

Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration

The mission of the Ph.D. program in the KU School of Public Affairs and Administration is to provide advanced graduate education in theory and research in order to prepare students for academic and research careers in public administration, as well as professional careers in advanced practice of public administration. Doctoral students in public administration complete seminars and independent research courses to build competency in public administration history, theory, methodology, discipline specialization, and complementary cognate field in preparation for degree milestones and future contributions to the academy.

The Public Administration Ph.D. program (<https://spaa.ku.edu/phd-program/>) prepares researchers to enter academia or pursue careers that involve cutting-edge and innovative research in public affairs, policy, planning, and management/governance.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

Ph.D. Admission

Successful Ph.D. applicants are clear about their research interests and why the School of Public Affairs and Administration is the best place to pursue their research.

Admission to the Ph.D. program is based on an applicant's:

- Complete online application (<https://gograd.ku.edu/apply/>)
- Official Transcripts
- Resume/CV
- Statement of Research Interests
- Writing Sample
- Letters of Reference
- Standardized Test Scores (GRE and Proof of English Proficiency)

Please visit the Public Administration Ph.D. Admissions page (<https://spaa.ku.edu/phd-how-apply/>) for complete admissions information.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

While completing the following degree requirements, graduate students are expected to understand and follow Office Graduate Studies policies

(<https://policy.ku.edu/office/Graduate-Studies/>) relevant to their student status and academic standing.

Course Work Requirements

The following courses are required for all students in the Public Administration Ph.D. These courses must be completed by the end of the semester of the foundations, course of study, and oral comprehensive exams. Note that these are the minimum requirements to be approved to move forward to the oral comprehensive exam.

| Code | Title | Hours |
|---|--|-----------|
| Public Administration Core Competency Courses ¹ | | |
| PUAD 824 | Creating Good Public Policy | 3 |
| PUAD 835 | Managing Public Money | 3 |
| PUAD 836 | Data Informed Decision-Making | 3 |
| PUAD 841 | Context, Ethics and Legal Environment of Public Administration | 3 |
| PUAD 845 | Managing Public Organizations | 3 |
| Foundations of Public Administration | | |
| PUAD 930 | Research Seminar in Public Administration and Democracy | 3 |
| PUAD 931 | Research Seminar in Public Management | 3 |
| PUAD 932 | Seminar in the Intellectual History of Public Administration | 3 |
| PUAD 943 | Constitutional Foundations of Public Administration | 3 |
| or PUAD 949 | Law, Courts, and Public Policy | 3 |
| Substitutions of any Foundations courses require the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. | | |
| Public Administration Course of Study & Cognate Field Coursework | | 12 |
| Methods Sequence ² | | |
| PUAD 934 | Research Methods in Public Administration | 3 |
| PUAD 935 | Advanced Quantitative Methods for Public Administration | 3 |
| Additional methods electives that are recommended, but not required: | | |
| PUAD 936 | Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation | |
| PUAD 937 | Qualitative Methods in Public Administration | |
| Substitutions of Methods Sequence courses require the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. | | |
| Total Hours | | 45 |

¹ Ph.D. students who enroll in the Public Administration Ph.D. with a conferred Master's degree in a public administration discipline (e.g. MPA, MPP, MUP) or a closely related discipline that is approved by the Admissions Committee may waive Public Administration Core Competency Courses.

² The University requires that every doctoral student receive training in responsible scholarship pertinent to the field of research and obtain research skills pertinent to the doctoral level of research in their field(s). These requirements must be completed by the end of the semester in which the student takes the oral comprehensive exam. For students in the Public Administration Ph.D., this requirement is satisfied by completion of the Methods Sequence. The doctorate emphasizes the development of research skills. These course requirements are the minimum, and students are encouraged to develop advanced skills in research methods and analysis.

Public Administration Course of Study

In consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, each student must develop and declare a public administration course of study of at least 2 courses, which may be satisfied by directed readings credit hours. Common courses of study include public management and organization theory, budgeting and finance, human resources management, public policy analysis and evaluation, public values and ethics, public law and administration, and urban policy/politics, but the courses selected will be unique to the students' research interests.

Cognate Field

The Ph.D. degree requires a cognate field in addition to the public administration course of study. Examples of these supplementary courses may be in the disciplines of economics, political science, education, or a distinct policy area (e.g., environmental policy or transportation policy). The cognate field's sequence of at least 2 required courses requires the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and does not require a comprehensive examination.

Public Administration Ph.D. Foundations and Course of Study Exams

After the completion of the required coursework, the student must pass two Written Comprehensive Examinations: one in the area of Foundations of Public Administration, and the other in the student's distinct Public Administration Course of Study. If the student receives a grade of unsatisfactory on either Written Comprehensive Examination, the examination may be repeated once at which time the student will be required to retake the entire examination. Under no circumstances may the student seek to fulfill the requirement to pass a Written Comprehensive Examination in a course of study other than the area in which they failed to pass on the first attempt. Failure to pass either Written Comprehensive Examination within two attempts shall constitute failure to satisfy a requirement for the Ph.D. degree, and shall result in dismissal from the program.

Comprehensive Oral Exam

After passing both written exams, to become a Ph.D. candidate, the student must then pass a Comprehensive Oral Examination that includes a defense of the dissertation research proposal. Oral exams will be held after the completion of all coursework and typically within six months after successfully passing both written examinations. In the Oral Examination, participating faculty may ask the student any question relevant to the field of Public Administration. Typically, the exam focuses on questions arising from the student's written preliminary examinations and a review of the student's dissertation proposal, which the student develops in consultation with their advisor. Comprehensive Oral Exams for the Public Administration Ph.D. procedures and committee requirements are detailed in the Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-oral-exams/>) and Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-student-oral-exam-committee-composition/>) Graduate Studies policies.

Post-Comprehensive Enrollment

Upon passing the comprehensive examination, the student becomes a candidate for the Ph.D. degree and is approved to proceed with their dissertation research and project. Starting the semester after successful completion of the comprehensive oral exam, doctoral candidates must enroll in PUAD 999 in accordance with the Doctoral Candidacy Policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-candidacy/>). This

enrollment includes, but is not limited to, at least 1 dissertation hour every semester until graduation.

Dissertation Defense

After passing the Comprehensive Oral Examination, the doctoral candidate must write a dissertation and must pass a final oral defense of the dissertation in order to receive the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation is to report substantial original research in the field of Public Administration.

Whether the dissertation satisfies the requirements for the degree is determined by the dissertation committee. Dissertation Defenses for the Public Administration Ph.D. procedures and committee requirements are detailed in the Doctoral Dissertation (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-dissertation/>) and Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/oral-exam-committee-composition/>) Graduate Studies policies.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Understand the evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations; how planning has advanced and hindered the attainment of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion; past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future. (Planning History)
- Understand the expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts; conceptual models about what planning is and how it works; the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis. (Planning Theory)
- Understand the behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes; mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision-making; legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally. (Planning Law & Institutions)
- Understand the political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development; relationships between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being; planning responses to mitigate climate change, reduce risks, and recover from climate-exacerbated impacts; interactions – flows of people, materials, ideas, and cultures – across world regions. (Urban & Regional Development)
- Understand the planning process and community and stakeholder engagement; plan creation and implementation; methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future. (Planning Process & Engagement)
- Develop research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research; quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting; methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization; data analytics and urban technology. (Analytical Skills & Tools)
- Work in teams and with professionals in allied fields; professional leadership in the planning context; written, oral, and graphic communication. (Professional, Communication, & Leadership Skills)