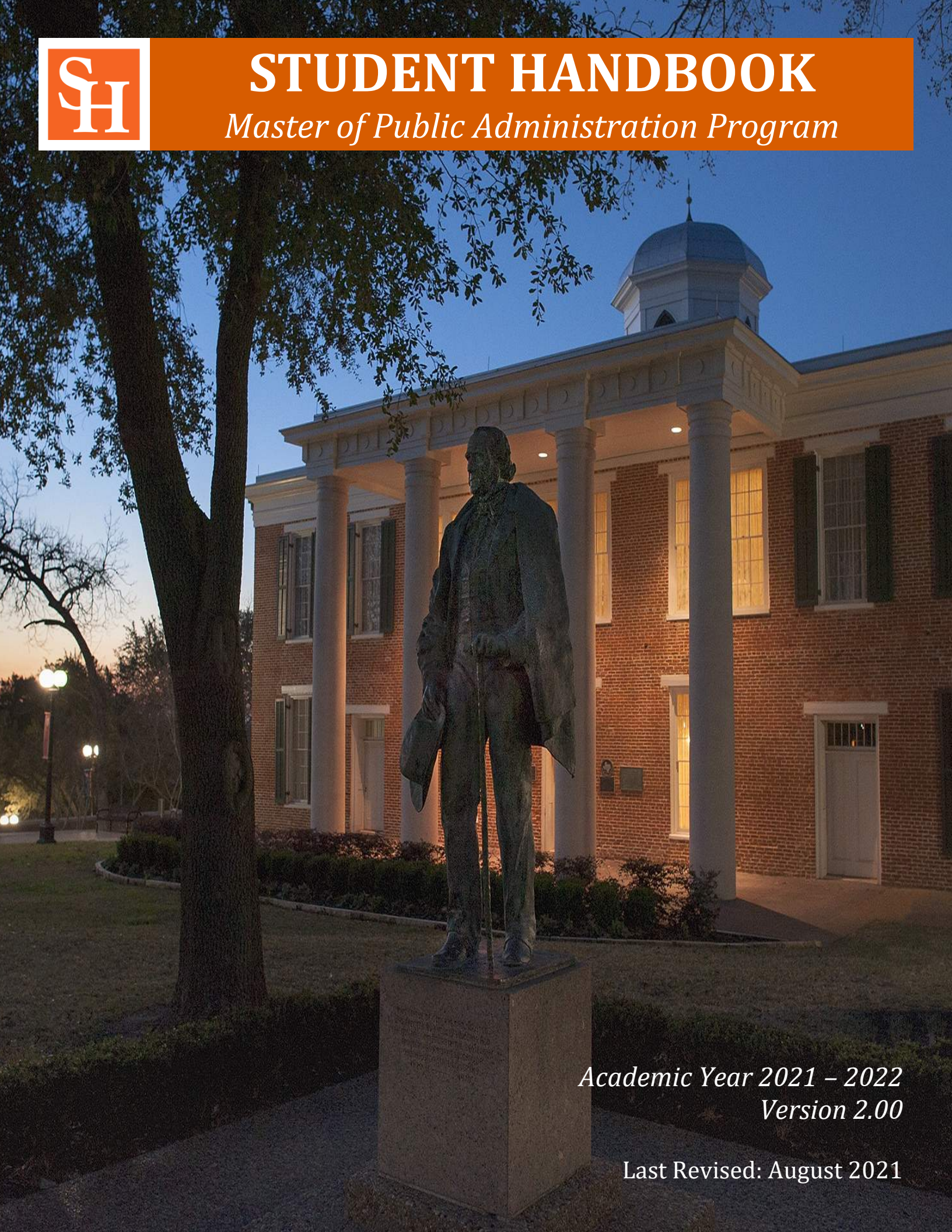




STUDENT HANDBOOK

Master of Public Administration Program



*Academic Year 2021 – 2022
Version 2.00*

Last Revised: August 2021

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OVERVIEW

MPA Handbook

The MPA Student Handbook is a guide that students can use to navigate the MPA program. The Handbook contains information about course registration, credit transfers, financial aid and scholarships, comprehensive examinations, and various services that SHSU graduate students can access. The content contained in the MPA Student Handbook is not exhaustive and is subject to change, without prior notification, due to operational conditions and/or changes in policies and procedures at the program, department, college, graduate school, and university levels. MPA students should become familiar with all SHSU policies and procedures. Students who have questions about their academic status and program of study should contact the MPA Program Director.

