

HANDBOOK FOR THE PH.D. IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

**School of Public Affairs
University of Colorado at Denver
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs**

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**For further information about the
Doctoral Program contact:**

**Dr. Tanya Heikkila
Director, Doctoral Program**

**Student Services Team
Dawn Savage (A-K)
*Antoinette Sandoval (L-Z)***

**School of Public Affairs
University of Colorado Denver
1380 Lawrence Street Center, Suite 500
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 315-2289
Fax: (303) 315-2220
www.spa.ucdenver.edu**

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I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This Handbook will facilitate a student's progress toward the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Public Affairs, encompassing the fields of public administration, public management, and public policy, as well as criminal justice for those students electing to concentrate in that area. The School of Public Affairs (SPA) and the University of Colorado Denver's Graduate School have procedures, rules and regulations for the Ph.D. that must be followed to obtain the degree. This Handbook explains those procedures, rules, and regulations, and PhD students are expected to review and follow the Handbook. While SPA updates the Handbook regularly, you should know that the contents of the Handbook are subject to change, and the Handbook is not intended to be a contract. If you have any questions, consult with the Director of the Doctoral Program, the Student Services Team, or your faculty advisor.

Additional resources for PhD students may be found on SPA's website.

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The University of Colorado's School of Public Affairs offers and administers the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Public Affairs. The content of the courses, administration of doctoral exams, and the dissertation process and defense are the responsibility of the SPA faculty and the Ph.D. Committee, headed by the Director of the Doctoral Program and overseen by the Graduate School at UCD. SPA faculty have a broad base of practical experience, as well as academic and research skills and accomplishments. SPA has an interdisciplinary faculty with a broad range of specializations within the field of public affairs. SPA also houses various research centers for public management and public policy (such as the Buechner Institute for Governance) to enhance the applied and basic research capabilities of the school.

THE DOCTORATE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The doctoral program is designed to address the strong demand for the services of people who are skilled in the theory, concepts, and research areas of public administration, public policy, public management, and criminal justice. It is a research-oriented degree. The program develops the conceptual, research, and analytic skills and knowledge of its students so that they will be able to advance the study and practice of public affairs in their subsequent careers. Graduates are able to generate and execute state of the art research on complex public and non-profit systems.

The Ph.D. prepares its graduates for positions in academia, public management, research activities, and public policy roles. Many students are already practitioners working in government, private sector organizations concerned with government, and non-profit organizations; others are professionals, such as attorneys, health workers, court administrators, and others who desire additional training that will enable them to participate more effectively in the process of administration, management, and policymaking.

RESIDENCY AND TIME REQUIRED FOR Ph.D. DEGREE

The rules of the Graduate School and of the University govern residency, enrollment, and completion requirements. Students are required to take a minimum of six credit hours of courses during both the fall and spring semesters. They are also required to establish and maintain residency in the State of Colorado to be eligible for in-state tuition; see the University catalog for specific details. Additional courses are offered during the summer semester. Most courses and seminars are offered during evening hours, or weekends on an intensive basis.

Students starting the doctoral program with a master's degree in public administration, public management, public policy, or cognate fields can expect to take at least three years to complete all of the requirements for the Ph.D. Any student entering the program with no prior graduate work in these areas should anticipate additional course work, sufficient to establish a background for the subsequent doctoral seminars. The Graduate School of the University of Colorado Denver requires that doctoral students complete their degrees within eight total years from their entrance date, although extra time may be granted for circumstances beyond the candidate's control.

DOCTORAL ADMINISTRATION/DIRECTOR OF DOCTORAL PROGRAM

SPA administers the doctoral program. The School has its own internal procedures and requirements for the Ph.D. degree.

The Director of the Doctoral Program serves as the key administrative officer for the program. The Director, who chairs the Doctoral Committee of SPA faculty, administers overall doctoral policies, approves student degree plans and committees, administers the various doctoral level examinations, and formally notifies students of their progress with respect to coursework, exams, and dissertations.

It is the responsibility of the Doctoral Committee to make policy recommendations for the Program and to advise and assist the Director of the Doctoral Program in administering the doctoral program. New and changed policies will be reviewed first by the committee, then reviewed and approved by the full SPA faculty.

SPA's Student Service Team is the focal point for the necessary paper work. SPA forms that doctoral students need are available from the Student Services Team, as well as from the SPA website, and should be returned to the appropriate office when completed.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Doctoral students are responsible for the management of their own academic studies. This Handbook, the Director of the Doctoral Program, and faculty advisors provide the necessary information about the Ph.D. program. However, the specific contents of a doctoral program, the necessary approvals, and the initiation of its various procedures are matters that are the

individual student's responsibility, as set out in this Handbook and in the provisions of the University catalog in effect at the time of the student's admission.

