UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO

Department of Public Policy, Management, and Analytics

Ph.D. Student Handbook

Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration

FOR STUDENTS WHO BEGAN PROGRAM AFTER JULY, 2025

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1. Introduction

The College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) was established in 1994 with the merger of the Urban Planning and Policy Program and the Graduate Program in Public Administration. The current Department of Public Policy, Management, & Analytics (PPMA) offers the only Doctorate in Philosophy in Public Administration in the state of Illinois. The department also offers a Masters in Public Administration (MPA), Masters in Public Policy (MPP), Masters in Civic Analytics (MSCA), and a Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy (BAPP).

The purpose of this handbook is to bring together in one document the policies of the Graduate College of the University, CUPPA, and PPMA related to the Ph.D. degree. The handbook is designed to be useful to the faculty, staff, and doctoral students of PPMA.

The preparation and maintenance of the handbook are the responsibility of the Ph.D. Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) of PPMA. The handbook is reviewed annually by the DGS to ensure compliance with the policies of the Graduate College and PPMA. In the event of conflict between the policies of the Graduate College and those of PPMA, those of the Graduate College prevail. Interested parties are encouraged to refer to the Graduate College catalog (available online at https://catalog.uic.edu/gcat/) for clarification.

The policies listed herein are in effect for doctoral students who begin their studies in or after the fall semester 2025.

2. Program Objectives

The doctoral program in the Department of Public Policy, Management, & Analytics is designed in accordance with the "Policy on Doctoral Education in Public Affairs/Administration" of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs/Administration, which states:

Doctoral programs in public administration should prepare students to undertake significant research in their subsequent careers, whether in government, academic life, or other settings: the capacity to do significant research, rather than access to a particular career setting, is the appropriate goal of doctoral training……. Whether in governmental, academic or other career settings, holders of the doctorate add to the ranks of those who are able to generate and share knowledge of public administration and its related fields...

The goal of doctoral training is [to equip] individuals to add to knowledge of public administration and related fields through disciplined research. When practicing professionals undertake the doctorate they should recognize the need to demonstrate substantial research skills and to interact with a research faculty on a continuing basis as they design and execute their dissertation projects.

Research skills are underlined to emphasize that the Ph.D. in public administration is, fundamentally, a degree in research. It is not simply further specialized study of how to manage or administer government. In other words, it is not a higher-level MPA degree, and most students who enter a Ph.D. program aim to pursue a career in academia or research in association with the government or non-profit sector. The program is designed for full-time study, and

combines coursework with applied learning through paid research and teaching assistantships. primarily full-time students. Part-time students and those holding outside employment face significant challenges in completing their Ph.D. One such challenge is that many of the required courses in the program are only offered every other year, which generally prevents part-time students from completing their coursework on the standard two-year schedule. Obtaining a Ph.D. requires sustained and concentrated learning over an extended period of time. In addition to learning how to do research, students are expected to become experts in the research being conducted within their chosen areas of concentration.

Examples of positions held by recent graduates of the Ph.D. program include:

- Assistant Professor, Oakland University (2025)
- Assistant Professor, University of Macau (2025)
- Research Analyst, Government Finance Officers Association (2024)
- Assistant Professor, Murray State University (2024)
- Assistant Professor, College of Charleston (2024)
- Research Analyst, National Opinion Research Center (2023)
- Assistant Professor, University of Colorado Denver (2023)
- Director of Research Strategy, National League of Cities (2021)
- Head of Digital Scholarship & Research Management, Northwestern University (2021)
- Data Scientist, CVS Health (2020)
- Assistant Professor, California State University-Long Beach (2020)
- Diplomat, Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2020)
- Assistant Professor, Abant Izzet Baysal University (2019)
- Applied Research and Evaluation Specialist, Duke University (2019)
- Assistant Professor, Wichita State University (2019)
- Head of Public Policy, Southeast Europe at Amazon Web Services (2018)
- Assistant Professor, Northern Illinois University (2017)
- Assistant Professor, University of North Texas (2016)
- Assistant Professor, Pace University (2016)
- Assistant Professor, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (2016)
- Assistant Professor, Michigan State University (2015)

See Comer, Douglas. "A PhD in Public Affairs?" NASPAA Doctoral Committee, September 2007 for an excellent discussion of why someone should pursue a PhD and caveats. http://glenn.osu.edu/graduate/doctoral/doctoral-attributes/PhD-in-Public-Affairs.pdf

3. Admission Requirements

All applicants must show a record of previous academic success, strong potential for continued success in the Ph.D. program, and a logical rationale for seeking admission to the program. Applicants to the Ph.D. program must hold a master's degree. All admitted applicants are required to have completed at least one masters-level statistics course.

All applicants should have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 [out of 4] in their

graduate work and scores that are at least in the 50th percentile of all portions of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE). A basic knowledge of American government and statistics is a prerequisite for admission. Scores on other graduate-level entrance exams, such as the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) or LSAT (Law School Admission Test), can generally be substituted for the GRE scores. All applicants are reviewed by the Ph.D. Committee. The Committee will review all evidence of the following, but not be limited to:

a. Trend of graduate grades
b. Type of graduate program
c. Prior work experience
d. Letters of recommendation
e. Statement of intent
f. Writing sample
g. GRE scores

4. Application Procedures

All applicants are required to upload their documents and academic credentials electronically to satisfy both program-specific requirements and admission/institutional requirements. Please visit the Graduate Admissions website for more details: https://grad.uic.edu/admissions/ . Applications and supporting credentials should be submitted as early as possible. Applications received after the deadlines below will not be considered. The Ph.D. application process is posted on the PPMA website at: https://cuppa.uic.edu/academics/pa/pa-programs/doctorate-public-administration/phd-admissions/ .

Admission decisions are made once per year. All admitted applicants will commence their study in the fall. The application deadline is January 15th. Admission decisions are made in February and applicants notified in late February or March of admission and funding decisions.

Applicants **must** upload the following:

1. University application form
2. Transcripts of previous college coursework
3. Written personal statement concerning the reasons for pursuing a Ph.D. in public administration
4. A current resume
5. GRE test scores (not more than 5 years old)
6. A sample of academic or professional writing
7. Three academic or professional letters of recommendation

Personal Statement

The personal statement should discuss intellectual, educational, personal, and professional goals, the reasons for seeking the degree, specific intellectual interests, and the proposed area of concentration. The one or two personal page statement should identify an area of concentration you are interested in pursuing. You may always change your area of concentration at a later time.

Please review the areas of concentration in the Ph.D. program and the expertise of faculty in developing your statement. Also, please include the following in your personal statement:

- What is your intellectual background and academic interests?
- Why did you decide to study public administration at the graduate level?
- What are your professional goals?
- How does a Ph.D. in Public Administration fit into your short- and long-term plans for your professional career?

Letters of Recommendation

PPMA is interested in specific and substantial evaluations of academic and professional competence. Recommenders should comment on an applicant's academic performance and potential as a doctoral student, research abilities, and performance in areas such as writing, analysis, and critical thinking, rather than their performance as a public manager. It is important to select recommenders who can comment on such matters. Generally, letters of recommendation should not be more than 2 years old.

International Students

A graduate of a college or university outside of the United States who has completed academic programs equivalent to an American bachelor's degree and master's degree may apply for admission to the Ph.D. program. In addition to the admissions criteria identified previously, international applicants, whose native language is not English, must take one of the English language tests listed below to demonstrate their proficiency. This test is not required for students who have completed at least two academic years of full-time study in a country where English is the native language. However, all international students in which English is not their native language must be tested for English oral proficiency in order to be awarded a teaching assistantship.

