

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

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 (<https://catalog.ku.edu/archives/2024-25/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (<https://catalog.ku.edu/archives/2024-25/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.

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 PhD program is based on the applicants:

- 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

The Ph.D. requires a minimum of 75 credit hours, including 66 credit hours of courses and 9 or more hours of dissertation credit. Students may count up to 30 hours of credit earned toward an MPA degree, or equivalent, toward the required 66 hours. Students who enter the doctoral program without a conferred MPA or its equivalent must complete

all MPA core courses in the School of Public Affairs & Administration (SPAA) or the comparable 900-level doctoral courses, except they may choose to take either PUAD 835 Managing Public Money or PUAD 837 Advanced Public Budgeting and Finance.

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

- Foundations of Public Administration
- Public Administration Specialization
- Cognate Field
- Methods Sequence

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.

Foundations of Public Administration

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

Code	Title	Hours
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 or PUAD 949	Constitutional Foundations of Public Administration Law, Courts, and Public Policy	3

Substitutions require the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Public Administration Specialization

In consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, each student must develop and declare a public administration specialization of at least 3 courses, which may be satisfied in part by directed readings credit hours. Common specializations 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. Other areas of specialization may be created in consultation with faculty.

Cognate Field

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 Director of Graduate Studies and does not require a comprehensive examination.

Methods Sequence

The doctorate emphasizes the development of research skills. It requires PUAD 934 Research Methods in Public Administration, with the prerequisite PUAD 836 Data Informed Decision-Making 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 and PUAD 936 Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation. Substitutions require the approval of the Director of Graduate

Studies. These requirements are the minimum, and students are encouraged to develop advanced skills in research methods and analysis.

Research Skills & Responsible Scholarship

Completion of the Methods Sequence requirement satisfies the Office of Graduate Studies' Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement.

Public Administration Ph.D. Foundations and Specialization 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 Public Administration Specialization. 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 specialization area other than the area in which he or she failed to pass the examination 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.

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 PhD 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.