FACULTY EXPECTATIONS

The SPA faculty explicitly assumes that each student arrives at the decision to pursue a doctorate only after seriously considering what such work entails. Much more is expected of doctoral students than is expected of undergraduate or master's students. The responsibilities of undergraduates and many masters' level students tend to be framed by the requirements of particular classes. Doctoral students, in contrast, have an entire field to study. It is their responsibility – with guidance from the faculty – to master the disciplines of public administration, policy, and management, as well as any additional individual areas of study they wish to pursue. Both independent thinking and scholarship are expected of doctoral students. The faculty assumes a higher level of maturity on the part of a doctoral student in terms of his/her progress towards the degree. Put in economic terms, doctoral students will be expected to make a gradual transition from consumers of knowledge, to producers of new knowledge and research.

In turn, faculty members teaching in the PhD program and those serving on dissertation committees are expected to be available to assist and mentor students in mastering the field and transitioning into scholars, including meeting regularly with students for informal advice and support, collaborating with students on grants, research projects, and publications, and introducing students to the relevant professional networks. Questions about mentoring may be directed to the Program Director.

FINANCIAL AID

A limited amount of financial support is available to SPA doctoral students. Financial aid can be requested from the Director of the Doctoral Program, who administers financial assistance for the doctoral program. Each year the School selects students based mostly upon merit and also upon demonstrated need to receive these fellowships, such as the Buechner Fellowships or the Wirth Chair Fellowships (for students specializing in the environment, sustainability, or community development). Limited teaching and research assistantships may also be available. Other scholarships and financial aid are available through the financial aid office of the campus. Students are encouraged to seek additional financial support from outside sources (e.g., foundation support), whenever possible, and especially to fund their dissertation research.

Faculty research grants may also serve as a source of funding for doctoral students. Interested students should contact individual faculty members to discuss opportunities.

II. ADMISSION

ADMISSION CALENDAR

Students will be admitted to the doctoral program once a year during the spring semester, with their doctoral studies beginning the following fall semester. To be considered for admission for the fall semester, applications are due by February 1. Students are encouraged to apply well before the deadline to ensure that the applications will be completed by the deadline. The doctoral committee will endeavor to make admission decisions quickly, so that potential candidates can make their decisions.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Students who have a master's degree in any field are eligible to apply for admission to the doctoral program. Students who do not have a master's in public affairs or a cognate field will in most cases have to take some prerequisite coursework, or demonstrate outstanding competence and/or experience in public affairs, before consideration for the doctoral program.

Minimum application requirements for doctoral students include the following:

- (1) The submission of scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) that are at a minimum above the 50th percentile ranking on each section of the GRE. The GRE must have been taken within five years of the year of admission to the PhD program.
- (2) A minimum 3.5 graduate grade point average in previous graduate (or undergraduate, for those students applying directly from undergraduate) studies;
- (3) A well-articulated statement of purpose demonstrating an understanding of the research orientation of the degree and a strong motivation and determination to successfully complete the program; and
- (4) Three letters of reference attesting to a candidate's academic promise.

In exceptional circumstances, in order for a student to be eligible for admission, he or she may meet minimum requirements in only three of the first four categories listed above.

Applicants whose native language is not English are also required to submit scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with a score above 550 (paper), 213 (computer), or 80 (Internet-based) on the TOEFL or 6.5 on the IELTS. This requirement may be waived for applicants who have completed a baccalaureate or graduate-level degree program at an English-speaking college or university or have completed at least two semesters at a college or university in the U.S. as a full-time student and obtained at least a "B" (3.0) average. In addition, applicants whose native language is not English are required to participate in an oral interview to demonstrate possession of adequate language skills to succeed in an American doctoral program. Please be aware that the Graduate School may have additional requirements for international students.

It should be emphasized that students who meet minimum entrance standards are not assured admission. The program is highly selective, and admits only persons who the doctoral

committee considers to be genuinely qualified to complete the degree successfully and whose interests match well with our program. The SPA faculty also values racial/ethnic and cultural diversity and a productive and stimulating balance among relevant professional backgrounds, interests, and experience of students. In making admissions decisions, SPA considers:

1. commitment to academic/research career and experience;
2. potential for career advancement;
3. the applicant's academic record in graduate studies;
4. Graduate Record Examination scores;
5. the fit between the applicant's research interests and the interests and knowledge of one or more SPA faculty members;
6. letters of recommendation; and
7. if a non-native English speaker, demonstration of adequate language skills to succeed at the doctoral level of work.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are encouraged to apply online through SPA's website. The online application process can be accessed at

<http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/SPA/Admissions/Apply/Pages/PhD.aspx>.