International students have a choice of taking one of the three tests below. Minimum scores required by the Graduate College for admission are also indicated.

- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): A minimum score of 550 (paper-based test); or 80 Total, with subscores Reading 19, Speaking 20, Listening 17, Writing 21 (internet-based test, iBT).
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS): A minimum total score of 6.5 and minimum subscores of 6.0 for each of the four subsections.
- Pearson PTE Academic: A minimum total score of 54 and minimum subscores of Reading 51, Speaking 53, Listening 47, Writing 56.See the following website for more information about the admission of international students: http://grad.uic.edu/international-admission

5. Funding Your Education

PPMA Public Administration Scholarship Award

All admitted students are offered an initial commitment of four years of funding for all students admitted to the program. Funding includes a full tuition waiver, a nine-month stipend each year (research and/or teaching assistantship of 20 hours/week), and campus health care. Students may be eligible for additional years of funding, pending good standing in the program and satisfactory progress toward the dissertation and degree. See the graduate college website for comprehensive information about other sources of funding for your education and research:

https://grad.uic.edu/funding-awards/graduate-funding-overview/

Other awards and fellowships

- UIC Graduate Student Council (GSC) Travel Award: The UIC Graduate Student Council Travel Award is available to students attending academic or professional meetings. To eligible applicants, the GSC gives awards of up to $550, which may be used to cover conference funding for transportation, lodging, registration fees, and meal costs. This does not include conferences taking place in the city of Chicago. For more information see: https://gradstudentcouncil.uic.edu/awards/travel-awards-2/ .
- The Graduate Student Presenter Awards: The Graduate College offers up to $150 (depending on actual expenses) to eligible graduate students to help defray costs associated with presenting original research or scholarly work at a meeting or conference. The meeting or conference must be part of a nationally or internationally recognized scientific or scholarly society. Applicants must be the primary presenter of the original research or scholarly work. The award may be used for transportation (outside the Chicago metropolitan area only), lodging, and/or registration expenses. See: https://grad.uic.edu/funding-awards/graduate-college-fellowships/student-presenter-awards/ .
- PA Student Presenter Award: intended to help PPMA graduate students defray costs associated with presenting research at scholarly meetings or conferences, (e.g., registration and/or travel expenses). Limited funds are available to support conference travel each year. Students are eligible for funding to attend conferences beginning in their third year of study and must be presenting in an official capacity (listed on the program) to receive PPMA travel funds. Students should obtain approval from the DGS before making a request to staff to process travel arrangements.
- ICPSR Summer Scholars Program: The department sometimes offers $1500 stipends for students to attend the Summer Program in Quantitative Methods. See: https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/pages/sumprog/scholarships/index.html.
- Laurette Kirstein Scholarship: $5,000 in the form of student account credit for tuition, books, living expenses will be offered to international students who display academic excellence. See: https://ois.uic.edu/programs/scholarships-and-awards/.
- Other awards for international students: https://ois.uic.edu/programs/scholarships-and-awards/

Other Financial Assistance

The Department of Public Policy, Management, & Analytics and the various research centers elsewhere in the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs have graduate research assistantships. Graduate assistants work 10-20 hours a week, receive a monthly stipend, and a tuition and service fee waiver from the University. Interested students should obtain information from the Director of Graduate Studies.

6. Degree Requirements (beginning AY25-26)

Graduate Course Catalog Information: https://catalog.uic.edu/gcat/colleges-schools/urban-planning-public-affairs/pa/phd/

The requirements listed here apply to students who began the Ph.D. program in Fall, 2025 or later.

There are three main requirements to complete the Ph.D. in Public Administration, are coursework, comprehensive exam, and dissertation.

Coursework and credits: Most courses offered by PPMA that Ph.D. students may take are either 2 or 4 credits. The curriculum is described in more detail in section 7.

The student must complete 64 credits beyond the master's degree. These courses will include at least 48 credits in approved coursework and at least 16 credits of dissertation work. The 48 credits of approved course work include the following:

1) Core theory courses (8 credits total)
2) Core methods courses (20 credits)
3) Courses in at least **one** chosen area of concentration (12 credits);
4) Two 2-credit applied research courses (4 credits total);
5) Elective classes (4 credits).

Comprehensive exam: The student must pass the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive exam is designed to test students' mastery of material and is described in more detail in section 8.

Dissertation: The dissertation is a record of original research that is conducted by the student under the guidance of a committee. The student must successfully defend both the dissertation proposal (called the preliminary examination) and the final dissertation in front of this committee. Upon successful completion of the preliminary examination, the student becomes a candidate for the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation is discussed in more detail in section 9.

Transfer credits

Acceptance of transfer credits from accredited institutions is dependent on the pertinence of the work to the Ph.D. program. Students requesting a transfer of credit from another institution are expected to submit information on the content of the courses for which credit is requested, including, for example, a syllabus. Transfer of credits should occur at the time of admission and is subject to the following restrictions:

a. Grades on all transfer credits must be a minimum of "B"
b. No credit used for another degree or preparatory deficiency course credit may be counted toward the 64 credits in the Ph.D. program.
c. Doctoral students may transfer in no more than 25 percent of the 64 course hours beyond the Masters required for the degree.

Time Requirements/Limitations

It is impossible to specify the precise length of time needed to complete the Ph.D. program due to the many variables associated with completing the degree requirements. Such variables include, but are not limited to the following:

i. Number of credits allowed for previous graduate study
ii. Whether there are course deficiencies relative to the program requirements
iii. The number of credit hours completed during each academic term
iv. The time required to prepare for the preliminary exam and to complete the dissertation

Generally, a full-time student with no prerequisite course deficiencies should complete all coursework requirements within two academic years. Thereafter, the time required to complete the dissertation will vary. Typically, the dissertation takes 1-2 years to complete.

The comprehensive examination is taken during the summer following the completion of coursework. Thus, all full-time students will take the comprehensive exam in the summer after their second year. **Students are required to take the exam within one year of completing all required PA coursework**.

> *Extensions:* To be granted an extension for completing the comprehensive exam, a student may request a six-month or one-year extension to this policy in writing from the DGS. Extensions will be granted only in cases where there is a valid reason for the student to postpone taking the exams (e.g., personal or family emergency).

Following satisfactory performance on the comprehensive examination, the student commences work on the dissertation proposal, which must be presented and defended before the preliminary examination committee. Following the committee's approval, the student is admitted to candidacy.

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree must complete all work within a seven consecutive year period after initial registration in the program.

Academic Standing

Continuation in the graduate program requires satisfactory progress toward the graduate degree. Evidence of such progress includes maintenance of a 3.0 GPA throughout the course of academic study. In addition, credit is not given for any required course in which a grade of less than "B" is earned.

Students who do not maintain the required 3.0 cumulative GPA after the first 24 credit hours will be placed on academic probation in the semester immediately following the semester in which the cumulative GPA drops below the 3.0. Students have two terms of enrollment (including summer, if enrolled) after the term in which their degree GPA falls below 3.0 to remove themselves from probation. Students who fail to raise their averages to 3.0 or to otherwise fulfill the terms of their probation within the deadline will be dismissed from the university.

The faculty of the program reserves the right to dismiss any student at any time when, in its judgment, the student is not making satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree.

