Western Carolina University
Master of Public Affairs

Program Handbook

Last updated
July 2008
Dear Student:

Welcome to the Master of Public Affairs Program at Western Carolina University. We offer a challenging and rewarding course of study for students who are interested in working in or around government. To meet the needs of our students, we provide excellent colleagues, dedicated faculty, and an extensive alumni network. Our alumni include town managers, police chiefs, human resources directors, and other successful individuals working in public service.

This handbook, along with the Western Carolina University Graduate Catalog should introduce you to the details, requirements and procedures of our graduate program. Of course our faculty will be happy to answer any of your questions, but we hope you will also turn here for guidance.

This Student Handbook is (and will continue to be) a work in progress. It is here to help answer your questions and guide you through our program. If there is something you do not understand, or if there is anything you would like to see added to the program, please don’t hesitate to let me know.

Best wishes,

Christopher A. Cooper, Ph.D.
MPA Director and Associate Professor
PROGRAM MISSION

The Master of Public Affairs program is a professional degree designed to prepare students for leadership positions in the public sector. The program emphasizes the integration of public affairs theory and practice to improve the managerial, analytical, and communication skills of students. The program promotes teaching, applied research, and service activities that will enhance the performance of the public sector with a particular emphasis on the Western North Carolina region.

As befits a graduate program in public affairs, program faculty are concerned that students obtain skills and knowledge enabling them to be effective managers and leaders in the public sector, nonprofit organizations, and, if they choose, in the business world. The program is designed so that, in addition to applied skills, students come to understand the nature of public affairs and the governing principles important to public service. The program offers courses in the weekday evenings and weekends, as well as a few day classes in order to serve the working professionals as well as full-time students.

As such, the objective of this degree program is to prepare individuals for positions of leadership in these sectors. The curriculum provides a solid base in the political, managerial and analytical aspects of public and nonprofit sector operations.

ORGANIZATION

The Master of Public Affairs program at Western Carolina University is housed within the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs. The MPA program is headed by the MPA Director who answers to the Political Science and Public Affairs Department Head, who answers to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences who is in turn responsible to the Provost. The University is headed by the Chancellor who is responsible to the Board of Trustees for the University, to the President of the entire University of North Carolina system, and the system's Board of Governors.

Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for the MPA program: determining its curriculum, advising its students, teaching its courses, preparing and evaluating comprehensive examinations, and other work of the MPA program. In addition, adjunct and part-time faculty with particular subject expertise teach courses on a part-time basis.

The MPA Advisory Board assists in a variety of ways: to evaluate curricula, advise on placement of students, and suggest ways that the MPA program can interact more effectively with the profession. Professionals from the community are invited by the University to serve as members of the board for each academic year.

Faculty

Dr. Claudia Bryant (PhD, University of Tennessee), Assistant Professor. Teaches Public Affairs Administration, Public Budgeting.

Dr. Todd Collins (PhD, University of Georgia, JD, University of North Carolina), Assistant Professor. Teaches Legal Issues for Public Affairs.
Dr. Christopher Cooper (PhD, University of Tennessee), MPA Director and Associate Professor. Teaches Policy Analysis, State and Local Governance, Research Methods in Public Affairs, and Political Parties.

Dr. Gibbs Knotts (PhD, Emory University) Associate Professor. Teaches Research Methods for Public Affairs, Budgeting, and Southern Politics.

Dr. C. Don Livingston (PhD, University of Mississippi), Professor. Teaches seminar in American Politics, Public Policy Formulation, State and Local Governance.

Dr. Gordon Mercer (PhD, University of Florida), Professor and Director of the Public Policy Institute. Teaches Public Organizational Theory, Public Affairs Administration, and Political and Organizational Leadership.

Dr. Jason Sides (PhD, Florida State University), Assistant Professor. Teaches Public Organizational Theory, Budgeting, and Non-Profit Management.

Professional Organizations

The MPA program faculty encourages students to become members of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) and the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA). For more information about ASPA, visit the ASPA website at www.aspanet.org.

Other organizations that encourage membership of students of public administration are the International City/County Management Association (www.icma.org) and the North Carolina League of Municipalities (www.nclm.org). Each year the North Carolina City and County Management Association invites MPA Students to attend its winter conference held in Durham and provides competitive scholarships for MPA students.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Welcome to the Master of Public Affairs (MPA) Program at Western Carolina University (WCU). The program requires you to complete 36 hours of graduate course work and a comprehensive exam. As part of these 36 hours, pre-service students must complete an internship and defend an internship report. In-service students do not complete an internship, but must complete the same number of required hours.

