing of a thesis that meets with the preliminary approval of the thesis committee.

The second part of the examination process, required of all students, is the taking of a final oral examination. The oral examination is designed to evaluate a candidate's understanding of the concepts, scope and methods of public administration as both an academic discipline and a public service vocation. Students must have completed all core courses and removed any incomplete grades from their transcript before scheduling the final oral examination. The Graduate School requires that students, at the time of taking the final oral examination, have a cumulative graduate grade point average of at least a 3.0 and be enrolled in their final semester. Normally, oral exams are not scheduled during the summer, unless an examination committee can be convened.

For students selecting the thesis option, the final examination committee is the same as the thesis committee. For students selecting the internship option, the final examination committee is composed of three MPA core faculty members of the student's choice, one of whom will serve as chair of the committee. As required by the Graduate School, a faculty member from outside of the Department of Government must participate in the final oral examination, as the representative of the Dean of the Graduate School. Students may recommend an individual to serve as the outside representative. This person must be a member of the graduate faculty, and where possible, from a related academic discipline. For student's claiming a graduate minor, the Dean's representative must be from the minor department. The oral examination committee for students pursuing the joint MPA/MCJ degree will consist of two representatives from the MPA faculty, two representatives from the MCJ faculty, and a Dean's representative from outside both departments.

The final oral examination is scheduled for two hours; three hours for joint degree candidates. In the case of students selecting the internship option, the final examination covers material of the committee's choice. Candidates should be prepared to discuss general questions about public administration theory and practice, public administration literature, sub-fields of the discipline and the internship project.

The oral examination for students pursuing the thesis option will be in two parts. The student must make a brief presentation of the thesis, including findings, and then a question and answer period is conducted. The examination committee is at liberty to question the student on any aspect of the student's graduate study, although it is presumed the emphasis will be upon the thesis topic.

After the final oral examination, students preparing a thesis will be encouraged to offer a public colloquium in which the major findings will be shared with those interested in the topic. This presentation should be no longer than one-half hour in length, with an additional half-hour for questions from the audience.