MPA Portfolio Guide

Purpose
PUBA 746 is the penultimate step for completion of the MPA degree and is a pre-requisite to the MPA Oral Exam. It is a 1.5 credit-hour course to be taken in the final semester of your studies, requiring you to prepare and finalize a comprehensive portfolio. It serves to demonstrate your public administration competencies through collecting and reflecting on work products from previous courses and creating one original paper on your public service vision.

A three-person faculty committee (review committee) assesses the portfolio. When the portfolio has been deemed to have met the demonstration of competency requirements, the same committee will conduct an oral examination of the student (see MPA Oral Exam Guide).

Prerequisites
A. All core courses satisfactorily completed
B. Total of 34.5 credit hours completed

Course Expectations
A. Instructor offers guidance in preparing the portfolio
B. Constructive feedback on draft portfolios from fellow students

The portfolio content has four primary goals:
• Establishes a vision of one’s self as a public service leader
• Articulates the values that one associates with as a public service leader
• Describes the knowledge and skills developed that are critical for one’s career
• Document achievement of selected competencies

Competencies
A. Required competencies in all portfolios:
   ► to lead, manage, and engage others in public service
   ► to articulate and apply public service values
   ► to communicate effectively
   ► to manage work efficiently and effectively to achieve public purposes
   ► to analyze information for decision making

B. Students select at least two of the following competences to include in portfolio:
   ► to understand social, economic, and political context
   ► to understand law and legal process
   ► to manage financial resources
   ► to manage human capital
Portfolio Structure, Preparation and Evaluation

I. Structure

Cover Page
- Title = “MPA Portfolio of [Your Name]”
- Date
- Other details TBD

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Section I: Personal Leadership Vision
Competencies: To lead, manage, engage others in public service
To communicate effectively

Section II: Diagnose Ethical Issues in Public Administration
Competencies: To articulate and apply public service values
To communicate effectively

Section III: Public Service Professional Learning Experience (PUBA 745)
Competencies: To manage work efficiently and effectively to achieve public purposes.
To communicate effectively

Section IV: Decision Making Skills
Competencies: To analyze information for decision making.
To communicate effectively

Section V: Student Specific Competencies
Choose at least two of the following:
► to understand social, economic, and political context
► to understand law and legal process
► to manage financial resources
► to manage human capital

II. Preparation

Preparation for this course occurs throughout a student’s work in the MPA program.

Due to the short timeframe of the 1.5 credit-hour course, identification of material to demonstrate competencies needs to start before the course begins. Students are encouraged to carefully consider how individual and group projects yield memos, reports, research papers and other products which can be used to demonstrate the competencies required for the portfolio. Students must engage the curriculum to develop an understanding of how their career goals, and associated knowledge and skills, are embedded in the specific areas of public administration as a discipline and as a practice.
Through instructor and peer feedback, one or more drafts of the portfolio are created and critiqued. Each student decides when to submit the final portfolio. The instructor’s opinion on the quality of the portfolio can be solicited, but it does not bind the separate review committee’s judgment of the quality of the portfolio. In short, a student can benefit from the constructive feedback of peers and the instructor, and the judgment that counts the most is that of review committee.

III. Evaluation

When a student submits the portfolio, the review committee assesses the material. The committee chair is responsible for aggregating the committee’s evaluation and determining if a majority has passed the student on the portfolio. With two or more passes, the portfolio has met the standards of demonstrating competencies and the student can proceed to scheduling the oral exam. For less than two passes, the review committee provides guidance on how to improve the portfolio for re-submission.

A student has the opportunity to revise and resubmit the portfolio one time. The assessment of the revised portfolio is done by the same committee. If the majority of the committee does not award passes, the student becomes academically ineligible to continue in the Graduate School.

A student may petition the MPA program for reinstatement when special circumstances warrant according to the policy of The Graduate School. The student and the MPA program must jointly complete the Request for Reinstatement to Graduate School.

Privacy, Honest Reflection, and Distribution of the Portfolio

The portfolio is addressed to the MPA faculty. Thoughtful and candid reflection is a central element for cover memos on previous work and for the Personal Leadership Vision.

Students’ work in this course will be shared with:
  a) The course instructor
  b) A subset of the students in the class for peer review (approximately 3-5 students)
  c) The faculty review committee: the three persons selected by the course instructor

Some or all parts of the portfolio may be appropriate for students/graduates to use for career development/job seeking purposes. However, sharing drafts or the final portfolio is solely up to the student. The portfolio will be handled as a confidential document by the MPA program, and will not be distributed beyond (a-c) above unless the student gives explicit, written permission.