This Handbook is designed as a supplement to the Graduate Catalog. Information in the Graduate Catalog is relevant to all graduate students at WCU, and you should become familiar with that information. If this handbook and the graduate catalog do not adequately answer your questions, please see your advisor or the Director of the MPA Program.

The MPA Program is housed in the Department of Political Science & Public Affairs within the College of Arts and Sciences.

PSC/PA Office: Stillwell 358

PSC/PA Phone Number: 828-227-7475
WCU Programs in Asheville Office: Karpen Hall 120 or at www.wcu.edu/wcuasheville. A .pdf of the WCU at UNCA survival guide is available at this website.

Faculty and graduate assistant mailboxes are located in the Political Science Department in Stillwell 358.

Faculty offices are located on the third floor of Stillwell Building.

Other information for MPA students can be found at:

http://www.wcu.edu/4839.asp

Other information for current graduate students at WCU can be found at:

http://www.wcu.edu/43.asp

Admission

Any student who satisfies published admission criteria is fully admitted to the MPA program. Students may be provisionally admitted to the program. Upon completion of the required provisions, the student will be moved to full admission. The Graduate School issues a letter with the formal decision of all admissions decisions. Students may begin the program in any semester (fall, spring, or summer). Requirements for admission to full standing in the MPA Degree Program include:

1. A completed application to the Graduate School with paid application fee.
2. A bachelor’s degree, or its equivalent, from an accredited college or university.
3. Appropriate grades in undergraduate work, with particular emphasis on the last two years.
4. An appropriate score on the Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical sections of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE).
5. Official transcripts from all postsecondary educational institutions in which the candidate was enrolled.
6. Students are not required to submit letters of recommendation, but may wish to submit letters if they feel their application is lacking in some other way.

Applications for admission must be made using the on-line system (https://app.applyyourself.com/?id=wcu-grad). Once the Graduate School has received all the materials associated with the application, the materials are sent to the MPA Director. Generally, the Director then makes a recommendation (accept/deny/provisional accept) to the Graduate School. In some cases, the Director may call a meeting of the MPA Admissions Committee to make a decision on admission. In these cases, the committee reviews the packet and makes a recommendation (accept/deny/provisional) to the MPA Director. The Director reviews the application, makes a recommendation and sends the packet back to the Graduate School. The Graduate School has the final say on an application based on the recommendations from the program. Once that final decision is reached, the Dean of the Graduate School sends a letter in the mail to the applicant with the outcome of the process. Generally 15-20 students are admitted each fall with another 5-10 in the spring.

Admission recommendations are based on a complete review of the applicant’s file. The following enter into that decision: (1) undergraduate and any graduate grades, (2) scores
on the GRE, (3) specific previous coursework, and (4) applicable work history. If students submit optional letters of recommendation, they will also be taken into consideration.

Students who do not meet full requirements for admission may be admitted provisionally. The specifics of the provision will be spelled out in the admissions letter sent by the Dean of the Graduate School.

For more information on how to arrange taking the GRE, please see “Arranging to Take the GRE” in Appendix A

Advisor

Each student is assigned a faculty member to serve as an academic advisor. The advisor assists the student in the development of a program of study. In addition, the advisor will evaluate requests for transfer credit and determine if other courses should be required.

Course Load

The maximum full-time course load for graduate students is 15 hours per semester. The minimum full-time load per semester is 9 hours. The normal maximum load for graduate assistants is 12 hours per semester. Load limitations during summer school are listed in the Summer School Catalog.

Students employed full-time are limited to 6 hours per semester and 12 semester hours for the academic year. Any exceptions to these rules must be approved by the department and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Time Limit for Degree Completion: The Six Year Rule

Work to be applied toward the MPA degree must have been completed within six years immediately preceding the completion of requirements for the degree. Graduate credits to be accepted in transfer must have been earned within the six-year period. Any extension of time beyond these limits must have the approval of the student’s advisor, the head of the Political Science and Public Affairs department, and the dean of Research and Graduate Studies.

Transfer & Elective Credit

A total of 6 credit hours may be transferred from other universities toward the 36-hour program requirement. This requires written approval from the MPA Director. The decision to count these hours towards the MPA degree is based on several conditions:

1. The student’s assigned advisor and the MPA Director must agree that the transferred credit is appropriate to the MPA degree and student’s program of study; and
2. Transfer credit from other universities will be accepted in accordance with university regulations. Generally, the Graduate School will accept up to 6 credit hours of graduate work from other accredited institutions.

In addition to transfer credit from other universities, students may opt to take courses in other graduate programs at Western Carolina University. With the approval of the student’s
assigned advisor and the MPA Director, the student will be permitted to count courses eligible for graduate credit from other Western Carolina University disciplines.

