

Texas State University

Outcomes Report

General Information

Academic Year:	2020-2021
College:	Liberal Arts
Department:	Political Science
Program:	Public Administration (MPA)
Program Code:	44.04
Outcome Type:	Student Learning (GR)
Degree:	Masters
Coordinator/Contact:	Nandhini Rangarajan
Status:	Data Entry Closed

Mission Statement

The Master of Public Administration Program's Mission is to cultivate practical, research-oriented students for careers as reflective practitioners guided by democratic values, integrity and service.

Evidence of Improvement

Comparison of 2019-2020 results with 2020-2021 results indicates that significant improvements are evident in outcome 1 [grammar and style (12% increase from last year)] outcome 2 [all four categories saw a 10% increase i.e., from 90% last year to 100% this year]; and outcome 3 (students' ability to communicate clearly (organization, professional delivery, and mastery of content). 100% met or exceeded standards in the organization of the presentation, 100% made a professional delivery, and) 100% exhibited mastery of the content) and outcome 4 (100% used reasoned arguments and indicated ability to see patters and classify information) as rated by external reviewers. Outcome 5 [ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in the literature review and results saw both external reviewers indicating that 100% of students demonstrated this ability through their work] These improvements can be attributed to last year's action plan of more attention on the part of faculty advising applied research projects with the use of a common rubric to provide consistent/detailed feedback. There was a 3% increase in percentage of students (Outcome 6) who graduated from the program in 2019-2020 (25%) in comparison to 2018-2019 (22%). Major improvements in student enrollment were observable in the 2020-2021 cycle. The MPA director, worked with a digital marketing company, to attract more graduate students to the program to increase student enrollment in the program. There was a 28% increase (see outcome 7) in number of students enrolled in Fall 2020 compared to Fall 2019.

Action Plan

Given the following results: 1) failure to meet benchmarks (based on faculty ratings) in structure and grammar and style, the MPA faculty will continue to use a common rubric to provide students with consistent and detailed feedback on their grammar/style and emphasize the importance of grammar and style by mandating students to attend workshops conducted by the University Writing Center and the Graduate College Shop Talk series on academic writing. The faculty will also include more assessments of written work in graduate courses across the board. The MPA director will continue to organize a few more customized workshops to help improve student writing skills. Improvements in outcome 6, i.e., a 3% increase in percentage of students who graduated from the program can be attributed to the introduction of additional pathways to graduation. Through advisement, students will be matched with the correct pathway to graduation based on their interests. Since there was a 28% increase in number of students enrolled in Fall 2020 compared to Fall 2019, the MPA director in consultation with faculty will continue targeted marketing campaigns to maintain robust enrollment in the program. A small increase in average time taken to completion was observed (2.6 years as opposed to 2.3 years in the previous cycle). This is probably attributable to the disruption caused by the pandemic. However, the MPA director and faculty will continue to work with students closely to help them complete the program in a timely manner.

Outcome 1

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in writing.

Outcome 1 - Method 1

External Review: This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral exam where the paper is defended. The oral exam committee is composed of two faculty and a public administration practitioner. The oral exam committee members receive the Applied Research Project one week before the exam. The oral exam is held the 14th or 15th week of regular classes. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The papers are generally 60 to 100 pages. An assessment grid is filled out while the public administration practitioner reads the paper and is submitted at the close of the oral exam. The public administration practitioner reviewer will use an evaluation rubric to assess quality of the paper's structure, grammar and punctuation, paragraphs and use of scholarly references. Structure quality is measured through four items: purpose, headings & subheadings, connections between headings & subheadings and transitions between headings and subheadings. Grammar and punctuation quality is measured through three items: grammar, punctuation and capitalization and style. Paragraph quality is measured through five items: key terms, thesis, body of paragraph, coherence and cohesion. The use of scholarly reference quality is measured through four items: citations, quotations, integration of sources and quality of sources. The grid uses a 1 to 10 quality scale where 10 equals top quality and 1 equals unacceptable quality. Our target is that 80% of the papers will be rated as 8 or above in each of the individual