MPA Website

www.shsu.edu/mpa

MPA Contact Information

Program Director

Dr. Fatih Demiroz
(936) 294-4571
fxd009@shsu.edu

Administrative Associate

Belinda Myers
(936) 294-2658
bmyers@shsu.edu

Comprehensive Examination Coordinator

Dr. Sungdae Lim
(936) 294-1469
slim@shsu.edu

Student and Alumni Newsletter Coordinator

Dr. Wen-Jiun Wang
(936) 294-1459
wjwang@shsu.edu

Political Science Department Chair

Dr. Jason Enia
(936) 294-1467
jason.enia@shsu.edu



FACULTY PROFILES



Dr. Rob Bittick

Associate Professor

Office: #483 CHSS Building (4TH Floor)

Phone: (936) 294-4105

Email: rmb004@shsu.edu

Dr. Robin Bittick joined the Department of Political Science in 2005. His research interests include institutional environments & complexity theory, administrative ethics, US national security, and political philosophy. He has taught both online and in-person classes such as Dynamics of Public Administration, Organizational Theory & Behavior, Ethics in Government, US National Security Policy, American Foreign Policy, American Public Policy, American Government, and Texas Government. He has published in several journals, including *Emergence: Complexity & Organization*, *Public Integrity*, and *Public Administration Quarterly*. He has also authored articles for *PATimes* and received the inaugural 2002 “Best *PATimes* Article” award. Previously, Bittick worked for the US federal government, U.S. Air Force in acquisition and procurement and has been a consultant to government and nonprofit organizations.

Research Interests and Expertise

- Ethics in government; institutional environments and complexity theory
- U.S. national security/defense policy; nation-building missions
- Political Philosophy: Theology and political purposes; religious toleration



Dr. Fatih Demiroz

Associate Professor

Office: #476 CHSS Building (4TH Floor)

Phone: (936) 294-4571

Email: fxd009@shsu.edu

Website: www.fatihdemiroz.com

Dr. Fatih Demiroz joined the Political Science Department at SHSU in 2015. He earned his bachelor's degree in economics from the Yeditepe University in Istanbul, Turkey, and MPA and Ph.D. from the University of Central Florida. His research includes disaster management, governance, networks, and complex systems. Dr. Demiroz teaches Public Management, Human Resource Management, and Governing Complex Policy Problems, and Public Administration courses. In 2011, he won the "Outstanding Paper Award" at the Literati Network Awards for Excellence.

Research Interests and Expertise

- Disaster Management
- Public Management
- Governance
- Complex Systems



Dr. Tom Haase

Associate Professor

Office: #496F CHSS Building (4TH Floor)

Phone: (936) 294-1470

Email: twh024@shsu.edu

Website: www.twhaase.com

Dr. Haase joined the Department of Political Science at Sam Houston State University in 2015. Dr. Haase serves as the Director of the Master of Public Administration program and supports the community as a volunteer and trainer for Walker County's Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T). His research interests include disaster management, resilience, and public administration education. Dr. Haase has published articles in journals such as *Administration and Society*, *Journal of Public Works Management and Public Policy*, *Natural Hazard Review*, *Local Governance*, and *The International Journal of Public Administration*. His teaching portfolio includes online and face-to-face courses on international disaster management, community and social resilience, public policy, program evaluation, and Texas government. Prior to his transition to Huntsville, Dr. Haase lived in Beirut, Lebanon, where he served as the Chair of the American University of Beirut's Department of Political Studies and Public Administration.

