LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In order to become effective public leaders, students must develop a solid foundation in technical, analytical, ethical, diversity, accountability, and leadership skills. In addition, students receive greater depth in a specialty area training of their choice: local government management, public management and leadership, fiscal administration, or nonprofit management.

To this end the Division of Public Administration (Division) uses a competencies based curriculum which establishes specific skills and abilities acquired by the students as they complete the required courses. A portfolio of completed work is displayed by the graduate as evidence of proficiencies in distinct categories of public service.

There are 13 program level competencies that students should attain before graduation from the program. Upon completion of the MPA degree at NIU:

Graduates of the NIU MPA Program should be able to:

✓ Effectively work with internal and external stakeholders
✓ Motivate peers and employees to enhance organizational capacity
✓ Integrate current and preferred management practices of budgeting, human resources, information technology, statistical analysis, and performance measurement to improve organizations
✓ Use strategic management to facilitate goal identification and execution
✓ Apply decision-making theories to frame and solve public service problems
✓ Effectively participate in the public policy process in a role appropriate to a professional public manager
✓ Conduct environmental scans and identify the windows of opportunity to influence decisions
✓ Evaluate public service issues in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, equity and economy
✓ Incorporate professional codes of ethics in public service decision-making to enhance integrity of public services
✓ Communicate effectively both orally (public speaking) and in writing (analytical and persuasive) for a public service organization and in the public policy process.
✓ Understand and listen critically to diverse perspectives to address public service issues
✓ Identify strategies for improving democratic accountability in governance, including improved transparency and civic participation
✓ Develop or adapt policies, programs, goods or services to accommodate changing social demographics for the population they serve.
There are specialization competencies that students should attain before graduation from the program.

Upon completion of the **Local Government Management Specialization** a graduate should be able to:

1. Link local government budgetary practices with service delivery.
2. Organize and manage a senior management staff meeting in a municipality.
3. Demonstrate knowledge and experience in understanding the roles and responsibilities of elected and administrative officials in local government.

Upon completion of the **Fiscal Administration Specialization** a graduate should be able to:

1. Use financial information to evaluate the financial condition of public service organizations and make appropriate fiscal policy recommendations.
2. Communicate budget and financial information about public service organizations to technical and non-technical stakeholders, including through appropriate graphs and spreadsheets.
3. Develop and implement entity-wide financial management policies for public service organizations in accordance with recommendations by GFOA and similar professional organizations.
4. Analyze nonprofit financial reports and fundraising activities and make recommendations to promote financial sustainability.

Upon completion of the **Strategic Public Management and Leadership Specialization** a graduate should be able to:

1. Use their knowledge of innovation models, techniques and theories, in addition to models of collaboration and change management, to diagnose organization situations and suggest recommendations for alternative solutions.
2. Use their knowledge of strategic management and planning processes models and technologies to assist in the application and implementation of these change and adaptation methodologies.
3. Use conflict management models and technologies to recognize and diagnose conflict situations at a skill level to make recommendations on how to resolve specific conflicts.
4. Show knowledge of leadership theories, models and applications through experiential learning activities.

Upon completion of the **Nonprofit Management Specialization** a graduate should be able to:

1. Identify the legal and fiduciary environment in which nonprofits operate.
2. Motivate and professionalize a volunteer workforce.
3. Analyze financial reports and fundraising activities and make recommendations to promote financial sustainability.