items. In addition, 80 percent of the papers will score between 32 and 40 for paper structure quality (4 items with scores between 8 and 10: $8 * 4 = 32$ and $10 * 4 = 40$) and ; 80 percent of the papers will score between 24 and 30 for grammar and punctuation quality (3 items with scores between 8 and 10: $8 * 3 = 24$ and $10 * 3 = 30$); 80 percent of the papers will score between 40 and 50 for paragraph quality (5 items with scores between 8 and 10: $5 * 8 = 40$ and $5 * 10 = 50$) and; 80 percent of the papers will score between 32 and 40 for use of scholarly references quality (4 items with scores between 8 and 10: $8 * 4 = 32$ and $10 * 4 = 40$).

Outcome 1 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2020-2021, 29 graduate student Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams were assessed using a rubric. They were assessed in order to measure the quality of writing. The rubric incorporated items on how well the students structured their Applied Research Project and comprehensive exams (purpose, headings and subheadings, connections between headings and text and transitions between headings), the quality of the student's grammar, punctuation and style, the student's ability to write a quality paragraph (use of key terms, thesis statement, well-argued body of the paragraph, cohesion and coherence across paragraphs), and the student's ability to use scholarly references (citations, quotations, integration of sources and quality of sources). The applied research projects and exams were assessed both on individual items in the rubric (e.g., thesis statement) and on the four categories which aggregated the items conceptually (structure, grammar/punctuation, paragraph and use of scholarly references). External reviewers' ratings for the four criteria measuring outcome 1 are presented as follows: External Review Ratings: Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding the Criteria - Outcome 1 Structure 89%; Grammar & Punctuation Style 82%; Paragraphs 89% ; Use of Scholarly References 99%. Based on these results, the students succeeded in meeting the benchmark all categories. There were marked improvements in grammar and punctuation with a 12% increase this year compared to last year.

Outcome 1 - Method 2

Faculty Review: This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral exam where the paper is defended. The oral exam committee is composed of two faculty and a public administration practitioner. The graduate faculty committee members receive the Applied Research Project one week before the exam. The oral exam is held the 14th or 15th week of regular classes. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The papers are generally 60 to 100 pages. An assessment grid is filled out while the faculty read the paper and submitted at the close of the oral exam. The faculty reviewers will use an evaluation rubric to assess quality of the paper's structure, grammar and punctuation, paragraphs and use of scholarly references. Structure quality is measured through four items: purpose, headings & subheadings, connections between headings & subheadings and transitions between headings and subheadings. Grammar and punctuation quality is measured through three items: grammar, punctuation and capitalization and style. Paragraph quality is measured through five items: key terms, thesis, body of paragraph, coherence and cohesion. The use of scholarly reference quality is measured through four items: citations, quotations, integration of sources and quality of sources. The grid uses a 1 to 10 quality scale where 10 equals top quality and 1 equals unacceptable quality. Our target is that 80% of the papers will be rated as 8 or above in each of the individual items. In addition, 80 percent of the papers will score between 32 and 40 for paper structure quality (4 items with scores between 8 and 10: $8 * 4 = 32$ and $10 * 4 = 40$) and ; 80 percent of the papers will score between 24 and 30 for grammar and punctuation quality (3 items with scores between 8 and 10: $8 * 3 = 24$ and $10 * 3 = 30$); 80 percent of the papers will score between 40 and 50 for paragraph quality (5 items with scores between 8 and 10: $5 * 8 = 40$ and $5 * 10 = 50$) and; 80 percent of the papers will score between 32 and 40 for use of scholarly references quality (4 items with scores between 8 and 10: $8 * 4 = 32$ and $10 * 4 = 40$).

