



Overarching Department Curriculum Goals Background Materials

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The PAM major prepares students for leadership roles as policy makers, analysts, and managers in both the public and private sectors. The major's unique strength stems from its combination of robust theory and practical application. Students will learn to integrate analytical thinking, research and data analysis skills, and policy implementation strategies to understand the effects of public and private policies on people's lives.

PAM majors employ theories and methods from economics, sociology, government, demography, and psychology to analyze public policy impacts on society. Students will learn to apply theories designed to explain the development of government policies addressing social issues and how private corporations interact with government to affect the well-being of society. Furthermore, students will learn to analyze management and policy decisions that affect individuals, groups, businesses, and different sectors of society.

The curriculum focus is United States public policy in the areas of health care, consumer, and regulatory issues, and family/social welfare; however, many other policy relevant fields are represented. The major provides opportunities for on- and off-campus undergraduate internships and field experiences that enhance the learning environment. PAM students are strongly encouraged to incorporate a significant experiential component into their course of study.

Core and Required Courses

The following list of courses represent both the required and core PAM courses. Students generally take these courses during their freshmen and sophomore years. The courses represent the backbone of policy analysis: statistics, data analysis, sociology, demography, psychology, economics, and policy analysis. In order to succeed in PAM, it is necessary to have a full understanding of these subject areas.

Quantitative Foundational Courses

PAM 2101 – Introduction to Statistics for Majors PAM 3100 – Multiple Regression Analysis

Core Policy Analysis and Management Courses

PAM 2000 – Intermediate Microeconomics PAM 2030 – Population and Public Policy
PAM 2040 – Economics of the Public Sector PAM 2300 – Introduction to Policy Analysis
PAM 3300 – Cost-Benefit Analysis



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Elective Courses

In addition to core and required courses, PAM students must take a minimum of 18 additional credits of PAM elective courses. These elective courses serve several purposes:

- they make use of, support, and advance the material taught in the core courses.
- they focus on public policy relevant subject areas. While the department has specific strengths in consumer, health, and family/social welfare, many other public policy areas are represented. For example, crime, law, education, social security, and so on, are all important areas of instruction and research.
- the elective courses encourage students' abilities to think critically, apply theories, analyze data, conduct research, manage teams, and present research findings.

Special Studies Courses

Special studies courses encourage students to explore policy analysis outside of typical classroom settings. However, these courses continue to focus on enhancing students' understanding of core courses, policy analysis, critical thinking, data analysis, research, and presenting research findings. Special studies courses include directed readings, research assistance, field studies, and independent research in policy analysis and management.



Core Competencies Expected of PAM Students upon graduation:

No.	Competency Area	Examples
1.	Basic statistical analysis	Describe data with summary tables and charts Understand and apply probability theory to data Understand sampling distributions Conduct hypothesis tests Interpret statistical findings
2.	Multivariate data analysis	Ability to interpret OLS regression results Ability to perform basic regression analysis Understanding research design & endogeneity with particular application to policy analysis
3.	Research design	Design a study to test hypothesis in policy analysis Perform relevant statistical analysis to test hypothesis Conduct methodological critique of empirical literature
4.	Economic analysis	Perform supply and demand analysis Analyze policy using budget constraints and indifference curves Understand the theoretical functioning of competitive markets Identify conditions for market failure and be aware of potential efficient government solutions Understand basic game theory
5.	Public sector economics	Understand the economic efficiency and equity justifications for government Understand basic public choice theory of democratic decision making Understand the economic impacts of various tax policies and their implications for incentives and efficiencies Learn the framework for the major U.S. government functions: healthcare, social security, education, unemployment, social insurance.
6.	Policy analysis	Understand and apply theoretical and empirical models to policy analysis Evaluate distributional aspects of policies and programs Read and critique existing empirical research Communicate the results of policy analysis
7.	Cost benefit analysis	Conduct cost benefit analysis of government projects Ability to discount future costs and benefits Measure distributional effects of policy Apply uncertainty and risk to policy analysis Ability to evaluate non-market activities such as environmental policy and the value of a statistical life
8.	Demographic analysis	Understand the logic and skills of demographic research Collect and interpret demographic data Understand the major components of global population change (fertility, mortality, migration) Use demographic techniques to understand relevant policy analysis
9.	Expertise in a Substantive Policy Area	Learn in depth details about policies issues in one or several public policy areas, for example consumer, health or family/social welfare



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10.	Conduct research	Identify an empirical policy question Design the research approach Collect and analyze data Present the research findings
11.	Leadership and team-based collaboration skills	Effectively lead individuals and teams Collaborate with team members to complete a research project Evaluate the performance of others
12.	Written communication skills	Write executive summaries, policy reports, research briefs, or cover letters Develop presentation slides that achieve their intended purpose
13.	Oral communication and presentation skills	Communicate with colleagues and supervisors effectively Verbally present issues and findings to diverse external audiences Respond to questions effectively
14.	Working within diverse groups	Appreciate and value individual differences Listen to and consider alternative points of view Share responsibility and information within diverse groups



Mapping of PAM Undergraduate Outcomes to CHE Learning Outcomes

PAM Competency	CHE Outcome							
	1. Comprehend disciplines and fields	2. Think critically	3. Apply multi-disciplinary perspectives	4. Innovate in research, design, or practice	5. Write, speak and use visual communication s effectively	6. Work effectively with others	7. Display commitment to ethical principles	8. Direct own learning
1. Basic statistical analysis	X	X						
2. Multivariate data analysis	X	X						
3. Research design		X		X			X	X
4. Economic analysis	X	X						
5. Public sector economic	X	X						
6. Policy analysis	X	X	X		X	X		
7. Cost benefit analysis	X	X	X					
8. Demographic analysis	X	X						
9. Expertise in a Substantive Policy Area	X	X	X		X			
10. Conduct research		X	X	X	X		X	X
11. Leadership and team-based collaboration skills					X	X	X	
12. Written communication skills					X			
13. Oral communication Skills					X			
14. Working within diverse groups					X	X	X	