

What is Public Administration? A Sampling of Textbook Definitions

Public administration is the production of goods and services designed to serve the needs of citizens-consumers. Dimock et al., *Public Administration*

Public administration may be defined as all processes, organizations, and individuals (the latter acting in official positions and roles) associated with carrying out laws and other rules adopted or issued by legislatures, executives, and courts. This definition should be understood to include considerable administrative involvement in formulation as well as implementation of legislative and executive orders. . . . Gordon, *Public Administration in America*

Public administration involves the coordination of all organized activity having as its purpose the implementation of public policy. Gortner, *Administration in the Public Sector*

Public administration is the authoritative implementation of those policy choices that have been legitimated through political processes. Hill & Hebert, *Essentials of Public Administration*

Public administration comprises both the techniques needed to manage public agencies and an understanding of the environmental factors that influence administrators. Thus, public administration includes both the *is* and the *ought*—the way things are done and the way they should be done. Klingner, *Public Administration: A Management Approach*

Public administration: (1) is a cooperative group effort in a public setting; (2) covers all three branches—executive, legislative, and judicial—and their interrelationships; (3) has an important role in the formulation of public policy, and is thus part of the political process; (4) is different in significant ways from private administration; (5) is closely associated with numerous private groups and individuals in providing services to the community. Nigro & Nigro, *Modern Public Administration*

Public administration concerns the accomplishing side of government. It comprises all those activities involved in carrying out the policies of elected officials and some activities associated with the development of those policies. Public administration is, in short, all that comes after the last campaign promise and election-night cheer. Starling, *Managing the Public Sector*

We shall define public administration as the application of organizational, decision-making, and staffing theory and procedures to public problems. Vocino & Rabin, *Contemporary Public Administration*

Public administration is all about the management of scarce resources to accomplish the goals of public policy. Williams, *Public Administration: The People's Business*