Outcome 1 - Method 2 - Result

In academic year 2020-2021, 29 graduate student Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams were assessed using a rubric. They were assessed in order to measure the quality of the writing in the Applied Research Projects and Exams. The rubric incorporated items on how well the students structured their Applied Research Projects and Exams (purpose, headings and subheadings, connections between headings and text and transitions between headings), the quality of the student's grammar, punctuation and style, the student's ability to write a quality paragraph (use of key terms, thesis statement, well-argued body of the paragraph, cohesion and coherence across paragraphs), and the student's ability to use scholarly references (citations, quotations, integration of sources and quality of sources). The applied research projects and exams were assessed both on individual items in the rubric (e.g., thesis statement) and on the four categories which aggregated the items conceptually (structure, grammar/punctuation, paragraph and use of scholarly references). Faculty ratings of these categories are presented as follows: Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding the Criteria - Outcome 1 Structure 79% ; Grammar & Style 79 %; Paragraphs 80% ; Use of Scholarly References 80%. Based on these results, the students met the benchmark targets only on two of the categories despite minor improvements in all four categories compared to last year.

Outcome 2

Students will demonstrate comprehension of public policy and program formation as well as the institutional and legal framework of public policy and management.

Outcome 2 - Method 1

External Review: This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral examination where the paper is defended. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The paper is generally 60 to 100 pages. It is defended in the 14th or 15th week of the semester. This method involves assessment by an external reviewer. The oral exam committee is composed of two graduate faculty and a public administration practitioner. The committee members review the paper in the week preceding the oral exam. At the completion of the oral exam, the external reviewer is asked to evaluate the student's comprehension of public policy and program formation as well as the institutional

and legal framework of public policy and management using an evaluation rubric. The reviewers will rate the student's demonstration of this outcome in their Applied Research Projects as exceeds standards, meets standards, or does not meet standards. Our target is that 80% of the Applied Research Projects will meet or exceed standards in each of the areas included in this Outcome.

Outcome 2 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2020-2021, 29 students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed on comprehension of policy/program formation and political/legal institutions and processes. Of all the External reviewers, 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the student demonstrated comprehension of public policy formation, 100% program implementation, 100% institutional framework, 100% legal framework of public policy and management thus meeting or exceeding standards in all the areas included in this outcome.

Outcome 2 - Method 2

Faculty Review: This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral examination where the paper is defended. The oral exam committee is composed of two faculty and a public administration practitioner. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The paper is generally 60 to 100 pages. It is defended in the 14th or 15th week of the semester. At the completion of the oral exam the faculty reviewers are asked to evaluate the student's comprehension of public policy and program formation as well as the institutional and legal framework of public policy and management using an evaluation rubric. The rubric uses exceeds standards, meets standards, or does not meet standards. Our target is that 80% of the students will demonstrate this comprehension at the meets or exceeds standards levels.

Outcome 2 - Method 2 - Result

Of those faculty committee members who did rate the students on Outcome 2, 86% agreed or strongly agreed on program formulation; 84% agreed or strongly agreed on program implementation; 82% agreed or strongly agreed on institutional framework; and 68% agreed or strongly agreed on legal framework. These results show that student performance exceeded the benchmark target on three of the four categories.

Outcome 3

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively orally.

Outcome 3 - Method 1

External Review: This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral examination where the paper is defended. This method involves assessment by an external reviewer. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The paper is generally 60 to 100 pages. It is defended in the 14th or 15th week of the semester. The oral exam committee is composed of two graduate faculty and a public administration practitioner. The committee members review the paper in the week preceding the oral exam. The students present their study and are questioned about their research papers over the course of the oral examination. After the oral exam is complete the outside reader will use an evaluation rubric to assess the student's ability to communicate clearly (organization and professional delivery and content mastery). The grid uses exceeds standards, meets standards, needs some improvement to meet standards and needs substantial improvement to meet standards. Our target is that 80% of the students will demonstrate this ability at the meets or exceeds standards levels.

Outcome 3 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2020-2021, 29 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed by external reviewers in order to measure the students' ability to communicate clearly (organization, professional delivery, and mastery of content). 100% met or exceeded standards in the organization of the presentation, 100% made a professional delivery, and 100% exhibited mastery of the content. Based on these results, the students exceeded the benchmark target.

Outcome 3 - Method 2

Faculty Review: This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral examination where the paper is defended. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The paper is generally 60 to 100 pages. It is defended in the 14th or 15th week of the semester. The oral exam committee is composed of two faculty and a public administration practitioner. After the oral exam is complete each faculty member will use an evaluation rubric to assess the student's ability to communicate clearly (organization and professional delivery and content mastery). The grid uses exceeds standards, meets standards, needs some improvement to meet standards, and needs substantial improvement to meet standards. Our target is that 80% of the students will demonstrate this ability at the meets or exceeds standards levels.