Graduation

Once a student is nearing completion of the program requirements, he/she must begin the steps in the graduation process. The process begins several months prior to graduation. Initially, the student must file an “Application for Graduation” form, available in the “Forms” section of this Handbook. Due dates for graduation applications may change, so check with the Graduate School or Registrar for current information.

All students must also submit an ‘Intent to Graduate’ form to the MPA Director (see “Forms”).

Tuition and Fees

2008-2009 tuition and fees for a full-time in-state graduate student is $5072 per year (not including summers). Tuition and fees for a full-time out-of-state graduate student is $9,864.50 per year (not including summers). Please note that this does not include books and software. For more information about tuition and fees, please see the Graduate Catalog.

Financial Aid for MPA Students

Scholarships

Each academic year, the Graduate School at WCU awards a limited number of $6000 Chancellor’s Fellowships. These fellowships are awarded to exceptionally promising students, permitting them to devote all of their energy to study and research directed towards completing their degree at WCU. The WCU Graduate School also has a number of $300 study grants which are available to relieve financial pressures so exceptionally promising students may devote more of their energy to study and research directed toward completing their degree. MPA students have been highly competitive for both of these awards in the past. Applications for both awards may be found on the Graduate School website.

MPA students in the past have also proved very competitive for scholarships not directly affiliated with the university. For instance, each year the North Carolina City/County Managers Association offers one $2500 scholarship to a WCU MPA student who is a resident of North Carolina and is interested in a career in local government. The National Forum for Black Public Administrators also hosts the Marks of Excellence Scholarship, totaling $1000.

Graduate Assistantships

Many opportunities for employment are available on and off campus. The MPA program, Public Policy Institute, and the Department of Political Science offer 7-8 graduate assistantships every year.

To apply for a Graduate Assistantship, a student must indicate so when they apply to the MPA program. If you are interested in an assistantship, but you did not indicate so when you applied, please contact the program director. Students who are granted an
assistantship must enroll in at least 9 credit hours of classes each term and work in the department for 20 hours per week. Work duties include assisting professors in the department with their research (sometimes publishing with them as a co-author), serving as a teaching assistant in selected undergraduate courses, and assisting the department with assessment activities. Graduate Assistantships pay between $7000 and $8000 each year.

The department also generally places a number of students in the Public Policy Institute (PPI). Students working in the PPI gain valuable real world policy experience.

From time to time, students may also receive graduate assistantships to work in other related units on campus. You may wish to contact the Graduate School if you are interested in these options.

**ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

Sequence of courses

Because we admit students in the fall and spring semesters, there is no required sequence of courses. Please see your advisor to decide the best sequence for you. We generally recommend, however, that you take as many of the core courses early in your program as possible. This will allow you to take comprehensive exams closer to the completion of your courses. In addition, your core courses may help you decide where your interests lie, thus your choice of electives will become clearer.

Recommended Prerequisites

We strongly recommend that all applicants to the MPA have completed coursework in American Government, Basic Macroeconomics, and basic statistics. Students should also have basic computer proficiency. Students who have not fulfilled these requirements may wish to take courses in these areas prior to enrolling in the MPA.

General Requirements

The program requires 36 hours of graduate coursework. Students complete: (1) core coursework; (2) concentration requirements; (3) concentration electives; and (4) for preservice students, an internship, including defense of the internship report. In addition to course work, each student must pass a comprehensive exam. These elements must be completed in order for a student to be awarded the MPA degree. All core courses are offered on weekday evenings in order to serve working professionals as well as full-time students.

In addition to the content implied by the course names, the core curriculum focuses on political and legal institutions and their processes, economic forces and social systems, ethical considerations for public affairs, organizational and managerial skills and practices, concepts and techniques of financial administration, and analytic techniques using computers and statistics to improve decision making.
Course Requirements

The Master of Public Affairs degree program is designed for students who possess professional experience and seek additional education to prepare for career advancement and also for students planning careers in the public service area. The program requires each student to complete the Public Affairs core requirements (18 hours), select and complete the requirements for a concentration (9 or 18 hours), and up to 9 hours of guided electives for in-service students or 6 hours of guided electives and 3 hours of internship (PA 685) for preservice students. All students are put into the General Administration Concentration if they do not select another option.