Application materials may also be downloaded from this site and mailed to SPA at the following address:

University of Colorado Denver
School of Public Affairs
Campus Box 142
P.O. Box 173364
Denver, CO 80217-3364

All of the following information must be submitted before students can be formally considered for admission:

1. Part I and Part II application forms;
2. Two official transcripts for all undergraduate and graduate work, sent directly to SPA from the universities/colleges attended;
3. Graduate Record Examination scores;

4. Current resume or vita;
5. Minimum of three letters of recommendation from colleagues and previous professors, focusing on potential for (a) future leadership in teaching, research and public service and (b) deriving benefit from the doctoral program; at least two should be from former academic instructors;
6. A (maximum) 1000-word statement of educational and career goals and how SPA can help achieve these goals, including the identification of two to three SPA faculty members with whom the student would be interesting in working; and
7. Application fee.

In addition, a student may submit samples of research reports or publications. All application materials will be retained by SPA and will not be returned.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

An oral interview may be required of applicant finalists, and is required for all international students for whom English is not the first language. All applicants who can do so are encouraged to talk with (or email) and meet with the Director of the Doctoral Program and faculty prior to applying to the program.

ADMISSION CATEGORIES

The SPA Doctoral Committee will classify each applicant for admission to the doctoral program into one of the following categories:

1. regular admission;
2. do not admit, but recommend that applicants enter a SPA master's program and reapply as their master's program nears completion;
3. do not admit at this time.

Applicants who have not been admitted have the right to reapply. Under exceptional circumstances, an admitted candidate may defer admission for one year. All admissions are made pending final approval by the Graduate School.

III. GENERAL TIMELINE AND THE ADVISORY PROCESS

In general, the Ph.D. program has two parts. In the first part, which typically takes two years, the student takes required and elective coursework intended to build his/her knowledge of the field of public affairs and develop the skills necessary to conduct original research. The student's mastery of this body of knowledge is tested through a comprehensive examination. In the second part of the program, students design and implement a significant research project, or dissertation. The student completes the program upon successful defense of the dissertation. Students typically take three to five years to write and defend the dissertation. These parts of the program are described in greater detail later in this handbook, and a sample timeline is attached as an appendix. Throughout the program, the student will be advised and mentored by faculty.

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The Director of the Doctoral Program is the advisor to all doctoral students upon their entry into the program. The Director of the Doctoral Program approves all programs of study within the degree plan and approves admission to candidacy as well as certifying the final completion and acceptance of the dissertation.

A program of study is a degree plan that lists all of the academic coursework a student has done and plans to do to meet the requirements for the doctoral degree. All students should meet with the Director of the Doctoral Program during their first semester in the program and mutually develop a preliminary program of study. This becomes a guide post for students to follow while they pursue the degree. Students may change their preliminary program of study if they decide to refocus their studies.

ROLE OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR/DISSERTATION CHAIR

Doctoral students are encouraged to find a subsequent faculty advisor consistent with their academic interests and mentorship needs within the first year of the program. The faculty advisor is a student's principal mentor until the completion of the doctorate, and coordinates a student's plans and progress with the Director of the Doctoral Program. S/he advises the student on how to choose a dissertation topic, selection of appropriate courses, who might compose the student's dissertation committee, and other professors from whom to solicit advice.

The advisory process works best when students and the professors/advisors share interests. Accordingly, students are urged to make an effort to learn who the members of the faculty are, their academic research interests, their resumes, and their various specializations. Students also can find out about faculty by taking courses, attending doctoral colloquiums and defenses, attending various faculty/student events, and by talking directly with faculty members, as well as other members of the Ph.D. cohort. Any student who has been unable to locate an appropriate faculty advisor should consult with the Director of the Doctoral Program.

If acceptable to both parties, this faculty advisor will become the chair of the student's dissertation committee once the student is accepted to candidacy. If a student changes his/her topic, s/he may choose another advisor. It is the faculty advisor's responsibility to help the

student arrange an appropriate dissertation committee. The role of the dissertation committee is addressed in section VII.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

In April of each year each student must complete a Progress Report and submit it to the Doctoral Program Director. The Progress Report covers such areas as courses taken, research and teaching activities, and external activities related to the field of public affairs, and allows the PhD faculty to monitor student progress in the program. The Progress Report template may be obtained from SPA's website or from the Doctoral Program Director.