Course Loads

Students who can devote full-time attention to their studies usually enroll in 12 credit hours (three courses) each term. Those receiving financial assistance may be subject to specific course load requirements. See the Graduate College catalog at https://catalog.uic.edu/gcat/.

Although all online courses taken by international students with F-1 or J-1 visas will count towards their degree, only one online class (up to 3 credits) will count towards their full course of study requirement each semester. See the following website at the Office of International Students (OIS): https://ois.uic.edu/.

Registration for Zero Hours

Registration for zero hours is only available to students who have completed all degree requirements except the dissertation. Students must have completed a minimum of 16 hours of PA 599, Dissertation Research, before being eligible for zero-hour status. Students wishing to register for zero hours must submit a Graduate College petition and receive permission from the DPA and the Graduate College prior to registration. Once permission is received, students may continue to register for zero hours provided they remain in the same program, continue to make satisfactory academic progress, and are within the time frame for degree completion.

Plan of Study

In the first year, each Ph.D. student should, in consultation with the DGS and other members of the faculty who are appropriate for their areas of interest, begin developing a Plan of Study (see Appendix A for the Plan of Study form). It is important that the Plan of Study be developed at least on a tentative basis, as early as possible (ideally by the end of the first year or the completion of the equivalent of one full-time year of coursework – i.e., 24 credit hours). When the Plan of Study has been prepared, it must be filed and approved by the DGS. The Plan of Study will contain a listing of all courses for which a student is requesting master's transfer credit; a listing of all courses expected to be completed at UIC and proposed to be used to meet Ph.D. coursework requirements; identification of the field of concentration; and, if known, a very brief description of the dissertation topic which the student expects to propose.

The Ph.D. Plan of Study may be filed at any time, but an approved plan must be filed prior to the comprehensive examination. A student may make changes in his/her Plan of Study, subject to the approval of the DGS.

It is comparatively easy to identify courses for the term immediately ahead because the department's and the university's course schedules for a particular term are published several months prior to the beginning of the next term. Selection of courses to be taken in semesters following the one immediately ahead is more difficult and should be treated as tentative because information about PPMA (and other departments') course offerings and time schedules cannot be known with certainty until the beginning of a particular semester. A tentative four year course schedule is shown in Appendix B.

Students are encouraged to take the following guidelines into account in planning course schedules:

- Incoming students should generally complete the core theory and core methods courses before taking electives and/or independent studies. One exception is if an elective is given infrequently and is part of the student's Plan of Study.
- All Ph.D. students should meet well before the beginning of each semester with the DGS or major professor to plan their course of study for the semester. Ph.D. students

are also encouraged to seek the advice of other members of the faculty when they have questions that fall within the scope of the teaching and research concentrations of other faculty.

- Do not make assumptions about the future availability of courses which are offered by other departments. Consult with the instructor or the chair of the department offering the course.
- Early filing of the tentative Plan of Study will raise the likelihood that your major professor and the Ph.D. committee can alert you to possible scheduling difficulties in time to adjust your plans accordingly.

7. Coursework and Curriculum

All courses are four credits unless indicated otherwise.

Core Theory Courses (8 credits total)

The three core theory courses are intended to provide students with a broad yet in-depth understanding of the discipline of public administration. The core theory courses are:

PA 510 Organization Theory and Behavior in Public Administration (2 credits)
PA 511 History and Development of Public Administration (2 credits)
PA 515 Bureaucracy and the Policy Process

Core Methods Courses (20 credits total)

Students are encouraged to develop competency in a wide range of methodological approaches. The methods requirement is intended to provide students with exposure to a variety of techniques and to allow them suitable opportunities to engage in research. The core methods courses are:

PA 540, Research Design for Public Administration (or POLS 505)
PA 541, Advanced Data Analysis I (or POLS 401 or POLS 501)

Plus 12 more credits in methods coursework. Students may take courses in other departments to fulfill this requirement (with permission from the DGS) or choose from the courses below

PA 542, Advanced Data Analysis II
PA 544, Qualitative Research Methods in Public Administration
PA 470, AI & Machine Learning
Any of the courses listed in the **Survey Methods** concentration section below except PA 578.

Applied Research Seminars (4 credits total; 2 credits per course)

The purpose of this two-course sequence (**PA 545 & PA 546**) is to provide students with an understanding of the craft-like elements of the research process, including how to select a research question, how to determine what methods are most appropriate to the question, how to balance considerations of rigor and practicality, and how to get published. Portions of these seminars will be devoted to a survey of different PA research areas, a review of research currently being undertaken by PPMA faculty, and opportunities for students to present their

research ideas and projects. The research seminars will help promote what is the primary activity of Ph.D., namely, to think critically and creatively. Two credit hours are awarded upon completion of each of the two seminars.

Concentrations/Electives (12 credits total)

Each Ph.D. student, in consultation with his or her major professor, selects one field of concentration from the fields offered by the program and completes at least twelve credit hours in this field. Although the student must complete twelve credits of coursework, and this may seem like a lot, students will still need to undertake significant self-study in their area of concentration in order to be prepared to take the comprehensive exam. This will be particularly true for students without previous training in their chosen field.

Doctoral students have the option of taking courses offered elsewhere in the university to complete the degree requirements. Previous students have taken courses in the School of Education, the School of Social Work, and the Departments of Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, and Economics. Students should consult the field faculty and their major professor in the selection of their courses. A student must petition for permission to substitute a field of concentration not currently offered by the program. The petition must explain how the alternative field of concentration is relevant to the student's dissertation plans, and they must identify the courses that will be taken. A petition to substitute an alternative field should be submitted to the DGS for review. Ordinarily, such a request will not be approved unless there are at least two but preferably three faculty members in PPMA who specialize in the field and who agree to participate in preparing and evaluating the comprehensive examination in the alternative field of concentration.

The concentrations currently offered are;

a. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Training for the financial management concentration in the Ph.D. Program prepares students to conduct research on the financial administration and fiscal policy of governments, primarily at the state and local levels. This is a very broad area of research with theoretical bases in the fields of public finance, political science, management, and accounting. Learning in the concentration focuses on applying theories and research in these fields to the context of the public sector in order to affect government policy and management decisions, and also to enhance knowledge in the broader field of public administration

PA 554, Advanced Seminar in Financial Management (*required*)
PA 594, Special Topics in Public Administration (Advanced State and Local Finance)

See Appendix D for a list of approved **Masters courses**

b. PUBLIC AND NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT

Training for the public and non-profit management concentration in the Ph.D. Program prepares students to conduct research on the management of agencies at all levels of government and non-profit organizations. Although knowledge about management in these sectors borrows heavily from knowledge of management in the private sector,

public management is fundamentally different due to the context of public governance and public values. Although they are not public organizations, non-profit agencies face demands and pressures that are similar to yet different from public organizations.

PA 527, Public Management Theory (*required*)

See Appendix D for a list of approved **Masters courses**

c. SURVEY METHODS

Training for the survey methods concentration in the Ph.D. Program prepares students to use surveys to conduct research in all areas of public and nonprofit administration and to conduct methodological research on the use of survey methods. Although survey design and analysis are skills that can be used in a wide range of substantive fields and areas of study, students are specifically focused on the use of surveys in research conducted by academics, government, and nonprofit organizations.