**Criminal Justice Concentration**

Students who complete this concentration will have the requisite 18 hours in Criminal Justice to teach Criminal Justice at the community college level. The Criminal Justice concentration requires 12 hours in the Public Affairs core, PA 670, 671, 672, and 673; 12 hours of Criminal Justice courses, CJ 600, 650 – Criminal Justice/Criminological Theory, 652 – Research Methods, 669; 6 hours selected from CJ 620 – Criminal Justice Administration, 670 – Criminal Justice Policy, 675 – Ethics in Criminal Justice, or 593 – Special Topics in Criminal Justice; and six hours of PA or PSC courses approved by the MPA Director. For preservice students this would include 3 hours of internship.

**Public Policy Concentration**

Students who wish a concentration in Public Policy must take 18 hours in the Public Affairs core; 9 hours from PSC 521—Political and Organizational Leadership, PA 572 – Public Policy Formulation, 640 – Environmental Politics and Policy, 650 – The Nonprofit Sector, MHS 510 – Systems and Policy in Health Care, EDL 820 – Educational Politics and Policies, or CJ 670; and 9 hours of guided electives for in-service students or 6 hours of guided electives and 3 hours of internship for preservice students.

**Human Resources Administration Concentration**

The Human Resources (HR) Administration concentration requires 18 hours in the Public Affairs core; 9 hours selected from PA 677* - Public Personnel Management, HR 602* - Human Resources Research and Evaluation Methods, HR 605* - Orientation to Human Resources, HR 610 – Human Resources Development, HR 617 – Organization Performance, HR 645 – Consultation in Human Resources, HR 660 – Career Development Management Systems, HR 675* - Leadership in Human Resources, or HR 693* - Selected Topics in Human Resources; and 9 hours of guided electives for in-service students or 6 hours of guided electives and 3 hours of internship for preservice students.

**Note:** PA 677 is offered only in Asheville each fall. All of the HR classes are offered on-line. Those denoted with an * are also concurrently offered in Asheville, assuming minimum enrollment numbers are met. If minimum enrollment numbers are not met, enrolled students will be transferred to on-line sections.

**General Administration Concentration**
The General Administration concentration is intended for students with specialized needs and interests who would like more flexibility in the courses they choose. In addition to the required 18 hours in the Public Affairs core, students choose 9 hours of graduate courses within Public Affairs or Political Science for the General Administration concentration, and an additional 9 hours of guided electives for in-service students or 6 hours of guided electives and 3 hours of internship for preservice students.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Each student must successfully complete a comprehensive examination ("Comps") in order to receive the Masters Degree. The comprehensive examination is a written examination designed to test the student's knowledge of, skills in, and ability to synthesize administrative analysis, theory, and practice. The exam will cover the subject areas addressed by the core courses. Students are individually responsible for making certain that they take the requisite courses. Your advisor or the MPA Director can help you plan your academic schedule to assure that you have the required courses. It is, however, the student's responsibility to enroll for the courses in a timely fashion in order to progress to the comprehensive examination stage as quickly as possible. Doing so will ensure that the materials presented in the core courses are relatively fresh in the student’s mind, thereby easing the preparation for the examination.

Examination Structure

The exam covers the core areas of the curriculum: public affairs administration, public organizational theory, public budgeting, research methods for public affairs, legal issues in public affairs, and policy analysis. It is up to each professor to determine how many questions will appear on his/her section. Students are to apply what they have learned in the core courses to respond to the questions at hand.

Almost all of the questions in the comprehensives require essay answers.

Procedures for the Comprehensive Examination

1. Students who have completed the required core courses are expected to take the next scheduled comprehensive examination. Any student who requires an exception to the scheduled examination must submit a written request explaining the exception requested and the reason for the request to the MPA Director. Students who wish to take the exam must fill out the application to take comprehensive exams, available on the MPA website and in Appendix A of this handbook.

2. The comprehensive examination is scheduled twice a year: in late fall and in late spring, but not in the summer. Fall exams are given in Cullowhee; Spring exams are given in Asheville and are usually scheduled about 2 weeks from the end of the semester. The examination is administered as a closed-book, closed note, in-house exam. Exams must be typed and students must turn in one hard copy of the examination answers along with an electronic copy on disk.

3. Completed examinations are the property of the MPA Program and will not be returned to the student. The results of the comprehensive examinations are
considered confidential by the MPA faculty and not discussed with any other students.

4. Once a student begins the exam, it counts as an attempt, regardless of whether or not the student turns in the answers. If the student opts not to turn in the answers, then he/she receives an automatic “fail” on that attempt and must try their second attempt on the next offering of the exam.

5. If a student fails any section(s) of the exam, to continue in the program, a student must take that section(s) over the next time the exam is offered. A student who fails the exam is expected to meet with his or her advisor and each grader to discuss preparation for retaking the exam the next time it is offered. Students are allowed only two attempts to pass the comprehensive exams unless special permission is given for a third attempt by the MPA Director. If a student fails the second attempt, the Graduate School dismisses them from the university.

