Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration

Why study public affairs and administration?

The mission of the doctoral program in the KU School of Public Affairs and Administration is to provide advanced graduate education in theory and research to prepare students for academic and research careers in public administration, as well as professional careers in advanced practice of public administration.

KU SPAA doctoral students are expected to:

- Assist in research being conducted by a public administration faculty member;
- Serve as teaching assistants;
- Co-author a refereed article with a faculty member;
- Present a scholarly paper at a national conference.

Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (http://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

PhD Admission

Please visit our website (http://kupa.ku.edu/admissions) for complete admissions information.

Admission is based on the applicant’s undergraduate and/or graduate academic record, standardized test scores, and references from instructors. All applicants must have completed a bachelor’s degree and an M.P.A. or equivalent degree. Students without an M.P.A. or equivalent degree must complete KU core M.P.A. requirements as part of their doctoral studies.

A completed application must include:

- Online Graduate Studies application (http://www.graduate.ku.edu).
- Graduate Record Examination results — verbal, quantitative, and analytical;
- 2-page statement of goals and research interests including evidence of research aptitude and interest;
- 3 letters of recommendation, preferably from faculty members who can comment on the applicant’s potential for doctoral study;
- A writing sample that reflects the applicant’s interest in and ability to conduct research;
- A current resume; and
- 1 official transcript from each college or university attended.

In addition, international students must submit Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or IELTS scores from an examination administered no more than 2 years before the date of application. Immigration requirements and a financial statement are available from the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (http://www.iss.ku.edu). All materials must be received before the application can be considered.

For fall admission and financial aid, the application file must be completed by January 25. Applicants who do not meet this deadline are unlikely to be considered for financial aid, even though applications may be considered throughout the year.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

The Ph.D. program requires a minimum of 66 credit hours of courses, including up to 30 hours earned completing the M.P.A. degree or its equivalent, plus a minimum of 9 hours for the dissertation, for a total of 75 credit hours. (An applicant with a KU M.P.A. or its equivalent may apply 30 hours toward the 75-hour course work requirement.)

Ph.D. students without an M.P.A. or its equivalent must take 8 courses that make up the KU M.P.A. core after entering the Ph.D. program.

The requirements for the Ph.D. are based on formal course work and independent study in several fields:

- Foundations of public administration
- Specialization field within public administration
- Cognate field
- Methods sequence

Foundations of Public Administration

4 of the 5 courses listed below are required of all doctoral students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUAD 930</td>
<td>Research Seminar in Public Administration and Democracy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUAD 931</td>
<td>Research Seminar in Public Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUAD 932</td>
<td>Seminar in the Intellectual History of Public Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUAD 943 or PUAD 949</td>
<td>Constitutional Foundations of Public Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
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Substitutions require the approval of the coordinator of doctoral studies.

Public Administration Specialization

In consultation with the coordinator of doctoral studies, each student must develop a public administration specialization of at least 3 courses. Common specializations include budgeting and finance, human resources management, public policy analysis and evaluation, public values and ethics, organizations management and organization theory, public law and administration, and urban policy/policy. Each has a basic course that is taught in the present graduate curriculum at the 800 level. It is presumed that at least an additional course will come from independent study/directed readings. A third course could come from the school or could be taken outside through another department such as Political Science.
Communication Studies, Economics, Education or Business. Other areas of specialization may be created in consultation with faculty.

**Cognate Fields**

The Ph.D. degree requires a cognate field in addition to the public administration specialization. The cognate field is a subfield similar to a "minor" and courses typically are taken outside the School. Examples include economics, political science, education, or a policy specialization (e.g., environmental policy or transportation policy.) The cognate field's sequence of 3 courses requires the approval of the coordinator of doctoral studies and does not require a comprehensive examination.

**Methods**

The doctorate emphasizes the development of research skills. It requires PUAD 934 Research Methods in Public Administration, with the prerequisite PUAD 836 or its equivalent, and PUAD 935 Advanced Quantitative Methods for Public Administration. Students also are encouraged to take PUAD 937 Qualitative Methods in Public Administration. Substitutions require the approval of the coordinator of doctoral studies. The methods requirement satisfies Option 1 of the K.U. "Foreign Language or Other Research Skills" requirement.

After the completion of the required coursework, the student must pass two written exams: one in the area of Foundations of Public Administration, and the other in the student's choice of Specialization. If the student receives a grade of unsatisfactory, an exam may be repeated, but under no circumstances may the student take a qualifying exam more than twice.

After passing both written exams, to become a Ph.D. candidate, the student must then pass a comprehensive oral examination.

After passing the comprehensive oral examination, the doctoral candidate will write a dissertation approved by a dissertation committee and pass a final oral defense of the dissertation. If the aspirant receives a grade of unsatisfactory on the dissertation defense, the defense may be repeated, but under no circumstances may the student defend more than twice.