PA 578, Surveys, Public Opinion and Public Policy. (*required*)

Students must take 9 additional credits from the following options:

PA 577: Survey Questionnaire Design (3 credit hours)
PA 582: Survey Data Collection and Methods
PA 588: Applied Survey Sampling and Analysis
PA 579: Practicum in Survey Research (2 – 6 variable credit hours)

Many of these courses are online, so international students will be limited in how many of the survey methods courses they may take each semester.

d. URBAN GOVERNANCE AND NETWORKS

Training for the urban governance and networks concentration in the Ph.D. Program prepares students to conduct research on the variety of organizational structures through which local and regional public goods and services are designed, implemented, and evaluated. The Urban Governance and Networks concentration provides a foundation for students seeking to understand the formation of governance networks and their capacity to address the challenges confronting urbanized communities throughout the world. Research on urban governance draws heavily from several different literatures, including collaborative public management, local governance institutions, network science, political science, and public policy.

PA 513: Collaborative Management and Governance Networks *(required)*
PA 594: Social Network Analysis (*required*)
PA 562: Seminar in Urban Governance (*required*)

See Appendix D for a list of approved **Masters courses.** Many students also enroll in **POLS 551**. Seminar in Urban Politics.

Independent Research

In order to enroll for **PA 593**, Independent Research in Public Administration, a student must complete the "Independent Study/Research & Thesis Research Request Form," including a paragraph describing the work to be done, and obtain written approval from the supervising faculty member(s), the DGS, and the Head of PPMA.

MPA/MPP/MSCA Courses

Doctoral students planning to take Masters courses as part of their programs are expected to work with the course instructors to develop appropriate modifications in both the content and requirements of those courses in order to make them serve the special needs of doctoral students. A Ph.D. student who wants to take a Masters course as part of their program should talk to the DGS and the instructor in advance. Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to take only Masters courses that are taught by full-time PPMA faculty (not those taught by adjuncts).

Catalogue descriptions of all core and required concentration courses are available in **Appendix C.** A list of which MPA courses can be used to fulfill concentration requirements also is available in **Appendix D**.

8. Comprehensive Examination

After completing their coursework, students must pass a comprehensive examination designed to test their scholarly competence and knowledge in conducting research in the field of public administration. The comprehensive examination for the Ph.D. Program requires the student to produce an original empirical article, relying only synthetic/simulated data, followed by an oral exam. This process is designed to assess students' ability to develop a research design that is theoretically informed and appropriate to their chosen research question, and to assess their ability to implement rigorous empirical analyses. It is not expected that the student will publish the paper.

During the oral portion of the exam, the student will present their research paper, followed by Q&A from the faculty. The oral exam will assess the student's contribution to the field, the theoretical relevance of the work, the appropriateness of the data and methods, and the quality of the methodological implementation. Following the oral examination, the committee will deliberate and determine whether the student has passed. The exam advisor will draft a written summary of the committee's decision and feedback. If the student passes, they will proceed to the dissertation proposal stage. If the student does not pass, they will have one month from the date of the decision letter to revise the exam based on the committee's feedback and resubmit for re-evaluation. Students who do not pass the revised exam will be dismissed from the program.

Upon completion of their coursework, the student will notify the DGS of their decision to take the exam. Students must also demonstrate to their primary advisor or the DGS that they have completed all required courses. Only students in good standing are permitted to take the exam. According to the Graduate College, students are considered to be in good standing if they have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and are making satisfactory progress toward a degree.

It is the student's responsibility to notify the DGS of their intent to take the exam. The comprehensive examination is offered once a year, starting at the end of the spring semester. Students with special circumstances can make arrangements to take the exam at a different time but must obtain DGS and faculty advisor approval to do so.

See **Appendix G** for a detailed overview of the exam requirements and timing.

Extensions in the Timing of Comprehensive Exams

A student may request a six-month or one year extension for taking the exam. Extensions will be granted only in cases where there is a valid reason for the student to postpone taking the exam (e.g., personal or family emergency) or where the primary advisor and DGS believe that the timing policies are not in the best interest of the student.

Enrollment during Comprehensive Exam

Students who are not recognized as active students by the university or are not on formal leave of absence may not take the comprehensive exam. (See the section on Leave of Absence.)

9. Dissertation

Upon successful completion of the comprehensive exam the student is eligible to begin work on the dissertation. A dissertation reports on original research that is conducted by the student under the guidance of a Preliminary Examination (dissertation) Committee of five qualified individuals from the academy or other sector. The chair of the committee must be a full member of the UIC graduate faculty, and at least two members must be tenured faculty at UIC. At least one member must be from outside the degree-granting program, which may include graduate faculty from other UIC departments or colleges. The outside member can also be from outside the University, in which case the member must demonstrate equivalent academic standards

The dissertation must make a contribution to knowledge and understanding within the field of public administration, public policy, or related fields. That knowledge can be practical but, above all, must be theoretical and broad-based. In other words, the dissertation must have relevance to our understanding of general events (e.g., the management of local governments) rather than only specific events (e.g., the management of a police department in one government). The research must also demonstrate a high level of scholarly and analytical ability and the candidate's intimate familiarity with all aspects of knowledge pertaining to the research topic. In order to make a contribution beyond what is currently known about the research topic, the research conducted by the student must be methodologically and logically sound, and it must be empirical. In other words, the research must include observation of events under study. The document must be well-written and convincing.

Preliminary Examination (Dissertation Proposal Defense)

The preliminary examination consists of the presentation and defense of the student's dissertation proposal before the Dissertation Committee. The dissertation proposal lays out the plans for and significance of the research. The proposal should justify the research questions to be answered and identify the following: the contribution of the research to knowledge in the field, the relevant literature and theory for understanding the events to be investigated, and the research methods to

be employed (research design, statistical methods, data and observation methods, etc.). The proposal should also address the feasibility of collecting the data necessary for answering the research questions.

As a practical matter, students are advised to find a dissertation chair (major professor) and, at least tentatively, begin formulating their dissertation topic and developing their research plan even before completing their coursework. Early development of the dissertation proposal in consultation with the major professor and other professors is essential if a student is to have a doable and high-quality dissertation. Planning for dissertation research prior to the comprehensive exam is also necessary if the student is to have a realistic chance of obtaining outside financial support for the project (e.g., NSF Dissertation Improvement Grants). Also, as a practical matter, all committee members should have input on the proposal and research plans prior to the Preliminary Exam, and the chair must agree that the research is defensible.

Students should keep in mind that they do not 'pick' dissertation chairs; rather, the faculty member agrees to chair a student's dissertation committee. In this case, the faculty member must have expertise in the student's research topic and must be confident of the student's ability to implement and complete the project. Thus, students should pick research topics that faculty members in PPMA can direct.

With respect to grading, the Graduate College guidelines state that:

> *Each member of the examining committee assigns a grade of 'pass' or 'fail.' A candidate cannot be passed with more than one 'fail' vote. The committee may require that specific conditions be met before the ''pass' recommendation becomes effective. At the recommendation of the committee, the head or chair may permit a second examination. A third examination is not permitted.*

Students who pass the preliminary examination are admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. Prior to the preliminary exam, the chair needs to obtain 'The Examination Report to the Graduate College' form, which will list the approved committee members and will record their pass/fail vote.

Dissertation Defense

A final oral examination on the dissertation is scheduled by the Graduate College at the request of the dissertation advisor. A minimum of four weeks notice is required to schedule the defense.