How Comprehensive Exams are Evaluated

The exam graders look specifically for the following capabilities and evaluate answers on the basis of how well a student demonstrates the following:

1. Ability to discuss substantively the various concepts, problems, models and policies addressed in the questions. The student must be able to respond with an in-depth analysis so that the grader can conclude that he/she is conversant with the subject matter addressed in the question. There is generally no one correct answer for any question.

2. Ability to identify and incorporate into a discussion of viewpoints associated with specific authors and their works and/or more general schools of thought as they relate to the subject matter raised in the question.

3. Ability to write a response with clarity. A well-organized and clear exposition of a student’s views is extremely important. Outlining the response before writing a more thorough answer is a very useful approach. Related, students are expected to write coherent and grammatical answers to comprehensive examination questions.

4. The exam is graded by the Comprehensive Examination Committee, composed of the core MPA faculty. MPA faculty who teach core courses write and grade the questions covering the competency area they are responsible for. Each question is graded on a four-level scale: High Pass, Pass, Low Pass, and Fail.

Comprehensive examinations are normally graded within two weeks of the date on which they are attempted. Students are notified of the outcome by letter sent to the address contained in their departmental student record. Students failing the exam must retake it at the next time the exams are scheduled.

For suggestions on how to prepare for Comprehensive Exams, please see Appendix A.
THE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT

Each student in the Master of Public Affairs Program is required to complete a professional field experience in public administration either through an internship or full-time employment. An approved internship is intended to give the student practical experience in the administration of a public or nonprofit organization. The field experience should broaden a student’s perspective on public management through first-hand application of classroom knowledge under supervision provided by the agency. Ideally, working with the MPA Director and the agency supervisor, the student will experience a variety of administrative and managerial tasks and processes. After completing the internship, students will complete a 25-35 page internship report and defend the report in front of the core MPA faculty. Guidelines for this report can be found in Appendix A of this Handbook.

The requirement of a professional field experience may be satisfied in one of three ways: (1) through a full-time position in a public or nonprofit organization; (2) through a full-time position in a business where the work experience is approved for internship; or (3) through an approved internship in a public or nonprofit organization. Students who fill the professional field experience through options 1 or 2 must enroll in a three-hour elective instead.

Internships

The internship experience is intended to provide exposure to the workings of government or nonprofit organizations. A paid position is ideal, but many non-paid internships are available and provide valuable experience. Students completing an internship must be enrolled in 685. The internship must be approved by the Director of the MPA Program and the internship advisor (a professor of your choice). A great deal of flexibility is allowed for the internship. However, the following are some general standards and criteria.

Length – Students must work at least 150 hours. If a student wishes to work more hours, they are welcome to, but s/he will not receive additional course credit.

Supervision and evaluation - Someone at the place of employment (the organization offering the internship) must serve as a supervisor and provide an evaluation of the students work at the end of the internship. Standard forms are available in the MPA office for this use (see below). The advisor is expected to meet with the student and the internship supervisor at the place of employment if at all possible. When the internship is nearing completion, both the student and the agency supervisor will be asked to submit separate "MPA Internship Evaluation" forms to the MPA office (see the "Forms” section of this Handbook). These evaluation forms are included in the student’s file for determining eligibility for graduation. They are not "graded” but are used in order to determine good internship opportunities from bad ones for future students looking to fulfill their professional experience requirement.

Students with limited or no professional working experience must obtain and complete an “MPA Internship Information” form and submit it to the MPA office. These forms are used by the MPA Director to judge the appropriateness of a proposed internship experience by the student and an agency.

Periodically, information about internships will be available in the MPA office, announced in classes, and/or included in periodic email updates to the MPA student body. Students are
also encouraged to pursue internship information by contacting the University Career Center (http://careers.wcu.edu/).

Although students may complete the internship any time after admission to the program, students are strongly encouraged to fulfill the internship requirement upon completion of their second semester.

For guidance and information on how to find an internship, please see Appendix A.

Procedure for Completing Internship Requirement

1. Near the end of the semester in which a student has completed all of his/her core classes, he/she should identify internship opportunities. Once identified, the student should discuss the opportunity with their advisor and fill out the MPA Internship Information Form.

2. Their advisor will "approve" or "deny" the proposed internship. If approved, then the agency and student may move forward with the arrangement. This may be on a paid basis or on a volunteer basis. If the form is denied, the student needs to find another opportunity that better meets the goals of the professional experience requirement.