Outcome 3 - Method 2 - Result

In academic year 2020-2021, 29 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed by faculty in order to measure the student's ability to communicate clearly (organization, professional delivery, and mastery of content). 85% met or exceeded standards in the organization of the presentation, 89% made a professional delivery and 83% exhibited mastery of the content. Based on these results, the students exceeded the benchmark target on all three dimensions.

Outcome 4

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration.

Outcome 4 - Method 1

External Review: This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral examination where the paper is defended. The oral exam committee is composed of two faculty and a public administration practitioner. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The paper is generally 60 to 100 pages. It is defended in the 14th or 15th week of the semester. At the completion of the oral exam each public administration practitioner reviewer is asked to evaluate the student's ability to identify patterns in the oral and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration. The evaluation instrument does this by asking about the student's ability to combine the research purpose, conceptual framework, methodology and results sections in a way that achieves a unified whole (see attached assessment grid). The grid uses exceeds standards, meets standards, needs some improvement to meet standards, and needs substantial improvement to meet standards. Our target is that the public administration practitioner will rate the student's ability as either meets or exceeds expectations in 80% of the papers.

Outcome 4 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2020-2021, 29 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure the student's ability to see patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration. The external reviewers found 100% of the students exceeded standards with respect to their ability to see patterns and classify information and concepts in public administration and policy and 100% exceeded standards in reasoned arguments.

Outcome 4 - Method 2

Faculty Review: This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral examination where the paper is defended. The oral exam committee is composed of two faculty and a public administration practitioner. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The paper is generally 60 to 100 pages. It is defended in the 14th or 15th week of the semester. At the completion of the oral exam each faculty reviewer is asked to evaluate the students' ability to identify patterns in the oral and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration. The evaluation instrument does this by asking about the students' ability to combine the research purpose, conceptual framework, methodology and results sections in a way that achieves a unified whole. The grid uses exceeds standards, meets standards, needs some improvement to meet standards, and needs substantial improvement to meet standards. Our target is that the faculty will rate the students' ability as either meets or exceeds expectations in 80% of the papers.

Outcome 4 - Method 2 - Result

In academic year 2020-2021, 29 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure the student's ability to see patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration. The faculty committee members found 44% of the students met or exceeded standards with respect to their ability to see patterns and classify information and concepts in public administration and policy. Based on these results the students did not meet the benchmark target.

Outcome 5

Students will demonstrate the ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and public management.

Outcome 5 - Method 1

External Reviewer This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral examination where the paper is defended. The oral exam committee is composed of two faculty and a public administration practitioner. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The paper is generally 60 to 100 pages. It is defended in the 14th or 15th week of the semester. At the completion of the oral exam each public administration practitioner reviewer is asked to evaluate the student's ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and public management. The evaluation instrument does this by asking about the student's ability to use the literature review and results chapters to demonstrate their ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and public management (see attached assessment grid). The grid uses exceeds standards, meets standards, needs some improvement to meet standards, and needs substantial improvement to meet standards. Our target is that 80% of the papers either exceed or meet standards.

Outcome 5 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2020-2021, 29 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure the student's ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in the literature review and results chapters of the Applied Research Project. 100% of alumni reported that students met or exceeded standards in the ability to use reasoned arguments and 100% reported that the students used reasons arguments to make recommendations in the public interest. Based on these results, the students met the benchmark target.

Outcome 5 - Method 2

Faculty Review: This method uses both the capstone paper of the Master of Public Administration Program (Applied Research Project) and the oral

examination where the paper is defended. The oral exam committee is composed of two faculty and a public administration practitioner. The Applied Research Project is completed over a semester and is an empirical research project dealing with a significant public administration or public policy problem. The paper is generally 60 to 100 pages. It is defended in the 14th or 15th week of the semester. At the completion of the oral exam each faculty reviewer is asked to evaluate the students' ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and public management. The evaluation instrument does this by asking about the students' ability to use the literature review and results chapters to demonstrate their ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and public management. The grid uses exceeds standards, meets standards, needs some improvement to meet standards, and needs substantial improvement to meet standards. Our target is that 80% of the papers either exceed or meet standards.