The final oral examination on the dissertation is intended to judge the quality of the dissertation, the amount of original work being presented, and the ability of the candidate to defend the dissertation and show competence in related fields. These criteria serve as the basis used by examining committee members when they vote on the acceptability of the dissertation and the student's performance in the examination. The committee vote is "pass" or "fail." A candidate cannot be passed if more than one vote of "fail" is reported. A written report of the vote, signed by all members of the examining committee, is sent by the chair of the examining committee to the Graduate College, together with appropriate comments. Note that according to Graduate College guidelines, "a minimum of one year has to elapse before the defense of the dissertation after passing the preliminary examination."

Members of the committee may make their approval conditional on certain changes being made to the dissertation by the candidate. For editorial changes, the committee may refer final approval to the candidate's dissertation advisor. If approval hinges on making substantive changes, committee members are expected to withhold their signatures of approval until the required changes have been made. All required corrections to the dissertation must be completed and approved at least two weeks before the proposed graduation date.

If a majority of the committee does not vote favorably, a reexamination, possibly after revision of the dissertation and additional work, may be requested. The reexamination is treated in the same way as a new examination for scheduling purposes.

The Graduate College also has a lot of rules about how to present and format your dissertation. The following website provides the necessary forms, deadlines, ithenticate procedures, and other processing requirements: https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/thesis/.

Dissertation Hours

Registration for at least 16 but no more than 28 credit hours of dissertation (PA 599) is required. Except by permission of the DGS, no student may register for dissertation hours until their coursework is completed and they have passed the preliminary examination.

10. Other Requirements And General Information

Academic Integrity and Misconduct

The UIC policies regarding academic integrity can be found at https://dos.uic.edu/community-standards/academic-integrity-2/.

As an academic community, the University of Illinois Chicago is committed to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. All members of the campus community -- students, staff, faculty, administrators -- share the responsibility of ensuring that these standards are upheld so that such an environment exists. Instances of academic misconduct by students, and as defined herein, shall be handled pursuant to the Student Disciplinary Policy. That policy can be found here: https://dos.uic.edu/community-standards/.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to

- Cheating: Either intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, people, or study aids in any academic exercise, or extending to or receiving any kind of unauthorized assistance on any examination or assignment to or from another person.
- Fabrication: Knowing or unauthorized falsification, reproduction, lack of attribution, or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- Facilitating Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.
- Bribes, Favors, Threats: Bribing or attempting to bribe, promising favors to or making threats against, any person, with the intention of affecting a record of a grade, grade, or

evaluation of academic performance. Any conspiracy with another person who then takes or attempts to take action on behalf or at the direction of the student.

Examination by Proxy: Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else other than the student is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy or substitute.

Grade Tampering: Any unauthorized attempt to change, actual change of, or alteration of grades or any tampering with grades.

Non-original Works: Submission or attempt to submit any written work authored, in whole or part, by someone other than the student. This includes the use of generative AI. Please go to the following website to learn more about plagiarism and how to avoid it: http://researchguides.uic.edu/etds/plagiarism

PPMA Policy on Gifts

It is the paid job of faculty to mentor and train students, and the paid job of department and college staff to provide administrative and academic support to students. Students should not attempt to provide gifts for faculty or staff. Faculty and staff are prohibited from accepting any gift with a market value of $25 or more. Students wishing to express their appreciation for faculty or staff efforts are encouraged to write a note of thanks instead.

Administrative Structure

The primary functions of the Director of Graduate Studies include ensuring the timely processing of applications to the doctoral program and providing general supervision to students as they progress through that program. The Director also chairs the Ph.D. Committee.

The Ph.D. Committee is responsible for the supervision of the doctoral program. This includes admissions, curriculum, procedures for preliminary and comprehensive exams, interpretation of policy, and general administration of the program. The committee also conducts an annual review of the academic progress of each doctoral student. Members of the Ph.D. Committee are appointed by the Head of PPMA in consultation with the DGS.

Advising/Mentoring

Upon entering the program, a student will consult with the DGS, who will serve as academic adviser until the student has selected a major professor. After the completion of 24 credit hours of coursework, in consultation with the DGS and other members of the faculty, students should select a major professor from among the PPMA faculty. The major professor will serve as the student's principal academic adviser, and together with the other professors, will supervise the work of the student until all requirements for the degree have been completed.

Annual Review

At the end of each academic year, the DGS asks each student to complete a Student Activities Report (see Appendix E) that asks them to report and evaluate their progress in the program during the academic year. The DGS also asks faculty to evaluate Ph.D. students (see Appendix F). These documents, along with students' performance in their coursework will be used by the DGS to summarize the student's progress and provide feedback to each student.

If the review shows that the student's performance has been adequate, he or she will be informed in writing that permission is granted to continue in the program. If, however, the review shows that the student's performance has been either so inadequate that dismissal seems appropriate or sufficiently marginal in one or more areas to merit probationary status, the basis for these tentative findings will be furnished to the student, and he or she will be invited to meet with the DGS and/or Ph.D. Committee.

If, after meeting with the student, the Ph.D. Committee concludes that a student should either be dismissed from the program or placed on probationary status, this recommendation will be reviewed by the full departmental faculty and the faculty's decision will be controlling.

Applicable Requirements

Handbook curriculum policies in effect in a student's first semester of doctoral work following admission continue to apply to the student through graduation. In some circumstances, students may be allowed to switch from an older curriculum model to one recently adopted.

Grading System
In accordance with UIC policy, the grades that can be awarded following completion of each course are as follows;

A – Excellent (4.0)
B – Good (3.0)
C – Average (2.0)
D - Poor (1.0)
F - Fail (0.0)

As established by the PPMA, only grades of "B" or better are acceptable in fulfilling the requirements in the Ph.D. program.

Leaves of Absence

Except for international students whose visas require continuous registration and doctoral students who have passed their preliminary exams, graduate-degree-seeking students may take off one semester plus the summer session without formal leave approval from PPMA or the Graduate College. Degree students who desire to take an additional consecutive semester off, for a total maximum of three consecutive terms, must file a Graduate Petition for Leave of Absence by the tenth day of the semester for which leave is requested. International students holding visas are subject to different requirements and should consult the Graduate College guidelines.

Upon receipt of a leave of absence petition from the department/program, PPMA and the Graduate College will automatically approve the first leave up to one year maximum. At least one term as a graduate degree student must be completed before being eligible for a leave. After returning to the program from an approved leave, a second leave is not automatic and will only be granted for medical or other extraordinary reasons.

Graduate students who fail to register for two terms in a row (excluding summer) without taking an approved leave of absence forfeit their admission to the Graduate College and must reapply to

the Graduate College and be readmitted to the doctoral program. Students must follow regular application protocols to reapply for admission to the Ph.D. program, and readmission is not guaranteed (See the section on Application Procedures).

Outside research

Learning how to do research is not simply about learning statistics and different types of research designs and approaches to research. Research is a craft and not just knowledge of technique and existing research. It must be learned through application and practice and not just reading and study. Ph.D. students who participate in research projects with faculty outside of class, through a research assistantship or independent study, gain better knowledge of how to do research and they learn more quickly. Students are strongly encouraged to get to know the areas of interest and current research of faculty members and become involved in a research project outside of class beginning in their second year (after having taken PA 540 and 541 or the equivalent and at least 16 hours of Ph.D. level coursework).

Part-time students are often at a disadvantage in their ability to work on research outside of class or through research assistantships, which often hampers their ability to devise good research questions for their dissertation and a valid and doable plan of investigation.

