



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

Q.) What is the length of the program?

A.) The program is 54 hours long and typically takes 57 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.) 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' 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 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

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 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 Desire2 Learn

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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 to 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): 4:309-17.