IV. DOCTORAL COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS

CREDIT HOURS

The doctoral program consists of 66 credit hours *beyond* the master's degree, including 36 credit hours of course work and 30 credit hours of dissertation credit. The course work must include nine credit hours devoted to advanced methodology courses (e.g., intermediate statistics and qualitative research). A minimum of 27 credit hours of appropriate doctoral level course work must be taken at the University of Colorado. Up to nine credit hours of graduate-level coursework may be transferred from another institution, with the approval of the Director of the Doctoral Program, consistent with section XI of this handbook. Finally, 30 hours of dissertation credit are required, following the pre-dissertation colloquium. A nominal timetable, with suggested completion targets, is appended to this Handbook.

COMMON CORE COURSES

All doctoral students must take the following core courses:

1. *PUAD 8010 - Historical and Comparative Foundations of Public Administration*
Description: A doctoral seminar on developments and changes in public administration as a field of study. It examines how public administration and bureaucracy has evolved and is defined, practiced, studied and taught. It must normally be taken during the first full semester of the doctoral program. Prereq: PUAD 7001 or PUAD 5001 (or equivalent).
2. *PUAD 8020 - Seminar in Public Management*
Description: An in-depth examination of contemporary literature, concepts, and theories of public management. Current issues and research problems are emphasized to prepare students for their advanced research. Prereq: PUAD 7003/5003, 7004/5004 or equivalent.
3. *PUAD 8030 - Seminar in Public Policy*
Description: Offers an in-depth examination of contemporary literature, concepts, and theories of public policy, with an emphasis on policy process. Current issues and research problems are emphasized to prepare students for their advanced research. Prereq: PUAD 7004/5004, 7005/5005 or equivalent.

4. *PUAD 8040 - Seminar In Economic and Institutional Foundations of Public Affairs*
Description: Offers an in-depth examination of the economic foundations of public affairs, with an emphasis on market failures, theoretical breakdowns of the market model, and the evolution of non-market institutions, as well as analytical tools grounded in economic foundations. Prereq: PUAD 8010 and 8030.

5. *PUAD 8050 - Quantitative Methods I*
Description: Introduces students to the foundational principles and techniques of quantitative analysis in the social sciences generally and in public affairs specifically, including statistical inference, regression analysis, and commonly-used statistical software packages. Prereq: PUAD 8010, 8020, 8030, and 8040.

6. *PUAD 8060 - Seminar On The Conduct Of Empirical Inquiry*
Description: Introduces basic elements of research design in the social sciences, focusing on the relationship between theories and methods, concept development and measurement, selection of observations or cases, and alternative methods of data collection and analysis. Prereq: PUAD 5003,7003 or equivalent, PUAD 8010, 8020, 8030, and 8040.

7. *PUAD 8070 - Quantitative Methods II*
Description: Moves beyond basic linear regression techniques by covering advanced analytic methods, such as maximum likelihood estimation for dichotomous and ordered dependent variables. Students will also be introduced to other techniques such as time series analysis and topics such as advanced issues in measurement. Prereq: PUAD 8010, 8020, 8030, 8040, 8050, and 8060.

METHODOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY

The Doctoral Program at SPA requires advanced proficiency in research methods or tools that will assist in completing dissertation research; nine credit hours of advanced proficiency are required. All students are required to take PUAD 8050, Statistics I (or its equivalent), and PUAD 8070, Statistics II. A qualitative methods course of the student's choosing (with the approval of the Doctoral Director) is also required. This course might include, *inter alia*, a course in qualitative methodology, administrative law, geographical information systems (GIS), or social network analysis.

OTHER COURSEWORK

Students have twelve credit hours (i.e., four semester courses) of electives in the doctoral program. Students are expected to use these electives to develop an emphasis in an area that furthers their dissertation and research interests. Careful consideration of electives can improve the preparation of student's dissertation research, as well as inform his/her comprehensive examination preparation. Elective courses must be approved by the Director of the Doctoral Program. Electives may be taken from any graduate program offered at the University of

Colorado. With the permission of the Doctoral Director, some electives may be taken outside the University of Colorado.

V. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Ph.D. level coursework is perforce very demanding in order to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills required to successfully complete a dissertation and to enter the field as a productive “colleague.” Students benefit from timely evaluation of their progress throughout the Ph.D. program.