Research Centers and Institutes

The College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs includes several research institutes, including the Center for Urban Economic Development, the Great Cities Institute, the Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement, the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy, the Natalie P. Voorhees Center, the Government Finance Research Center, and the Urban Transportation Center. There are sometimes opportunities for doctoral students to engage in research activities with one or more of these centers. Such students should contact such centers directly or consult with the DGS.

Teaching

The Ph.D. program does not include specific courses to prepare students to teach nor is there a requirement that students teach. However, PPMA recognizes that some Ph.D. students would like to obtain these skills and we will work with such students to identify teaching opportunities in PPMA or elsewhere in the university that can provide students with these skills. All students who intend to pursue academic positions after graduation should teach at least one course on their own before they go out on the job market. We require that students gain experience as a teaching assistant before they teach their own course in PPMA, usually at the undergraduate level.

International students who are assigned as teaching assistants must undergo a mandatory orientation sponsored by the International Teaching Assistant Program (ITAP) and also meet English standards based on the TOEFL and IELTS (Oral English Proficiency Certification process for international Teaching Assistants). ITAP also sponsors courses to help international students to improve their English communication skills for interaction or teaching purposes.

APPENDIX A: PLAN OF STUDY

Name: _____ Current Date: _____

Date first enrolled in program: _____

Expected date for comprehensive exam: _____

Please indicate in the table below which courses you have taken (semester and year). Please provide the name, number, and department of 'other' courses. Please indicate if you took a course in another department in place of one of the required courses listed below, or if you have transferred courses in from another department to replace one of the required courses listed below.

	Semester	**Year**
Core Theory Courses		
511: The History and Development of PA		
510: Organization Theory		
515: Bureaucracy and the Policy		
Methods Courses		
540: Research Design for Public Administration		
541: Advanced Data Analysis I		
Other methods		
Other methods		
Other methods		
Concentration and Elective Courses		
PM: 527: Public Management Theory		
FM: 554: Advanced Seminar in Financial Management		
UGN: 562: Seminar in Urban Governance		
UGN: 513: Collaborative Governance and Networks		
UGN: 594: Social Network Analysis		
Other special / elect		
Other special / elect		
Other special / elect		
Applied Research Methods		
545: Applied Research Seminar I		
546: Applied Research Seminar II		

APPENDIX B: TENTATIVE 4-YEAR COURSE SCHEDULE

		AY2024-25		AY2025-26		AY2026-27		AY2027-28	
		Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
CORE COURSES									
PA 510	Organization Theory and Behavior in Public Administration	X				X			
PA 511	The History and Development of Public Administration	X				X			
PA 515	Bureaucracy and the Policy Process				X				X
METHODS COURSES									
PA 540	Research Design for Public Administration			X				X	
PA 541	Advanced Data Analysis I	X				X			
PA 542	Advanced Data Analysis II		X				X		
PA 544	Qualitative Research Methods		X				X		
PA 582:	Survey Data Collection Methods				X				X
PA 594	Special Topics: Social Network Analysis (2 hrs)	X				X			
APPLIED RESEARCH									
PA 545	Research Topics in Public Administration I			X				X	
PA 546	Research Topics in Public Administration II				X				X
REQUIRED CONCENTRATION COURSES									
PA 554	Advanced Seminar in Financial Management			X				X	
PA 527	Public Management Theory			X				X	
PA 578	Surveys, Public Opinion, and Policy (*low demand)*								
PA 562	Seminar in Urban Governance		X				X		
PA 513	Collaborative Management and Governance Networks	X				X			
CONCENTRATION ELECTIVES									
PA 594	Special Topics- Public Finance (state and local finance)				X				X
	Total Credits	**12**	**12**	**12**	**12**	**12**	**12**	**12**	**12**

APPENDIX C: CORE AND REQUIRED CONCENTRATION COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Core Theory Courses *(required)*

510 Organization Theory and Behavior in Public Administration Research. 2 hours.
In this course students will be introduced to important organization theory frameworks including organizations as rational systems, open systems theory, resource dependent theory, and institutional theory. Topics to be covered include organizational change, organizational politics, networks and institutional economics. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the Ph.D. in Public Administration program or approval of the program director.

511 The History and Development of Public Administration Research and Theory. 2 hours.
In this course students will be introduced to the history of public administration as an academic discipline in the U.S. Students will learn about key issues and controversies that have served as a focus of scholars in the field. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the Ph.D in Public Administration program or approval of the program director.

515 The Bureaucracy and the Policy Process. 4 hours.
Students will be introduced to a number of the frameworks and theories that have been put forth for the purpose of understanding and explicating the policy process including, the "stages' approach, the "multiple streams" approach, the advocacy coalition model, and the punctuated equilibrium approach. We will also look in some depth at topics of particular relevance to the role of the bureaucracy in the policy process including the concept of policy subsystems or subgovernments, policy learning and diffusion, implementation, and policy analysis and evaluation. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the Ph.D. in Public Administration program or approval of the program director.

Core Methods Courses

540 Research Design for Public Administration. 4 hours. ***Required***
Logic and methods of quantitative and non-quantitative research in public administration. Issues in measurement; causal inference; experimental and quasi-experimental designs; and methods of data collection. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the Ph.D. in Public Administration program or approval of the program director.

541. Advanced Data Analysis I. 4 hours.
Modern econometric and statistical techniques for applied research, including OLS regression, regression with qualitative predictors, limited dependent variables, panel data, data issues, and data visualization. Course Information: Prerequisite(s): PA 402; and PA 434 and admission to the Master of Public Administration or Master of Public Policy or Master of Science in Civic Analytics or PhD in Public Administration program or consent of the instructor.

542. Advanced Data Analysis II. 4 hours.
Topics and methods for analyzing social science data, including count regression models, regression

discontinuity designs, instrumental variables, matching methods, multilevel models, and longitudinal multilevel models. Course Information: Prerequisite(s): PA 541 and admission to the Master of Public Administration or Master of Public Policy or Master of Science in Civic Analytics program or consent of the instructor.

544 Qualitative Research Methods in Public Administration. 4 hours.
The uses, strengths and limitations of qualitative methods of research and analysis including case studies, participant-observer, and ethnography will be explored. *Prerequisite(s)*: Graduate or professional standing; PA 540 or equivalent; or consent of the instructor.

Applied Research Seminars ***Required***

545 Research Topics in Public Administration I. 2 hours.
Provides Ph.D. students with a better understanding of current research topics in PA. Students will read current working papers and published articles so as to develop the tools needed for critical analysis of current research. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading only. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the Ph.D. program in Public Administration and advanced standing or consent of the instructor.

546 Research Topics in Public Administration II. 2 hours.
Continuation of PA 545. Students critically analyze current research and will develop a research topic of their own focusing on the elements needed to write a quality research paper. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading only. *Prerequisite(s)*: PA 545; and admission to the Ph.D. program in Public Administration with advanced standing or consent of the instructor.

Concentration Courses

1. Financial Management concentration

554 Financial Management in Public Administration. 4 hours. ***Required***
Principles of financial management and applications in various institutional and programmatic settings. Forecasting techniques, computer applications, innovations in public borrowing and debt management. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the Ph.D. program in Public Administration or approval of the instructor; and PA 410 and PA 504 or equivalents.

2. Public and Non-Profit Management concentration

527 Public Management Theory. 4 hours. ***Required***
Addresses the development of the public management subfield within the field of public administration. It covers the development of public management theory from its early stages to current questions and theoretical approaches. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the Ph.D. in Public Administration program or consent of the instructor

3. Survey Methods concentration

578 Surveys, Public Opinion, and Public Policy. 4 hours. ***Required***
Addresses the nature of the relationship between public policy and public opinion and the role

that surveys play in that relationship. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the MPA or Ph.D. in Public Administration program or consent of the instructor.