Research Interests and Expertise

- Emergency and Disaster Management
- Community Resilience
- Emergency Management Law and Policy
- Socio-Technical Systems
- Complex Adaptive Systems



Dr. Sungdae Lim

Assistant Professor

Office: #489 CHSS Building (4th Floor)

Phone: (936) 294-1469

Email: slim@shsu.edu

Dr. Sungdae Lim holds his Ph.D. in Public Administration and Master of Public Administration from Florida State University. He earned his bachelor's degree in Public Administration from Soongsil University, Seoul, South Korea. He was born and raised in South Korea until he came to the U.S. for his academic career in 2012. Prior to joining academia, Dr. Lim served in the Air Force of South Korea for seven years as a staff sergeant, where he had a variety of public-service experiences and commitment. Dr. Lim teaches Introduction to Public Policy, Texas Government, Scope & Methods of Political Science, and Public Budgeting & Finance. His research specializes in nonprofit and public management with a particular focus on leadership theory, mission and value conceptions, innovation, coproduction, and community capacity, and social capital. He is also a member of multiple academic associations and serves as a committee member of the ARNOVA-Asia Conference Program. His professional, teaching, and research experiences across a variety of content areas enable him to facilitate a diversity of student achievements.

Research Interests and Expertise

- Nonprofit Leadership Development
- Mission and Value Congruence
- Nonprofit Learning and Innovation
- Public Service Coproduction and Governance
- Social Capital and Community Capacity



Dr. Wen-Jiun Wang

Assistant Professor

Office: #496D CHSS Building (4TH Floor)

Phone: (936) 294-1459

Email: wjwang@shsu.edu

Dr. Wang joined the Department of Political Science at Sam Houston State University in 2018. Her research interests include emergency management, decision making, and local governance. Dr. Wang has published articles in journals such as *Natural Hazard Review*, *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, and *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy*. Her teaching portfolio includes online and face-to-face courses on emergency management, decision making in public administration, government organization & management, social network analysis, and Texas government. Previously, she served as an assistant professor in the Department of Public Administration and Public Policy, National Taipei University, Taiwan.

Research Interests and Expertise

- Emergency and Disaster Management
- Decision Making in Conditions of Uncertainty
- Emergency Manager Competencies
- Emergency Management and Information & Communication Technologies

TECHNOLOGY

Email Communications

All university, Master of Public Administration (MPA) program, and MPA course communications occur through Sam Houston State University's (SHSU) email system. Upon admission, SHSU will send MPA students an email that contains information on setting up their university email account. To ensure access to university, program, and course communications, MPA students must check their SHSU email account on a regular basis. A tutorial on the SHSU email system can be found [here](#).

Computer Equipment

The MPA program is offered online. Students must have access to a desktop or laptop computer, webcam, microphone, updated versions of commonly used software, and reliable internet access. A list of recommended system specifications can be found [here](#). Additional questions about technology requirements and issues can be directed to the SHSU Online Support Desk at (936) 294-2780.

SHSU Online Support Desk

Students who encounter technical problems or who have questions about computer hardware or software should contact the [SHSU Online Support Desk](#).



CURRICULUM & ACADEMIC ADVISING

MPA Curriculum

MPA students must complete 36 course credits, of which 24 credits are in the MPA core curriculum, and 12 credits are in the concentration curriculum. The MPA program does not allow MPA students to complete external concentrations. MPA students must also successfully complete a comprehensive examination. A list of MPA courses, links to course descriptions, and the semester when each course is typically offered are provided below. A digital copy of course syllabi from a previous semester can be requested from the MPA Program's Administrative Associate.

Core Curriculum: The MPA core curriculum is comprised of the following courses:

<u>POLS 5377</u> ¹	Scope and Methods of Political Science	(Fall Semester)
<u>PADM 5381</u>	Dynamics of Public Administration	(Fall Semester)
<u>PADM 5383</u>	Program Evaluation	(Fall Semester)
<u>PADM 5384</u>	Organizational Theory and Behavior	(Summer Semester)
<u>PADM 5386</u>	Human Resource Management	(Summer Semester)
<u>PADM 5387</u>	Public Budgeting and Finance	(Spring Semester)
<u>PADM 5388</u>	Ethics in Government	(Spring Semester)
<u>PADM 5389</u>	Public Management	(Spring Semester)

¹ Course number will become PADM 5301 for the Fall 2022 semester.