MINIMUM GPA REQUIREMENTS

Basic evaluation of the progress of students in the Ph.D. program is provided by grades in individual courses, especially at the 8000 level. Students must maintain a GPA of 3.33, and if they fall below this level will be placed upon academic probation, during which time they must achieve a 3.33 GPA. Additionally, students must have the required GPA at the time they take the comprehensive exam. Courses in which the student earns a grade lower than B- may not be applied towards fulfillment of the coursework requirement.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Overall student performance in the Ph.D. program is assessed by the Ph.D. Committee on an annual basis. Each student is required to provide a Progress Report to the Doctoral Program Director in April of each year. The template for the Progress Report may be found on SPA’s website. This report, along with other indicators, will be used by the Ph.D. Committee to monitor student progress and provide an annual performance evaluation for each student, which will be shared with the student and the student’s advisor and/or dissertation chair.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to evaluate the ability of students to conduct competent and original analytical research and writing of the caliber necessary to develop and complete a dissertation in the fields associated with public affairs. The comprehensive examination consists of two parts: a written examination and an oral examination.

All doctoral students must take the comprehensive examination upon completing a minimum of 24 hours of course work (including transfer credits). The comprehensive examination is offered only once a year, typically in August, at the start of the fall semester. Students generally take the comprehensive examination in August following their first two years of coursework. The comprehensive examination must be taken no later than the end of the third year, for full-time students. While each student’s degree plan will be somewhat unique, in most circumstances, courses that must be completed prior to the examination include PAD 8010, 8020, 8030, 8040, 8050, 8060, and 8070; it is also useful to have completed the methodology elective class. Exceptions to this timeframe may be made only upon approval of the PhD program director.

The exact format of the exam and its administration may vary somewhat each year. The written portion of the examination is likely to be comprised of a four-day written open-book (i.e., take home) test that will be designed and evaluated by faculty members appointed by the Director of the Doctoral Program for this purpose.

While the material to be covered generally corresponds to the subject areas introduced in the doctoral seminars, the comprehensive examination includes content beyond any particular course. Students are expected to use their skills in conducting literature reviews to expand their familiarity with the literature in public policy, administration, management, and research design beyond the material presented in their core classes. While the range of potential examination questions is large, students can expect an examination, in any given year, that covers only a narrower range. Previous comprehensive examination questions are available for student inspection in the SPA office. In addition to reviewing carefully their course materials, students should become familiar with the arguments in the literature beyond the core classes and with questions asked on past examinations.

Responses to the comprehensive examination questions will remain confidential throughout the examination sequence, until after final grades on the written exam have been assigned. A faculty committee consisting of at least three members will grade the exam – this committee will generally consist of the members of the Ph.D. Committee. The dissertation advisor, if already selected, may not be part of the examination committee. Faculty will be asked to grade the entire written examination. Examiners may meet to discuss their individual grades.

After receiving specific written comments from the graders, students will take an oral examination soon after the grading of the written exam, with as many of the grading faculty present as possible. The oral exam will focus mainly upon the written exam, but students are also responsible for the full range of comprehensive exam material in this context.

Examination grades will be independently submitted by the readers to the Student Services Coordinator with responsibilities that year for the comprehensive examinations. The coordinator will compile the results, again honoring the anonymous nature of the examination. After all the graders have turned in their examination, the Coordinator will give the results to the Director. The overall grade will represent the consensus of the examiners (e.g., a majority of readers), and is a weighted composite of the student's performance on both the written and oral components, with the principal weight being assigned to the written examination. The student will be informed of his/her grade by the Ph.D. director following the oral examination.

There are four grades students can receive for the comprehensive examination: (1) pass with distinction; (2) pass; (3) conditional pass; and (4) fail. A grade of "pass with distinction" indicates exceptional performance. A grade of "pass with distinction" or "pass" indicates acceptable performance. In both cases, students continue on with their doctoral studies and dissertation preparations. A grade of conditional pass requires the student to meet additional requirements specified by the grading committee within four months of the exam in order to receive an unconditional passing grade. Failure to satisfy these conditions will result in failure of the examination.

If a student is “passed,” s/he will be eligible for colloquium if s/he has completed all the required course work. If a student receives a conditional pass, s/he must meet the specified additional requirements to be eligible for colloquium. A grade of “fail” (either on the written exam, or after an oral exam) means that the student does not advance in the program. To advance, the student must re-take the comprehensive examination the next time it is offered. The understanding is that, since the student failed the exam the first time, they will need extensive further preparation to have a good chance to pass the next time. At that second taking of the examination, the student must pass, or s/he will be required to leave the program.

A student who fails the comprehensive examination after the first taking, but is otherwise in good standing in the program, may continue with additional coursework and preliminary research towards the dissertation, while the student is preparing to re-take the comprehensive examination the next year. That student cannot, however, defend a dissertation colloquium. Furthermore, continuing in the program in this manner is no guarantee of passing the following year: The student must assume some risk of failing a second time and being terminated in the program.