577: Survey Questionnaire Design. 3 hours
Concepts and strategies for developing survey questionnaires for various modes of survey data collection. Course Information: Same as CHSC 577. Prerequisite(s): Graduate or professional standing and CHSC 446 or CHSC 447; or approval of the department.

582: Survey Data Collection and Methods. 4 hours.
This course will address the impact of data collection methods on survey responses and data quality. Course Information: Prerequisite(s): Graduate or professional standing or consent of the instructor.

588: Applied Survey Sampling and Analysis.4 hours.
Provides an in-depth overview of available procedures and standards for survey data reduction and data analysis activities. Course Information: Prerequisite(s): Admission to the MPA or Ph.D. in Public Administration program or consent of the instructor.

579: Practicum in Survey Research. 2 – 6 variable hours.
Students learn about survey research by participating in the process of conducting a survey or surveys. Course Information: Prerequisite(s): Admission to the MPA or Ph.D. in Public Administration program or consent of the instructor.

4. Urban Governance and Networks

562 Seminar on Urban Governance. 4 hours. ***Required***
Course examines contemporary research on the governance of urban regions. Urban governance refers to the process through which democratically elected local governments and other stakeholders within the region, such as residents, businesses, civic organizations, neighborhood groups, advocacy organizations, and others, make decisions about how to manage, finance, and plan urban regions. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the Ph.D. program in Public Administration or approval of the instructor

513 Collaborative Management and Governance Networks. 2 hours. ***Required.***
This course will analyze public administration and policy through a collaborative governance lens and explore the types of network structures that exist among public and private organizations. *Prerequisite(s)*: Admission to the Ph.D. in Public Administration program or approval of the program director.

594 Special Topics: Social Network Analysis: 2 hours. ***Required.***
Covers network data collection, research design, visualization, and inferential techniques for cross-sectional and longitudinal network data. Prerequisite(s): PA 402 and graduate standing and admission to the Master of Public Administration or Master of Public Policy or Master of Science in Civic Analytics program or PhD program in Public Administration or consent of the instructor. Recommended Background: Students should have a prior stats course and be comfortable with regression and logistic regression.

APPENDIX D: MPA/MPP/MSCA COURSES THAT CAN BE USED FOR PH.D. CONCENTRATIONS

	Public and Non-Profit Management	Financial Management	Urban Governance and Networks
Selected 494 and 594: Special Topics in PA	X	X	X
PA506: Policy Development & Analysis for Public Administrators			X
PA521: Strategic Management: Planning and Measurement	X	X	
PA552: Capital Budgeting and Infrastructure		X	
PA553: State and Local Public Finance		X	X
PA 561: Intergovernmental Management	X	X	X
PA 563: Local Government Management	X	X	X
PA 571: Nonprofit Management	X		
PA 572: History and Theory of the Non-Profit Sector	X		
UPP 533: Development Finance Analysis		X	

Note: UGN students should take either PA 563 or PA 561, but not both.

APPENDIX E: STUDENT ACTIVITIES REPORT FORM

(DUE ELECTRONICALLY TO THE DGS BY THE END OF MAY)

SECTION I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Your Name:

2. Your Advisor's Name:

3. Year and semester you entered the UIC PA Ph.D. program (e.g., Fall, 2025):

4. Have you attended full-time or part-time during the past year (indicate full time if you enrolled for at least 10 credits over the past academic year (summer/fall/spring):

____Full Time ____Part Time

4a. **If you attended full time**, what was your source(s) of funding during the past year?

SECTION II: COURSEWORK

5. a. What is your primary concentration: _____

b. Have you completed all the required core courses? _YES _____NO
c. Have you completed your concentration courses? _YES _____NO

d. Did you take any courses this academic year (summer/fall/spring)?

____YES _____NO

IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO PART D ABOVE, SKIP TO QUESTION 6

e. List below the course work you took during the last school year (or plan to take) to complete your core or concentration coursework. List the course number, title, and when you took or plan to take the course (if known). Place an asterisk (*) beside any course yet to be completed.

CORE THEORY COURSES

CORE METHODS COURSES

CONCENTRATION COURSES

SECTION III: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS AND DISSERTATION PROGRESS

6. Comprehensive exams: Please report below the semester and year in which you have taken the exam. If you have not taken any exams, please report when you intend to take the exam.

IF YOU HAVE COURSEWORK OR EXAMS TO COMPLETE, SKIP TO QUESTION 8

7. For students who have successfully taken and passed the comprehensive exam, briefly discuss where you stand with respect to completing your dissertation (e.g., planning or writing proposal, data collection, etc.). Also, indicate your dissertation advisor and the semester and year in which you expect to graduate.

    a. Dissertation advisor:
    b. Expected graduation date:
    c. Explain current progress toward your dissertation:

SECTION IV: STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PRODUCTIVITY

8. Below, list the research projects that you have been involved in during this academic year (summer/fall/spring). For each general project (though not necessarily every individual study), list a general subject title, your collaborators, and the current status of the research (e.g., planning, data collection, analysis, writing).

TITLE OF RESEARCH	COLLABORATORS	STATUS

9. Using APA format, list below any papers presented or accepted for presentation at regional or national conventions during the academic year (by past academic year, we mean any time between the beginning of summer last year and the end of spring this year, so for instance, Summer of 2025 to Spring of 2026).
   Example: Johnson, T. P., Cho, Y. I., Holbrook, A. L., & Owens, L. (2007). Health disparities or measurement disparities? Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Annaheim, CA.

11. Using APA format, list below any papers published, in press, or submitted for publication during the academic year (please specify the status of each paper as published, accepted for publication and in press, etc).
   Example: Meier, K. J., & O'Toole, L. J. (2002). Public management and organizational performance: The effect of managerial quality. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 21(4), 629-643.

12. List below any other significant accomplishments or experiences relevant to your training as a Ph.D. student during the academic year (e.g., conventions attended, honors/awards, manuscripts reviewed, etc.).

13. List any activities which support moving into a nonacademic path. Provide documentation (nonscholarly reports, reviews, job descriptions, summary descriptions of clients/colleagues, and business plans).

14. Below, explain how you have contributed to the public administration program in a service capacity (e.g., assisting in colloquium or forum activities, student recruitment, mentoring others, etc.).

SECTION V: SELF-EVALUATION AND FINAL COMMENTS

15. SUMMARY SELF-EVALUATION - Below, indicate what progress you have made this year toward your goal of becoming a public administration researcher. Evaluate how well you have met your specific objectives of learning about the field, engaging in research, in teaching, and in providing service to the department and profession. In sum, we are interested in some assessment of how well YOU feel you are doing in the various aspects of the program.

15. FINAL COMMENTS: Is there anything else that the faculty should know about factors that have especially hindered or facilitated your progress in the public administration program?

16. CURRICULUM VITA. Attach a copy of your current curriculum vita to this report.

17. Indicate any information that you would like to bring to the attention of the faculty about the graduate program in general rather than about YOU in particular. Address any aspect of the program that you would like (e.g., classes, advising, research, colloquia, interpersonal relations, recruitment of new students, etc.)