3. Once approved, the student fills out the request to defend the internship and turns it into the MPA Director. Now the student is ready to begin work with the agency. Students are expected to comport themselves with the agencies’ professional expectations. The student represents the university and the MPA program while working with the agency.

4. Students are expected to work for a minimum of 150 hours.

5. Near the end of the internship period, students must complete two forms, both available on the MPA website:

   a. The student must have the agency supervisor complete an "MPA Internship Evaluation By Employer" form and submit it to the MPA office; and

   b. The student must complete an "MPA Internship Evaluation By Intern" form and submit it to the MPA office.

6. When all the forms have been returned to the MPA office, the student’s record will be updated to indicate satisfactory completion of the internship requirement.

7. An Internship Report should be turned in…Internship Defense…etc. For detailed Internship Report requirements, see Appendix A.

INDEPENDENT STUDIES

Sometimes a student may be interested in working with a professor on a topic that is not directly addressed in the formal curriculum. This may include a series of readings on a new topic, working with a professor on a paper, or a number of other things not addressed in the curriculum. As a general rule, the program discourages independent studies because they tend to draw students out of the elective classes. From time to time, however, they may be
the best option for the student. In these limited cases, before enrolling in an independent study, students should consult the faculty member whom the students wishes to work with and work out the details. All independent studies must have a syllabus on-file with the department. Please note that no professor is required to work on an independent study.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

As stated in the WCU Undergraduate & Graduate Catalogs:

Western Carolina University, as a community of scholarship, is also a community of honor. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students work together to achieve the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at WCU because it threatens the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend on knowledge and integrity. Academic dishonesty includes:

A. Cheating - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

B. Fabrication - Intentional falsification or invention of information or citation in an academic exercise.

C. Plagiarism - Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in an academic exercise.

D. Facilitation of academic dishonesty - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help someone else to commit an act of academic dishonesty, such as knowingly allowing another to copy information during an examination or other academic exercise.

Many courses in the MPA department require some degree of independent work outside the classroom setting (such as take-home exams). During these times the student is expected to conduct themselves according to the Academic Integrity guidelines provided above, and also within any specific directions given by the course professor. Not all professors allow open-book and open-note take-home work, so it is important to understand the specific requests of each instructor.
Appendix A
Additional Information on Selected Topics

Arranging to Take the GRE

The department uses scores on the General Section of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) to help make admissions decisions. The GRE is offered is a standardized test offered by Educational Testing Services (ETS) “measures critical thinking, analytical writing, verbal reasoning, and quantitative reasoning skills that have been acquired over a long period of time and that are not related to any specific field of study.” The closest location to take the GRE is the Prometric Testing Center located at 31 College Place, Building D, Suite 107 Asheville, North Carolina 28801. Phone: (828)253-4224. For more information, please visit http://www.ets.org.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING TO TAKE THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

1. Organize and review class notes and underlined sections of texts and readings from your courses.

2. Cooperate with fellow students in developing topic outlines, reviews, and study groups.

3. Make your answers clear, well organized, and cite relevant sources.

4. After you have spent some time reviewing your course material, get together with colleagues and give yourselves a mock exam in the same environment in which you are going to take the real comprehensive exams. Review and evaluate each other's exam answers.

5. Talk to each faculty member who will be writing and grading exams. They may be able to help provide a more detailed list of what to study.

Finding an Internship

The program does not automatically furnish internship placements. The onus is placed on the student to identify such opportunities (as part of the practical experience). Students should consult the list of recent employers of MPA interns, be sure to read the periodic email updates sent to all MPA students by the MPA Director that frequently include internship opportunities, and pursue other sources of information about intern positions independently. The student’s assigned advisor often knows of internship opportunities as well. Assistance may include contacting area agencies, talking to in-service MPA students, working with MPA alumni, and providing academic references to prospective employers. In addition, students are encouraged to contact the University Career Center for further information on internships (http://careers.wcu.edu/).
The Internship Report and Defense

The Internship Report

Not every internship report is the same, or needs to follow a strict format. Good internship reports vary and their content depends on the internship and the individual student. A general outline for the report is given below and copies of selected Internship Reports from MPA students who have successfully completed internships are available at the MPA program homepage.