Concentration Curriculum: The Concentration in Disaster and Emergency Management curriculum is comprised of the following courses:

<u>PADM 5390</u>	Global Disaster Politics	(Summer Semester)
<u>PADM 5391</u>	Emergency Management	(Spring Semester)
<u>PADM 5392</u>	Decision Making in Public Administration	(Fall Semester)
<u>PADM 5393</u>	Disaster Resilience	(Spring Semester)

Academic Advising

The MPA Program Director serves as the academic advisor for MPA students. To the extent possible, the MPA program offers four different courses every semester. These courses are offered on a regular and repeating schedule. **Students are encouraged to register for no more than two courses each semester.** This enables students to manage their academic workload while also balancing their personal and professional obligations. This also enables students to graduate in two calendar years (six semesters). Students that have questions about course offerings or their degree plan should contact the MPA Program Director. Students who encounter a technical issue with registration, for example, a course restriction, should contact the MPA Administrative Associate.

Course Registration

The university will send all students an email about course registration several months before registration opens. This email informs students when they can register. Students are encouraged to register as soon as their registration window opens. Students who wait to register may find their course options limited, which can delay graduation. The MPA courses offered during a specific semester can be found [here](#). Although students may not be able to enroll in the courses they want during their preferred semester, the MPA program ensures all students have access to the courses they need to graduate. Students that encounter registration issues should contact the MPA Administrative Associate.

Waitlists

Students are encouraged to register for courses as soon as their registration window opens. Students who cannot register for a course because there are no seats are to add themselves to the course waitlist. When a seat becomes available in a course that has a waitlist, the first student on the waitlist will receive an automated email informing them to register within twenty-four hours. Students who do not register within twenty-four hours will be removed from the waitlist. The open seat will then be automatically offered to the next student on the waitlist. The MPA Program Director will address the students who remain on the waitlists two weeks before the start of the semester, giving priority to MPA students who are near graduation.

Example MPA Degree Plans

Two Courses Each Semester – Example Schedule – Fall Start

	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER	SUMMER SEMESTER
YEAR ONE	<p>PADM 5381 Dynamics of Public Administration</p> <p>PADM 5301 Scope and Methods</p>	<p>PADM 5389 Public Management</p> <p>PADM 5388 Ethics in Government</p>	<p>PADM 5384 Organizational Theory and Behavior</p> <p>PADM 5386 Human Resource Management</p>
YEAR TWO	<p>PADM 5392 Decision Making in Public Administration</p> <p>PADM 5383 Program Evaluation</p>	<p>PADM 5387 Public Budgeting and Finance; and</p> <p>PADM 5391 Emergency Management; or</p> <p>PADM 5393 Disaster Resilience</p> <p>Comprehensive Examinations</p>	<p>PADM 5390 Global Disaster Politics</p> <p>Coordinate with MPA Director to identify course</p>

One Course Each Semester – Example Schedule – Fall Start

	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER	SUMMER SEMESTER
YEAR ONE	<p>PADM 5381 Dynamics of Public Administration</p>	<p>PADM 5389 Public Management</p>	<p>PADM 5384 Organizational Theory and Behavior</p>
YEAR TWO	<p>PADM 5301 Scope and Methods</p>	<p>PADM 5388 Ethics in Government</p>	<p>PADM 5386 Human Resource Management</p>
YEAR THREE	<p>PADM 5392 Decision Making in Public Administration</p>	<p>PADM 5387 Public Budgeting and Finance</p>	<p>PADM 5390 Global Disaster Politics</p>
YEAR FOUR	<p>PADM 5383 Program Evaluation</p>	<p>PADM 5391 Emergency Management; or</p> <p>PADM 5393 Disaster Resilience; and</p> <p>Comprehensive Examinations</p>	<p>Coordinate with MPA Director to identify course</p>

Textbooks

Students are encouraged to contact their MPA faculty for information about the books and materials needed for class. Books can be purchased through the university textbook [website](#) or online book dealers. We recommend that students keep all their course textbooks, assigned readings, notes, and other course materials. When the time comes, having these materials will make it easier to prepare for the comprehensive examinations.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Graduate Catalogue and Academic Guidelines

MPA students are expected to read the Graduate and Professional Catalog for their academic year of admission and become familiar with and follow the policies and procedures therein. The most recent Graduate and Professional Catalog can be found [here](#). MPA students are expected to pay particular attention to SHSU's **Academic Expectations and Guidelines** for graduate students, which can be found in the Academic Policies and Procedures section of the Graduate and Professional Catalog. Here, MPA students will find detailed information about: 1) the **Grading System**; 2) **Academic Honesty**; 3) **Academic Probation and Suspension**; 4) **Scholastic Expectations**; and 5) **Transfers of Credit**.