A student who fails the comprehensive examination twice, but has otherwise successfully completed appropriate coursework may be awarded a terminal MPA by SPA, if s/he has not previously been awarded that degree and if s/he meets the degree requirements.

All of this sounds very rigorous and official, and it is. However, the goal of the comprehensive examination is to allow students to demonstrate a wide and deep knowledge of public affairs topics, so that the full faculty can be confident of their ability to move on to the dissertation phase of the doctoral studies. It is not a “gotcha” exercise aimed at finding a single book or area of research that a student does not know well. Good students who prepare appropriately generally should expect to pass comprehensive examinations. The grade of “fail” is meant for overall performance that is clearly not adequate.

The comprehensive examination is administered under the University of Colorado’s Student Honor Code. A violation of the code, including plagiarism in the answers, will result in a grade of “fail” and may be grounds for a student to be dismissed from the program. Students with documented disabilities should speak to the Director well in advance about making appropriate accommodations.

Each spring, the Director of the Ph.D. Program will meet with students planning to take their examination the following fall to discuss the timing for the examination, and address any other questions the members of the doctoral cohort might wish to ask.

VI. THE DISSERTATION

All doctoral students must seek approval of a dissertation topic, then research, write and defend their dissertation. In general, a dissertation is a demonstration that a candidate for the doctoral degree is capable of doing independent, original scholarly research that constitutes a contribution to knowledge in the broadly defined field of public affairs.

CREDIT HOURS DURING DISSERTATION WORK

After successfully passing the comprehensive examination, students will need to take a minimum of 30 hours of dissertation credit before they are eligible to graduate. Students must be continuously registered for at least five dissertation credit hours (and not more than 10) each fall and spring semester until 30 hours is reached; thereafter, if additional time is needed before the dissertation is completed, the student must register for at least one dissertation credit each semester. No more than 15 credit hours (three enrolled semesters) may pass between the semester in which the student successfully completed PUAD 8070 and presentation of the colloquium.

Students should keep in mind that enrollment in at least five credit hours per fall and spring semester is required for full-time student status, which may affect eligibility for financial aid and/or visa status. Students who are not enrolled at the appropriate level and who have not made arrangements with the Program Director for a formal leave of absence are subject to dismissal. Under special conditions and with the approval of the Director of the Ph.D. program, a student may take a leave of absence for no more than two semesters; during that leave, students must agree not to avail themselves of University facilities (e.g., the research library).

A student must be registered for at least one dissertation credit hours during the semester when s/he has a dissertation defense. Please be aware that registering for only one credit hour may have an impact on financial aid and/or visa status, and consult with Student Services if needed.

A grade of “In Progress” (IP) will be assigned to all semesters of dissertation credit until the final approved dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School office. The Graduate School will then obtain the dissertation letter grade from the dissertation chair, and all IPs then will be changed to this final grade.

DISSERTATION PROCESS

The dissertation process has four distinct stages:

1. establishing the committee;
2. preparing/defending the colloquium proposal;
3. writing the dissertation; and
4. defending the dissertation.

VII. DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

A dissertation committee has three basic roles:

1. a resource of ideas and information for the student;
2. a source of guidance and feedback during the research and writing process; and
3. the evaluator of the final product.

A student's dissertation committee is the final authority for approving the proposal as well as the dissertation.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

A dissertation committee shall consist of at least four persons who must also be members of the Graduate Faculty: a chair (who must be drawn from the full-time, tenured, or tenure-track SPA faculty); at least two other faculty members from SPA at the University of Colorado Denver; and at least one other Graduate Faculty member if required to complete the four-member committee. It is common to also have at least one (but sometimes two) "external advisors" – who may be practitioners, researchers, or academics – selected for the knowledge and skills that the external advisor can bring to bear on the dissertation topic. The chair of the dissertation committee is selected by the student. All committee members must hold a terminal degree, or get a waiver from the Graduate School.

COMMITTEE SELECTION

Doctoral students, in consultation with a dissertation advisor, are responsible for assembling their dissertation committee, especially the chair (see below). The composition of the committee must be submitted to the Director of the Doctoral Program for formal approval. The Director, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor, will either approve the committee as constituted or make specific recommendations or changes. A colloquium may not be scheduled until the Director has approved the committee composition. Since the working relationship between a doctoral candidate and the committee may extend over many months, sometimes years, the quality and continuity of relationships are very important to all parties.