The report should be approximately 25-35 pages and include the following sections:

1) Title page
2) Table of contents
3) Overview of the agency in which the MPA candidate worked
4) Overview of the specific duties of the MPA candidate
5) Discussion of how internship experience relates to core MPA classes
6) Policy recommendations for the agency
7) Conclusion
8) Appendix (please keep to a minimum. This does not count towards the page count)

Internship Defense

The MPA candidate must defend the internship in front of the core MPA faculty. During the defense, the candidate will give a brief (generally about five-minute) overview of the experience and then answer questions about the report. Based on the quality of the report and defense, MPA candidates will be assigned a grade for PA 685.
Appendix B
How-To’s

HOW TO...COMMUNICATE WITH THE MPA DEPARTMENT

Each student is responsible for making certain that the Department has his/her current contact information, including a current email. We frequently send out program announcements and job opportunities through a Program Listserv. All students need to make sure they are on this list-serv. Please email Lynn Kaufman at lkaufman@email.wcu.edu if you are not on the list-serv.

HOW TO...PURCHASE BOOKS

Students are encouraged to purchase textbooks on-line at http://www.wcu.edu/bookstore/wcua/index.cfm or in the WCU bookstore on campus. Books are also available for classes taught at UNC-A on the UNC-A campus in Karpen Hall 102. The exact operating schedule is published each semester in the WCU programs in Asheville Schedule of Classes. Student also may purchase books from their choice of bookseller, but are cautioned to check carefully for the specific edition and volume of text needed.

HOW TO...USE MY CAT & WEBCT/WEBCAT

My Cat

WebCat is a secure site that provides students, faculty and administrative staff with world-class Intranet and Internet services. This is where you can check your campus e-mail, register for courses, and make secure credit card payments. It serves as a portal for most student services.

To log into MyCat, go to the WCU Homepage at www.wcu.edu and click on the “MyCat” link at the top of the page. When the new window appears, enter your Student ID number (often called your “92 number” because all ID’s begin with these numbers) and your password. If you do not know your 92 number, you can use the ID Finder at https://itapp.wcu.edu/IDFinder. Your default password (or PIN) is either your birth month, year followed by double zero’s (in the format MMYY00) or your full birthday (in the format DDMMYY). You can change your PIN after you login to MyCat the first time.

WebCat

WCU uses WebCat as the interface for distance learning courses. In addition, some of your traditional, in-class courses may use on-line elements to supplement course content.

To log-in, go to the WCU homepage at www.wcu.edu and click on the “WebCat” link at the top of the page. Once on the WebCat homepage, click the “WebCat” button in the “Log In” box on the left side of the page. Enter your 92 number in the “username” box and your PIN in the “password” box (see the MyCat section above for an explanation of your PIN number).
If you are already logged in to MyCat you can access your online courses by clicking on the “My Courses” tab and then the “My Online Courses” link. Once logged in, you will see a list of your courses that have on-line elements. Click on the course name to access the course information. Although your professor will be able to help you with some course content, if you have any technical questions about WebCat, you should first contact IT services.

How To…Get IT and Computer Support

At WCU

IT Support is available Monday-Thursday from 8:00am – 10:00pm and Fridays 8:00am – 5:00pm. WCU ITS Helpdesk can be contacted by phone at 828-277-7487 or toll-free at 866-928-7487 (866-WCU-7ITS). Walk-in support is available at B32 in the Forsyth Building. For support via email, send an email to: itshelp@email.wcu.edu

At UNC-A

A computer lab technician is available in the Asheville office Monday - Thursday, from 5pm – 9pm. The computer lab technician assists faculty and students with the operation of the computer lab, computer carts, smart classrooms, and other audio visual needs. For assistance, please call 828-251-6642.

WHO TO CALL

For questions about admissions requirements, please contact Chris Cooper, MPA Director (ccooper@email.wcu.edu)

For questions about taking the GRE, please contact ETS at 1-866-473-4373

To find out if your application is complete, please call the graduate school at 828-227-3175

To decide which courses to take next semester, please contact your advisor

If you have problems with a professor, first contact the professor directly. If you do not have a satisfactory answer, then contact the Department Head, Gibbs Knotts (gknotts@email.wcu.edu). If you still are not satisfied, please contact Scott Higgins, Dean of the Graduate School (higgins@email.wcu.edu).

For questions about graduation requirements, please contact your advisor, or the MPA Director (Chris Cooper ccooper@email.wcu.edu).

If you have a hold on your account, contact the Graduate School at 828-227-3175.