With respect to grading, MPA students must be aware that the Graduate and Professional Catalog states: "A student who earns a grade of "C" in any course (repeated or distinct course) within the academic program may have their graduate status reviewed by a committee comprised of the department or college's graduate faculty. The committee will recommend an appropriate remediation for the student. **A student who earns two grades of "C" in distinct or repeated courses within their academic program will be terminated from graduate studies. A graduate student who earns a grade of "F" in any graduate course will be terminated from graduate studies.**" For whatever reason, MPA students who encounter difficulties with their graduate studies should contact their professors and the MPA Program Director.

Full-Time / Part-Time Status

Graduate students must be enrolled in nine credit hours to be considered full-time. Six hours is considered half-time. Generally, six hours is sufficient to qualify for financial assistance, but students should always check with their sponsoring or funding agency. Registration alone does not constitute enrollment. To be considered enrolled, a student must: 1) be registered for and currently attending classes; and 2) have fulfilled their financial obligations to the university for the semester.

The Six-Year “Graduate By” Requirement

SHSU policy requires all graduate students to complete their degree within six years of their initial enrollment for graduate credit. The policy, which can be found [here](#), states: “**A student is required to complete master's level graduate work within a six-year period, measured from the date of initial enrollment for graduate credit in a particular degree program and within an eight-year period for doctoral level graduate work.** The period of time a student is on an approved leave of absence will be counted as time accumulated toward that six-year or eight-year deadline for completion of the degree. Any extension of the six-year or eight-year deadline must be approved in writing by the appropriate academic dean and the Dean of The Graduate School.”

Transfers of Graduate Credit

Graduate credits completed at accredited colleges and universities may be applied toward a graduate degree at Sam Houston State University at the discretion of each graduate program and the college in which it is housed. Transfer credit is not automatically conferred and must be requested by the graduate advisor. No more than nine (9) credits related to the MPA core and concentration curriculum with an earned grade of “B” or better may be transferred. The MPA program does not accept credits for courses and training sponsored or offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute.

MPA students who would like to inquire about credit transfers should contact the MPA Program Director, and if possible, submit copies of the following items:

- Official transcript, which lists earned grades for the relevant courses.
- Course description for relevant courses.
- Syllabi for relevant courses (semester and year must match transcript).

The MPA Program Director cannot process credit transfer requests until a student’s updated “official” transcript is on file with SHSU. The transcripts must report the grades earned for the course related to a transfer request. Information about how students can have their official transcripts transmitted to SHSU can be found [here](#).

WARNING: Transferred courses must adhere to the six-year time frame for master’s degrees and the eight-year time frame for doctoral degrees. As such, credit transfers must be done after careful consultation with the MPA Program Director.

University Course Drop, Resignation, and Refund Policies

MPA students may need to drop a course or resign from Sam Houston State University. Students who find themselves in such a situation should immediately contact the MPA Program Director or the MPA Administrative Associate. Once notified, we can work to understand the situation, recommend resources, and, if necessary, provide advice that will help the student to protect their academic status and record. Information about SHSU's course add, drop, and resignation policies can be found [here](#). SHSU's course add, drop, and resignation deadlines are posted [here](#).

WARNING: Dropping a course or resigning from a semester can have a negative impact on a student's degree completion process and ability to secure financial aid. MPA students who are considering dropping a course or resigning should contact SHSU's Office of Financial Aid to determine how such a decision will impact their financial aid status.