Outcome 5 - Method 2 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 29 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure the student's ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in the literature review and results chapters of the Applied Research Project. 47 % of faculty reported that students met or exceeded standards in the ability to use reasoned arguments and 100% reported that the students used reasons arguments to make recommendations in the public interest. Based on these results, the students met the benchmark target.

Outcome 6

Goal: 1. Promote the success of all students.

Initiative: 1.3 Increase student retention and graduation rates.

The academic program will promote and realize gains in student success.

Outcome 6 - Method 1

Student retention success will be measured by observing one year retention rates of students enrolled in the academic program from their first to second year. Data will be obtained from the university's certified enrollment records at the end of the fall semester. Rates of retention success will be expected to be at or above the university average for this level of program.

Outcome 6 - Method 1 - Result

Data on the number of entering students enrolled in the academic program who returned the second year was used to assess retention. In this program, 20 of the 23 entering students in fall of 2019 returned for their second year in fall of 2020 for a one-year retention rate of 86.9%, compared to the university average of 81.3%. However, the 2020-2021 retention rate was 33.6 % more than the 53.3% retention rate in 2019-2020.

Outcome 6 - Method 2

Student graduation success will be measured by observing the number of graduates from the academic program in during the fall, spring, and summer semesters and comparing the number of graduates to the number of students enrolled in the program. Data will be obtained from the university's certified enrollment records for the fall, spring, and summer semesters. The number of graduates is expected to be at or above the university rate of graduation for this level of program.

Outcome 6 - Method 2 - Result

The number of students graduating from the degree program during the 2019-2020 summer, fall and spring semesters along with the total number of students enrolled in the program provided the data to assess student graduation success. 29 of the total 114 students enrolled in the program graduated in the summer, fall and spring semesters of 2019-2020 for a graduation percentage of 25%, below the university master's average of 76.7% and not meeting the expected target.

Outcome 7

Goal: 1. Promote the success of all students.

Initiative: 1.2 Manage student enrollment, both at the graduate and undergraduate level.

The academic program will promote and realize efficiency in the delivery and completion of the program.

Outcome 7 - Method 1

Delivery efficiency will be measured by reviewing the total number students enrolled in the academic program during the fall semester. Data will be obtained from the university's certified enrollment records at the end of the fall semester. Delivery efficiency will be expected to increase from year to year.

Outcome 7 - Method 1 - Result

The total number of students enrolled in the degree program during the fall semester this year compared to last year provided the data to evaluate delivery efficiency. In the fall of 2019, the program had 85 declared students and in the fall of 2020 the program had 109 declared students for a 28% year to year increase.

Outcome 7 - Method 2

Completion efficiency will be measured by observing the average time-to-completion for students in the academic program. Data will be obtained

from the university's certified enrollment records for the fall semester. The time-to-completion of graduates is expected to be at or below the university average for this level of program.

Outcome 7 - Method 2 - Result

The average time-to-completion rates of students graduating from the degree program during the 2019-2020 fall, spring, and summer semesters provided the data to assess completion efficiency. In the fall, spring, and summer semesters of 2019-2020, students took an average of 8 semesters or approximately 2.6 years to graduate, exceeding the university master's average of 2.5 and not meeting the expected target. The 2018-2019 average time-to-completion rate was 2.3 years. Hence there was a small increase in time taken to graduate in 2019-2020 compared to the previous year.

Approval History

Approval History Event	Approver
Outcomes Approved Level 1	Kenneth Grasso (kg03)
Outcomes Approved Level 2	Mary Brennan (mb18)
Outcomes Audit Report Submitted	Susan Day (sd01)
Results Approved Level 1	Kenneth Grasso (kg03)
Results Approved Level 2	Mary Brennan (mb18)
Results Audit Report Submitted	Susan Day (sd01)