For questions about financial aid, contact financial aid at (828) 227-7290
At UNCA

WCU resident staff offices are located in 120 Karpen Hall on the UNCA campus. The offices are open Monday - Thursday from 8am - 9pm and on Friday from 8am - 5pm, telephone 828-251-6642 in Asheville or 828-227-7243 from Cullowhee, FAX 828-232-2277. Students are encouraged to call the staff office for assistance with matters pertaining to registration, advisement, admissions, financial assistance, book sales/rental, class schedules, student services, automobile registration, library services, tuition, and payment of fees. Also, a direct telephone system for communicating with all offices on the Cullowhee campus is available to students. For the WCU-Asheville webpage:
http://www.wcu.edu/wcuasheville

HOW TO…GET ACCESS TO THE LIBRARY

At WCU

The WCU Library is located at 176 Central Drive or at www.wcu.edu/404.asp

At UNCA

To support your course work, WCU provides books, periodicals, indexes, and other materials to Ramsey Library on the UNCA campus. You will need a student ID card to check books out and to use materials placed on reserve by your professors. You may keep books for three weeks and renew for additional three week intervals. For instructions on how to get a UNCA id, please see below.

HOW TO…GET A UNCA ID CARD

One-Card IDs are required for all library services on the UNCA campus. They are used to operate the copy and drink machines. They are also used for WCU sponsored athletic events on the Cullowhee campus. You may deposit money on your One Card in the One Card office or automatic deposit machines located in Highsmith and Ramsey Library. New students or continuing students who have not yet received a One-Card, should secure a permanent one during registration. Cards are issued by the One-Card office located in 120 Highsmith University Union. There is no charge for the One-Card. For additional information, go to www.unca.edu/onecard, or call 828-251-6767. Regular hours: Monday-Friday, 8am - 5pm. Special hours: During registration and first week of classes, 9am - 6pm.
**HOW TO…FIND THE FORMS YOU NEED**

Every form referred to in this handbook should either be available on the MPA web site (http://www.wcu.edu/4839.asp) or the Graduate School web site (http://www.wcu.edu/43.asp). Email Dr. Cooper or Lynn Kaufman if you can’t find the form you need on those sites.

**HOW TO…GET TO CAMPUS**

WCU is located in Cullowhee, NC, 5 miles south of Sylva on Highway 107. To get to WCU from Asheville, NC and points east: follow 1-40 West to Exit 27 (Highway 74 West). Follow Highway 74 West to Exit 85 in Sylva. At third light turn left onto Highway 107 South. Follow Highway 107 South to campus. The MPA program is located in the Stillwell Building. The Graduate School is located in the Camp Lab Building.

UNCA is located in Asheville, NC. If you are approaching from the South or West on 1-26 or 1-40, Take I-240 for Asheville. As you cross the river, move into the left-hand lane. Take US 19-23 north. Proceed approximately 1 mile to UNCA exit. Turn right at bottom of exit ramp. Proceed approximately 1/3 mile to second traffic light; turn left onto W.T. Weaver Blvd. Proceed approximately 1/3 mile to second left-hand turn for the main entrance road to UNCA campus. MPA classes and the WCU Graduate Center are located in Karpen Hall.

Maps of both campuses can be found on the following pages.
Map Key to Campus & Symbols

Admissions (UH)
Bookstore (HU)
Campus Information (i)
Carmichael Hall (CH)
Carol Belk Theatre (CBT)
Cooperative Campus Ministries (CCM)
Copy Center (HU)
Founders Hall (FH)
Governors Hall (GH)
Governors Village:
  Vance Hall (p) (campus police)
  Scott Hall (b)
  Gardner Hall (c)
  Moore Hall (d)
  Ashe Hall (e)
  Hoey Hall (f)
Glasshouse (G)
Health & Fitness Ctr. (HFC)
Highsmith University Union (HU)
Humanities Lecture Hall (HLH)
Human Resources (PH)
Justice Gym (JG)
Karpen Hall (KH)
Lipinsky Hall (LH)
Mills Hall (MH)
New Hall (NH)
New Hall Green (NG)
Owen Hall (OH)
Phillips Hall (PH)
Physical Plant (PP)
Ramsey Library (RL)
Reuter Center (RC)
Rhoades/Robinson Hall (RH)
Sam Millar Management Complex (MC)
South Ridge (SR)
University Hall (dining hall) (UH)
University Publications (UP)
University Quadrangle (UQ)
Weizenblatt Health Center (WMC)
West Ridge (WR)
Zageir Hall (ZH)

Parking
VISITORS & VENDORS
Obtain parking permit from Police.
7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon-Fri., except holidays and breaks

COMMUTER STUDENTS PARKING
Lots: 5, 9, B, C, D, E, F and ZH & UH parking deck

RESIDENT STUDENTS PARKING
Lots: 1, 3, A, Ridges parking deck & Ridge Drive. Residents must
park in resident parking areas at all times.

FACULTY/STAFF
Lots: 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18,
B, C, D, E, F, I
Street parking on or inside
University Hts.