



Frequently Asked Questions about Valdosta State University's DPA Online Degree Programs

Q.) What is the length of the program?

A.) 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.) Core classes – 15 hrs.; Methods – 9 hrs.; Concentration area – 15 hrs.; Guided electives – 6 hrs.; Final Project 9 hrs.

Q.) If you are transferring in from a school that does not require testing as an admission requirement will testing be required to get into VSU?

A.) Yes, all requirements for admission remain the same whether you are starting new or transferring in.

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

A.) Up to 15 hours may be transferred in from credits beyond your first graduate degree. The student is responsible for requesting that a transcript be sent to VSU's 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 completion of our program (your graduation date).

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

A.) 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?

A. The student consults with their chair and members of their dissertation committee.

Q.) Does the dissertation count as semester hours?

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

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

A.) You cannot graduate from this program without it. It is your exit requirement for this 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.) None. The GRE is an **optional** test. You must have a GRE within the last 5 years, if over 5 years, you must provide a copy of your test scores for consideration. It would be best to refer to the Graduate School for clarification on this matter. If you can find your official GRE test scores (check your transcripts) you can use them providing the score is high enough.

Q.) To be considered for regular admission what is the minimum?

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'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 but you will have to attend a minimum of 5 residency requirements.

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 due dates for final projects.

A.) Go to the VSU website under Grad School to find for deadline for dissertations. The due dates for everything else is set by each individual's committee. Check with your committee to see if they have set any deadlines for you to follow.

Q.) If I'm scheduled to take the GRE in mid-March and the application deadline is April 15th will the scores make it to the Graduate School before the review committee meets?

A.) The Graduate School should have the results by the deadline and Graduate School will not send any information to the review committee until after the deadline of April 15th. The student needs to make sure they have all required items to the Graduate School in time.

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

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 received 113 applications for Fall 2021 and admitted 38.

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

A.) No. Our classes do not function as cohorts.

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.) Your concentration courses cannot be dual listed courses; we are open to graduate students only. Check with VSU's Graduate Catalog to see what might be offered online. If you do not find what you need through VSU you may need to find your concentration courses elsewhere but please contact our office first for advisement.

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.) PADM 9990: Capstone Seminar can be taken only upon completion of all other coursework. Generally, the Capstone course is taken at the beginning of the student's third year.

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.

According to Brewer, et al “the degree title tends to be more informative about the kinds of doctoral students recruited and the scale of faculties employed... DPA programs tend to be aimed at training practitioners than Ph.D. programs are, but this difference does not translate into substantially greater levels of scholarly productivity from Ph.D. program graduates.” (315)

See Gene A. Brewer, Rex L. Facer II, Lawrence O’Toole, Jr., and James W. Douglas. “What’s in a Name? Comparing DPA and Ph.D. Programs”. *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 5 (1999): 4:309-317.