ROLE OF CHAIR AND COMMITTEE

The chair and the student will work closely throughout the dissertation process. Still, while the chair is the most important member of a student's dissertation committee, all committee members are important. Accordingly, the student's responsibility is to keep all committee members informed about the progress of the dissertation. Students who consistently seek and

heed the advice of all committee members can expect to encounter fewer problems during the dissertation process. The dissertation committee must meet with the student at least once every year to provide feedback on the student's progress. If the committee determines that the student's progress is unsatisfactory, they will forward a written report to the student and the program director suggesting steps to be taken to rectify the situation. Written records of the committee's meetings with the student are to be kept in the student's file. Students in good standing who have not had a meeting with their dissertation committee in the preceding 12 months will not be permitted to register for subsequent semesters.

COMMITTEE AUTHORITY

The committee decides when a student's work on a dissertation topic has advanced enough to warrant scheduling a pre-thesis colloquium defense. Subsequently, after a student writes and reviews his dissertation with the committee, the committee determines when the dissertation is acceptable for defense. Following the colloquium and dissertation defenses, the committee determines what, if any, changes must be made in the final version. The chair and at least three other members of a dissertation committee must sign off on the dissertation, thereby indicating their final approval of the thesis.

CHANGING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee membership may be adjusted with the permission of the Director of the Doctoral Program. Should the chair of a student's committee leave the University's employ during the dissertation process, he or she may remain on the committee as an outside reader – if the student desires. Otherwise, the student, after consultation with the committee chair, must choose a replacement member; the choice must be approved by the Director. The chair must always be a full-time, tenured or tenure-track, SPA faculty member.

VIII. THE DISSERTATION COLLOQUIUM

COLLOQUIUM PAPERWORK

Prior to the dissertation colloquium, the student must complete a review with Student Services. Student Services will make sure that the student has successfully completed all required coursework and examinations, and that the student is prepared to continue her/his doctoral work. No student will be permitted to hold a colloquium without having done the following:

1. completed in a satisfactory manner all of the coursework indicated in his/her program of study;
2. passed the comprehensive examination unconditionally;
3. achieved a grade point average of 3.33 in doctoral coursework indicated in their program of study, which they develop with the Ph.D. Director at the time of their admission to the program. Note that, prior to this review, if the student's GPA falls

below a 3.33 level, the student is not in good standing, is on academic probation, and must raise the GPA above 3.33 within 2 semesters to continue in the program;

4. satisfied the methodological proficiency requirement; and
5. filed required Colloquium paperwork with SPA.

SELECTION OF A TOPIC

Doctoral students should start thinking about an appropriate dissertation topic as early in the program as possible. If a student knows in general what s/he wants to do, the student can take related courses that will help him/her further that interest and talk informally with those faculty most suited to serve on such a committee. The student can also write term papers in courses that help him/her define the topic more clearly. This statement is not meant to limit a student's flexibility or explorations of topics early in their doctoral career. Some students know exactly what they want to study and should get to it quickly, while others will want to examine different fields before settling on a topic. In either case, it is useful to think about possible topics.

The student has the ultimate choice of a dissertation topic. But this choice is constrained by the student's ability to assemble a committee (subject to the Director's approval) that agrees that the topic is both worthy and feasible.

PURPOSE OF THE COLLOQUIUM

At the colloquium, a doctoral student presents the dissertation proposal to SPA faculty and students, and to his/her dissertation committee. This colloquium provides a formal opportunity for feedback and suggestions for improvement from the entire SPA community before the writing of the dissertation. A student goes into a colloquium with a specific proposal for a dissertation. The student should gain from the colloquium a refined proposal and assurance from the dissertation committee that, if the refined proposal is executed according to appropriate standards and with the continuing advice of the dissertation committee, the final product will be accepted and the student will be awarded the doctorate. The colloquium is the last chance of the faculty to review the preparation of the student for admission to candidacy. Therefore, faculty may request students to demonstrate their mastery of portions of the literature of public affairs, through an oral examination of the student. In general, this oral examination will focus on subjects relevant to the student's dissertation topic. If the student fails to satisfy the committee that he or she has a satisfactory mastery of literature or methodology, the committee may refuse to accept the colloquium prospect.

SCHEDULING

A student should schedule his/her dissertation colloquium within one calendar year of completing the PUAD 8070 course, and no more than 15 dissertation credit hours may be taken prior to the colloquium. Exceptions to this timeline may be granted only upon approval by the PhD program director. A student who does not meet this deadline may be asked to re-take his/her comprehensive examinations, unless the student can demonstrate extreme family, work,

or other reasons for the delay. The decision about whether a student must re-take the comprehensive examination will be made by the dissertation committee chair and the dissertation committee.

Before scheduling the colloquium, students should give at least one, or more, drafts to the committee members. Prior to the actual colloquium date, students should give what they expect to be the “final” draft to all committee members no less than one month before the expected date, so that committee members will have time to make suggested revisions and additions.