**MPA Faculty (From Left to Right):
Drs. Wang, Demiroz, Haase, Lim, and Bittick**

Application for Graduate Degree

MPA students must apply for graduation as they near completion of their degree requirements. Typically, this will be the semester that follows the successful completion of the comprehensive examinations. According to SHSU's Office of the Registrar, "The Application for Degree is required in order to have a degree posted to your academic transcript and to be permitted to participate in the commencement ceremony. The Application for Degree must be submitted during the term you plan to graduate. There is a fee associated with the graduate application process. The university sends all students an email with information about the graduate application process after the start of each semester." Additional information about the degree application process can be found [here](#).

INTERNSHIPS & COMPREHENSIVES

Internships

MPA students are not required to complete an internship to graduate. Pre-service students are encouraged to complete an internship that enables them to acquire professional experience prior to graduation. Students are responsible for locating and securing their own internships. Students who complete a pre-approved, faculty-supervised internship with a public or nonprofit organization can earn graduate credit that can be applied towards their MPA degree plan. Students with questions about internships and internship credits should contact the MPA Program Director.

Comprehensive Examinations

All MPA students must successfully complete a set of comprehensive examinations to qualify for graduation. The comprehensive examinations are not something that students need to worry about during their first semester; however, MPA faculty recommend that students keep the course syllabi, textbooks, assigned readings, assignments, and written work for all their courses. When the time comes, having these materials will make it easier to prepare for the comprehensive examinations.

At the start of each semester, the MPA Comprehensive Examination Coordinator sends an email to all MPA students. This email contains details about the comprehensive examination process, the eligibility criteria, and the deadlines for that semester. Generally, students become eligible to take the comprehensive examinations once they complete all but one or two of their MPA core courses.

Each comprehensive examination will be comprised of three questions, one question from each of the subject areas identified below. Students can select the three courses they want to be tested on. Students cannot request to be tested on a course that they have not completed or courses that are not listed in the subject areas below. Generally, the comprehensive examination questions will be written by the faculty member who taught the course. The comprehensive examinations are completed at home over a period of seven to ten days, depending on the academic calendar and SHSU's administrative deadlines. Each examination answer will be read by two MPA faculty members, who will assess whether the answer should be awarded a score of: High-Pass, Pass, or Fail. MPA students who receive a "Fail" for one or more of their comprehensive examination questions must

retake those questions a subsequent semester. When retaking, a student must be enrolled in at least one SHSU graduate course. According to SHSU policy, MPA students who fail to receive a “Pass” on any retake question will be dismissed from the MPA program.

- I. **Public Service Perspective** – select one of the following courses:
 - PADM 5381 Dynamics of Public Administration
 - PADM 5388 Ethics in Government

- II. **Public Management** –select one of the following courses:
 - PADM 5384 Organizational Theory and Behavior
 - PADM 5386 Leadership and Human Resource Management
 - PADM 5389 Public Management

- III. **Public Policy and Analysis** –select one of the following courses:
 - POLS 5377 Scope and Methods of Political Science
 - PADM 5383 Program Evaluation
 - PADM 5387 Public Budgeting & Finance

MPA students who have questions about the comprehensive examinations should contact the MPA Comprehensive Examination Coordinator.

Graduate Thesis

The MPA program does not have a thesis requirement or a thesis option.



College of Humanities and Social Sciences Building

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial Aid

A variety of financial aid resources are available for MPA students. An overview of the financial aid process for graduate students can be found [here](#). Additional information about how to fund a graduate degree, including options for paying for graduate school, is provided by SHSU's [Graduate School](#).

Scholarships and Grants

During the academic year, MPA students will receive informational emails about scholarships and grants available from various internal and external sources. The application processes for these scholarships often require MPA students to submit a personal statement and one or more letters of recommendation. If provided sufficient time to write a letter of recommendation, MPA faculty are willing to support MPA students who seek internal and external scholarship opportunities.

A.S.P.I.R.E. Program

Minority students should explore the A.S.P.I.R.E. Program, which is managed by SHSU's Graduate School. The A.S.P.I.R.E. Program is designed to support minority students as they navigate the transition to graduate school and the professional environment. The A.S.P.I.R.E program offers workshops, networking opportunities, career planning services, and mentoring services. Program recipients are awarded scholarships that support tuition and textbooks. Information about the program and how to apply can be found [here](#).