NOTE: Responses to question 17 may be detached and submitted separately (i.e., without name attached if you desire)

APPENDIX F: FACULTY EVALUATION FORM

Ph.D. Student Evaluations:

Student Name: _____

Faculty Name: _____

What opportunities did you have to interact with this student (please check all that apply):

_____ I had the student in a class
Please specify which class: _____
What was the student's grade in the class? _____
_____ I supervised the student in an independent study
What was the topic of the independent study? _____
_____ I supervised the student in independent research
What was the topic of the independent research? _____
_____ The student worked as an RA on my research project
What was the topic of the research project? _____
_____ Other (please specify: _____)

Thinking about your interaction with the student, please answer the following questions about him or her.

1. Did the student perform at a level commensurate with his/her PhD status?

2. In what areas, if any, does the student need to improve?

3. Would you recommend that the student be retained in the program?

4. Is there any other feedback you would like to provide to the student?

APPENDIX G: COMPREHENSIVE EXAM REQUIREMENTS

In brief, the exam will consist of an original empirical article, requiring only synthetic/simulated data, followed by an oral exam. This is an exercise designed to assess students' ability to develop a research design that is theoretically informed and appropriate to their chosen research question, and to assess their ability to implement rigorous empirical analyses. It is not expected that the student will publish the paper. Below, we lay out the general timeframe for the exam, followed by the specifics of the exam itself.

As this is a comprehensive exam, you are not allowed to seek outside help in developing and writing the exam. This includes help from other students, faculty, or generative AI.

Time Frame and Process

1. **Spring of the Second Year**

The student will identify a potential dissertation advisor no later than the end of spring of their second year. The advisor will provide feedback on the student's proposed exam topic to help ensure it is focused on a meaningful area of study. The advisor will not assign a topic but will offer guidance and advice to refine the student's proposal. Unsuitable topics are those that the student has already written about (e.g., a research paper or research design for another course) or has worked on as part of an ongoing project.

a. Once a topic has been chosen, the advisor <u>will not</u> assist during the actual writing of the exam. The advisor can help with logistical questions, options for simulating data (see below), or potentially appropriate uses of AI (such as for language translation). Note that any use of AI must be discussed with your advisor and fully disclosed in a footnote on the exam.

2. **Summer after the Second Year**

Once the exam topic has been finalized, the student will spend the summer drafting their comprehensive exam, which will take the form of an empirical article. The completed draft must be submitted to the advisor by **August 15**. The advisor will conduct an initial review and assemble a committee for the oral examination. Committee members will be selected based on the methods and theoretical frameworks used in the student's work. In most cases, the committee will be comprised of three faculty members (the advisor and two others) with expertise in the core, methods, and concentration.

3. **Fall of the Third Year**

Once the committee is finalized, the exam will be distributed to its members. An oral examination of 1.5 hours in length will be scheduled and completed by the end of **September**. The student will present their research in ~15 minutes, followed by Q&A from the faculty. The oral exam will assess the student's contribution to the field, the theoretical relevance of the work, the appropriateness of the data and methods, and the quality of the methodological implementation. The student should be prepared to

not only answer questions about the exam itself, but also connections to the broader field and thoughts on their future career and goals. Potential exam committee questions the student should be prepared to answer include:

a. What debates within your subfield or larger field of public administration and policy do you see the proposed study being able to contribute to?
b. What are the pros and cons of alternative data and methods of analysis in answering your research question? Why did you ultimately choose this approach?
c. What types of classes would you see yourself teaching if hired at a public affairs school? Can you walk us through the topics, readings, and textbooks that you might consider?

4. **After the Oral Exam**

Following the oral examination, the committee will deliberate and determine whether the student has passed. The advisor will draft a written summary of the committee's decision and feedback.
a. If the student passes, they will proceed to the dissertation proposal stage.
b. If the student does not pass, they will have **one month** from the date of the decision letter to revise the exam based on the committee's feedback and resubmit for re-evaluation.

Exam Specification

The Ph.D. comprehensive exam is designed to assess students' ability to independently design, execute, and present an empirical research study that makes a meaningful theoretical contribution to the field of public administration, policy, and management. To that end, the exam will take the form of an empirical article modeled after those published in top peer-reviewed journals, such as *Public Administration Review, Policy Studies Journal, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, or *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*.

The article should be between 8,000 and 10,000 words in length, not including references. Students should structure their paper in the general format of a professional journal article, but they may adjust the organization to fit the needs of their research question and methodological approach. In general, the exam should include the following components.

1. **Introduction**

The paper should open by clearly stating the research question and offering a strong justification for its theoretical significance. The introduction should explain why the question matters for broader scholarly debates in the field and preview the argument and main findings.

2. **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

This section should review prior scholarly work relevant to the research question, highlighting key debates, tensions, or gaps. The review should situate the proposed study within the broader literature and identify the specific contribution the article aims to make. Building on this foundation, the student should develop specific hypotheses or propositions. This section may also include the development of a

conceptual framework or the expansion of an existing theoretical model, depending on the nature of the paper.

3. **Research Design, Data, and Methods**

In this section, the student should describe and justify the intended research design, including the data source(s) (e.g., surveys, administrative data, experiments, interviews) and the context for the study. Relevant variables and their operationalization should be clearly defined. The student must also explain and justify the proposed analytic strategy. For qualitative projects, it may be appropriate to expand this section or add a separate section describing the context or case in greater detail. As you think about your research design, you need to consider what is feasible under an ideal scenario (e.g., a small amount funding, several years to gather data, etc.) but is also realistic (e.g., does the data actually exist? Can such an experiment be run?, etc.).

Students are **not required to collect real-world data** for the exam (though if the student has access to appropriate data, they can use it). Instead, students will **generate synthetic data** that mimics the structure and properties of their intended dataset. For example, a student proposing a survey-based study might use Qualtrics to create a survey instrument and request simulated responses or they can generate the variables in statistical software. Students may choose to simulate data that produces a specific effect size and direction or simply generate random variables, resulting in null findings. Either approach is acceptable and will not affect the evaluation of the exam.

For qualitative papers, there are several options available to the student. If they are doing content analysis of available documents, they can conduct the analysis on a random sample of those documents. If they are proposing to conduct in-depth interviews or focus groups, the student can develop the appropriate questionnaire and develop prompts to allow a generative AI platform to produce a small set of synthetic responses. The advisor can assist in the decisions around the creation of synthetic data.

4. **Results and Findings**

The student should conduct their proposed analyses using the synthetic data (or real data if available) and present the findings clearly and systematically. This section should include appropriate tables, figures, and descriptive statistics. If appropriate to the research design, robustness checks or sensitivity analyses should be incorporated.

5. **Discussion**

The discussion should interpret the findings in light of the original research question and theoretical framework. It should address the implications of the results for theory, policy, and practice, emphasizing the work's broader significance.

6. **Conclusion**

The conclusion should succinctly summarize the key findings and contributions of the article, acknowledge the study’s limitations, and propose directions for future research.

In addition to these six main sections, students must also include:

- An **abstract** summarizing the research question, methods, findings, and contribution (~250 words)
- **Replication materials** that include the synthetic dataset and all analysis code or scripts

APPENDIX H: ACRONYMS

BAPP: Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy

CUPPA: College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs

DGS: Director of Graduate Studies

DPA: Department of Public Administration

GPA: Grade point average

GRE: Graduate record examination

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

ITAP: International Teaching Assistant Program (ITAP).

MPA: Masters in Public Administration

MPP: Masters in Public Policy

MSCA: Masters of Science in Civic Analytics

OIS: Office of International Students

Ph.D.: Doctor of Philosophy

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language