



Doctor of Public Administration Program (DPA)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.) What is the length of the program?

A.) **Capstone Track**: The program is 60 hours long and typically takes 3-5 years to complete.

Dissertation Track: The program is 54 hours long and typically takes 5-7 years to complete.

Q.) Does your program admit throughout the year?

A.) No, we offer admission once a year, in the fall semester only

Q.) What is the application deadline?

A.) April 15th

Q.) What is the program structure in reference to hours needed?

A.) **Capstone Track**: Core classes – 18 hrs.; Methods – 9 hrs.; Concentration area – 15 hrs.; Guided electives – 6 hrs.; Capstone Seminars – 12 hrs.

Dissertation Track: Core classes – 15 hrs.; Methods – 9 hrs.; Concentration area – 15 hrs.; Guided electives – 6hrs.; Final Project 9 hrs.

Q.) How many hours can I transfer in from another professional degree program?

A.) Up to 6 hours may be transferred in from credits beyond your first graduate degree and must be doctoral level coursework. The student is responsible for requesting that a transcript be sent to VSU' Graduate School after the course(s) is/are completed and the grade(s) is/are posted.

Q.) If transferring coursework into the program, how old can it be?

A.) The coursework has to be within 7 years of the program you completed.

Q.) Can a military course count as transfer credit?

A.) A military course can be substituted but it has to be ACE recommended for graduate credit, and the student must have a grade.

Q.) I'm in the Military and deployed. If I'm unable to attend the initial residency what are the ramifications?

A.) We will work with you on your initial residency should you run into a situation due to your military obligations.

Q.) How much time is allowed to complete the program?

A.) **Capstone Track**: You are allowed seven years to complete all coursework.

Dissertation Track: You are allowed seven years to complete all coursework and five years to complete your dissertation after admission to candidacy.

Q.) Is it possible to receive an extension on the timeframe allowed?

A. Yes, only once and for no more than 1 year.

Q.) Who decides on the topic of the dissertation? (Dissertation track only)

A.) The student selects the topic of their dissertation in consultation with their chair and members of their dissertation committee.

Q.) Does the dissertation count as semester hours? (Dissertation track only)

A.) Yes, the capstone and dissertation make up a total 9 semester hours.

Q.) How much weight is given to the dissertation?

A.) **Capstone Track**: Does not require dissertation, students must complete capstone seminars to graduate.

Dissertation Track: The dissertation is an exit requirement and is needed to graduate from the program.

Q.) How long does it take to come off of a probationary period?

A.) 9 graded hours with no grade below a B.

Q.) What test is required for the DPA program?

A.) The GRE is an **optional** test with scores being provided within the last 5 years; If the GRE was taken over 5 years, you must provide a copy of your test scores for consideration. Applicants are best recommended to refer to the Graduate School for clarification on questions relating to GRE test scores. If you can find your official GRE test scores (check your transcripts) you can use them providing the score is high enough.

Q.) What is the minimum Graduate GPA to be considered for regular admission into the program?

A.) Graduate GPA must be 3.5 or higher

Q.) Can I be admitted as an irregular student?

A.) No. Irregular students are not accepted in the DPA program.

Q.) I attended multiple schools while working on my undergrad. Do I need to send all transcripts or will the transcripts from the degree granting institution suffice?

A.) All official transcripts must be sent.

Q.) I am finishing my masters and I anticipate successful completion before the start of Fall classes. Can I be accepted conditionally upon award of the masters prior to the fall start date?

A.) Yes, you can be accepted pending your final transcripts.

Q.) How do I gather information on dissertation due dates and defense dates. (Dissertation track only)

A.) On the VSU website, please consult the Graduate School for final submission due dates for dissertations. Other due dates for individual student progress throughout the dissertation process are established directly with the individual's committee.

Q.) Who is the review committee and when do they meet for applications?

A.) The committee consists of Public Administration faculty. They meet once they receive the packets from the Graduate School, which is after the April 15th deadline. Nothing is decided beforehand.

Q.) Are any MPA or DPA courses blocked for transient students?

A.) MPA – no, DPA – yes, all.

Q.) *How many applicants apply each year and how many applicants are accepted each year?*

A.) Our DPA program is highly competitive, and many students apply each year. We regularly have over 90 applicants.

Q.) *As a new incoming class begins each fall semester does it function as a cohort?*

A.) We do admit as a group and often times students have classes with the same peers, but some students take courses at different paces than others which could change cohort composition.

Q.) *The DPA handbook, pg. 7, states that each student must identify an area of concentration by the end of 18 hrs. of coursework. Once an area of concentration is identified the student will work with his advisor to develop a Program of Study, which the advisor must approve. This Program of Study will govern the remainder of the student's coursework. What is the name of this process or form and where do I obtain it?*

A.) The form is our DPA Program of Study which is processed when the student is advised. The Advisor uses this form to guide the student through to graduation.

Q.) *How comprehensive does the resume need to be? Overall summary or detailed descriptions of course work, training, and programs involved in.*

A.) An overall summary will be fine.

Q.) *For the concentration area, if the student is interested in both policy analysis as well as program evaluation, can these two interests be bridged into a coherent concentration?*

A.) Yes, this can be done.

Q.) *Is there a master list of concentrations that we are to follow?*

A.) There is not a list. Our DPA students come from all walks of life, from education to law enforcement, just to name a few. If you are in the educational field, then you might want your concentration to be in that area. Same applies to other fields.

Q.) *Do my concentration courses have to be graduate level only?*

A.) Yes, they must be graduate level courses, and we strongly recommend students work with their advisor to confirm concentration courses.

Q.) *I intend to complete six credits per semester. Is this amount fairly typical for those involved in the program?*

A.) Yes, this is typical.

Q.) *My job may require me to take some semesters off from school. What are the ramifications?*

A. It is possible to do so but any longer than 1 year will require readmission.

Q.) *Can I take PADM 9990: Capstone Seminar before I finish my other coursework?*

A.) Students should not take either PADM 9990 (**Dissertation Track**) or PADM 9991 (**Capstone Track**) unless their other coursework has been considered. Students can contact the DPA Coordinator for special consideration though.

Q.) *What is the format for the online courses?*

A.) The University System of Georgia (which VSU is a part) uses the Desire 2 Learn platform.

Q.) *Is the D.P.A. program a PhD?*

A.) No, but it is considered a terminal degree. Most of our students are already in their chosen professions and working full-time while pursuing a DPA degree. It differs from a traditional Ph.D. degree by being applied in nature and training students to assume leadership and higher-level managerial roles, and to solve practical problems.