



# Public Administration

## College of Liberal Studies

Public Administration is primarily for those interested in public service careers in government or with nonprofit agencies and private sector companies engaged in government-related activities. The field of study is designed to develop the intellectual, analytical and administrative skills that are highly useful when working for, or with, governmental units to increase awareness and understanding of the problems associated with governmental operations and policymaking.

The Public Administration program at UW-La Crosse offers broad multi-disciplinary training to qualify students for new or expanded responsibilities in public sector employment. This unique major contains courses from political science, public administration, management, economics, sociology, psychology, and computer science, as well as electives from other departments.

The program is designed with sufficient flexibility to allow students to emphasize an area of particular interest. The university's internship program, an essential feature of the public administration major, is well-established, well-managed, and widely respected.

The States of Wisconsin and Minnesota, the federal government, local governments, and nonprofit agencies have employed many graduates of this program. Upon graduation or after working in public administration, many students also successfully pursue graduate studies. Both acceptance into, and graduation from, graduate and/or law school has been quite high for UW-La Crosse students.

### Undergraduate Programs

**Major:**

- Public Administration

**Minor:**

- Public Administration

**Specializations:**

- Urban Management/Planning
- Health Policy/Administration
- Public Personnel Administration
- Public Policy Making/  
Implementation/Evaluation and  
Analysis
- Public Financial Administration
- Internship (Required)

Many students take the option of completing two different internships in a specialization to help them obtain skills and choose between alternative careers. For example, students may obtain internships in city planning with a county administrator or city manager for the urban management/planning specialization. Alternately in the personnel specialization, a student may have one internship with a government agency and a second with a business in its human resources department.

### Department Features

The public administration program is offered by the Political Science/Public Administration Department. Students may specialize in: Urban Management/Planning; Health Policy/Administration; Public Personnel Administration; Public Policy Making/Implementation/Evaluation and Analysis; Public Financial Administration; or an individual, general administrative management program containing elements of each.

The public administration major requires a student to intern with a government or nonprofit agency. The student's opportunities are thus improved in several ways. The experience gained makes the graduate more employable; the experience often makes the student eligible for a higher entry level salary than he or she would otherwise be eligible for; and internships often lead directly or indirectly into employment.

An undergraduate public administration major who does not intend to enter graduate training in a specialty area of public administration (e.g., urban planning, city management, etc.) should

consider selecting a complementary minor or even a second major – economics, geography (for planning), management (for personnel), sociology, or criminal justice, for example.

Public administration itself is a complementary major or minor with other fields of study, which often leads to employment in public agencies. Recreation, health administration, environmental studies, criminal justice, educational administration, political science, and pre-law are good examples. A second major which provides management training in government enhances employment opportunities.

## Sample Courses

- Introduction to Public Administration
- Public Budgetary Process
- Health Policy and Administration
- Human Resources: Employment
- Urban Politics and Administration
- Public Policy Analysis
- Research Methods in Politics and Government
- Environmental Policy
- Internships in Government and Politics

## Career Opportunities

### Entry Level

- Assistant City Manager
- Budget Administrator
- Census or Survey Research positions
- Federal Civil Service
- Human Services Administrator
- Legislative Assistant
- Policy Analyst
- Public Relations Trainee
- Recycling Coordinator
- Urban and Regional Planner
- Wisconsin State Patrol or City/County Police and Fire Departments

### Further Education

- Graduate study in public administration, city management, urban affairs, urban and regional planning, policy analysis, hospital administration, health service administration, criminal justice administration.

### Long Term Career Development

- City, County or Town Manager
- College or University Instructor
- Educational Administrator
- Government Positions (federal, state, local)
- Lawyer
- Police Administrator
- Politician
- Public Administrator

## Occupational Outlook

While most undergraduate majors generally enter the area of public administration because this is a public service and management program, some graduates find their skills easily transferable to the private sector. The exact kinds of positions vary considerably depending on the level of government and type of business. As the largest employer in the nation, government, whether federal, state, or local, offers a wide variety of opportunities.

Many graduates seek additional education in analysis, health administration, and legal careers. Additionally, many undergraduates combine the study of public administration with a technical or skill specialty that is also directly or indirectly related to public service. These include community health administration, recreation administration, environmental studies, mass communications, military science, criminal justice, social work, and education. Any undergraduate major which is likely to lead to employment in the public sector is enhanced by training in public administration.

Although the availability of positions varies with the area and level of government in question and is affected by such things as budgetary considerations and public demands, the vast scale of government creates a marketplace of opportunities for the more skilled and better prepared. The government employs one out of every six people working today in the U.S. An overwhelming number of these people have no formal training in public administration. Even if government did not grow in the future, simply replacing those who leave would create jobs.

Those educated in public administration (a relatively new field of formal study) will be more qualified to compete for these positions than those who are not so trained.

### Job Titles of Graduates

- Budget Analyst
- Census Technician
- Internal Revenue Service Trainee
- Legislative Analyst
- Management Trainee
- Public Affairs
- Regional Planning Assistant
- Systems Analyst Trainee

## Professional Associations

- American Political Science Association
- American Society for Public Administration
- Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)
- Law & Society Association
- Midwest Association of Pre-Law Advisors
- Midwest Political Science Association
- National Academic Advising Association
- Society for Utopian Studies
- Southern Political Science Association
- Wisconsin Political Science Association

**Department of Political Science/Public Administration**  
**421A Wimberly Hall**  
**(608) 785-8434**  
[www.uwlax.edu/PoliSci/](http://www.uwlax.edu/PoliSci/)