Peace Officer and Firefighter Tuition Exemption Program

MPA students who are peace officers or firefighters should explore the Peace Officer and Firefighter Tuition Exemption Program. This program, and the application and approval process, are handled by SHSU's Office of the Registrar (936-294-1040 or registrar@shsu.edu). Information about the Peace Officer and Firefighter Tuition Exemption Program can be found [here](#). The Peace Officer and Firefighter Tuition Exemption Program may not apply to all student fees associated with tuition expenses. Information about student fees and tuition rates can be found [here](#).

GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES

The Graduate School

The Graduate School provides a variety of resources (e.g., scholarships, travel awards, recruitment events) for graduate students at SHSU.

Phone: (936) 294-2408
Email: thegraduateschool@shsu.edu
Website: Click [here](#) to visit the Graduate School website.

Office of the Registrar

The Registrar's Office's functions are to register students, to maintain and provide a record of their academic studies, and to certify them for graduation. Through the Registrar, students can process schedule changes, official resignations (withdraw from University), drop requests, requests for official transcripts, requests for duplicate diplomas, and more.

Phone: (936) 294-1040
Email: registrar@shsu.edu
Website: Click [here](#) to visit the Registrar website.

Student Health Center

The Student Health Center helps SHSU students with their personal health and wellness. The SHC offers services via its primary care outpatient clinic, lab, in-house pharmacy, and dental office.

Phone: (936) 294-1805
Email: shc@shsu.edu
Website: Click [here](#) to visit the Student Health Center website.

Academic Success Center

The Academic Success Center offers a variety of support programs for SHSU students. These services include CRLA-certified peer tutoring programs for writing and math, online tutoring for writing and math, and a supplemental instruction program. The ASC's services are available for all undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in SHSU.

Phone: (936) 294-3680

Email: asc@shsu.edu

Website: Click [here](#) to visit the Academic Success Center website.

Services for Students with Disabilities

The mission of the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is to promote full and equal access on the part of students with disabilities to educational and extracurricular programs and activities at SHSU. The SSD provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services, promotes independence and self-advocacy, and makes referrals to support services on campus and in the community.

Phone: (936) 294-3512

Email: disability@shsu.edu

Website: Click [here](#) to visit the Student with Disability Services website.

Office of Financial Aid

SHSU offers financial aid and scholarship opportunities to undergraduate as well as graduate students.

Phone: (936) 294-1774

Website: Click [here](#) to visit the Office of Financial Aid website.

Veterans Resource Center

The Veterans Resource Center serves men and women who have honorably served our country and assists them with their transition into university life at SHSU.

Phone: (936) 294-1046

Email: veterans@shsu.edu

Website: Click [here](#) to visit the Veterans Resource Center website.

Office of Career Services

The Career Services helps SHSU students get hired. Among other things, the Career Services organize hiring events, assist with resumes and cover letters, and help students find micro-internships.

Phone: (936) 294-1713

Email: careerservices@shsu.edu

Website: Click [here](#) to visit the Office of Career Services website.

Newton Gresham Library

The Newton Gresham Library provides resources to students for research and creative activities. The Newton Gresham Library also holds workshops on plagiarism and digital research, and has a variety of digital resources, including books, journals, and videos.

Phone: (936) 294-1614

Email: library@shsu.edu

Website: Click [here](#) to visit the Newton Gresham Library website.

MPA COURSE CHECKLIST

CORE COURSES

	Semester	Notes
PADM 5301: Scope and Methods ¹		
PADM 5381: Dynamics of Public Admin		
PADM 5383: Program Evaluation		
PADM 5384: Organizational Theory		
PADM 5386: Human Resources		
PADM 5387: Public Budgeting		
PADM 5388: Ethics in Government		
PADM 5389: Public Management		

CONCENTRATION COURSES

	Semester	Notes
PADM 5390: Global Disaster Politics		
PADM 5391: Emergency Management		
PADM 5392: Decision Making		
PADM 5393: Disaster Resilience		

OTHER ITEMS

	Semester	Notes
Comprehensive Examinations		

¹ Offered as POLS 5377 Scope and Methods through Fall 2021.

NOTES & REMINDERS