The Student Services Team will schedule a colloquium at the request of a candidate only with the concurrence of the committee chair. Students must request a Colloquium Handbook from the Student Services Team; the appropriate paperwork needs to be submitted in a timely manner as indicated in the Handbook. The Student Services Team member must be notified of the desired date and time so that room arrangements can be made. No student will be scheduled for a colloquium who has not completed all required coursework and who has not passed the comprehensive examination.

THE COLLOQUIUM PROPOSAL

A dissertation proposal should generally include a clear explanation of what the student plans to do and how the student expects to do it, a discussion of how the proposed work will contribute to knowledge in the area of inquiry, a fairly thorough review of the literature, and a careful articulation of the methodology the student will employ, the prospectus will also include a bibliography that includes all relevant literature known to the candidate.

While it is the role of a student’s dissertation committee to suggest or require specific items to be included in the proposal, all proposals should, at a minimum, contain the following:

1. a title page,
2. an abstract of not more than two double-spaced pages,
3. an introductory statement of the significance of the study,
4. a literature survey,
5. a statement of the propositions to be tested or issues to be examined,
6. an explanation of methodology, and
7. a bibliography.

A proposal generally should be no shorter than 25 double-spaced pages, exclusive of abstract and bibliography, and no longer than 40 pages.

CONDUCT OF COLLOQUIUM

The colloquium is chaired by the chair of the student's dissertation committee. All SPA students and faculty are welcomed to attend all colloquia. Usually they are held at SPA so interested parties may readily attend. While formats may vary, usually students make a brief formal presentation of their proposal and then accept questions and comments, first from the committee members, then from the audience. At the colloquium, the student formally asks of her/his committee:

1. Will the work proposed, if competently carried out, represent an original contribution to the literature that measures up to generally accepted standards in the field and in relevant sub-fields?
2. What revisions in the approach would strengthen the inquiry proposed?
3. What other literature and other data sources should be included?

The committee must agree unanimously on the student's prospectus and dissertation plan. Alternatively, the Committee may ask a student to prepare a memorandum to the record outlining faculty suggestions and detailing how they will be addressed. A second failure would result in the student being asked to leave the program.

PREPARATION OF FINAL COLLOQUIUM PROPOSAL

Upon approval by the committee, students must deposit with the Student Services Coordinator a final written draft of the colloquium proposal acceptable to all committee members. In the event the student has been asked to prepare a memorandum detailing how faculty suggestions will be included, this document should also be deposited with the Student Services Coordinator. The final written draft of the proposal must reflect the comments and suggestions of all committee members and signatures certifying satisfaction with the document and must be affirmed by all committee members.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

A student is admitted (or advanced) to candidacy for the Ph.D. Degree only after he or she has completed all of the requirements for the degree except the dissertation. Students admitted to candidacy must have successfully passed their colloquium. Upon certification by all members of a student's dissertation committee that the student has passed the colloquium, the student will be advanced to candidacy. No student will be permitted to defend his/her dissertation without having attained this status.

IX. CONDUCTING RESEARCH AND WRITING THE DISSERTATION

IRB APPROVAL

All research involving human subjects must be submitted to the University's institutional review board for approval of the research design. Students should contact their chair or the PhD program director for information about how to submit proposed research to the IRB.

FACULTY AVAILABILITY

Students should note that most faculty members are on nine-month appointments and are not always available during the summer for dissertation supervision, colloquia, and defenses. Thus, students should not assume summer faculty availability unless faculty are teaching during the summer session or prior arrangements are made. Under normal circumstances, colloquia and defenses will be scheduled only during the fall and spring semesters.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR PREPARATION

The final authority for the technical preparation of doctoral dissertations is the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado Denver. This Office should be consulted early in the dissertation process for directions and dissertation format. The Graduate School Dean's Office should be consulted whenever questions arise concerning acceptable dissertation formats. Since this Office must approve the format and style, but *not* the content, of the final drafts of all SPA dissertations before a student may graduate, a student may want to contact the Graduate Dean's Office at the proposal stage, but, in any case, certainly before preparing the final draft for the dissertation defense. SPA has available copies of the Graduate School guidelines.

COMMITTEE RELATIONS

It is the student's responsibility, with direction from the committee chair, to coordinate the work of the committee. Members of the committee have the right to participate in the dissertation process in the manner they choose; some members may wish to see each chapter as it is completed, while others may wish only to read complete drafts. The student should accommodate the various dissertation review styles of faculty. The faculty members, by serving on a committee, assume the responsibility to respond in a timely fashion. The dissertation process is a cooperative effort involving the candidate as well as all members of the committee.

USE OF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

The dissertation is a demonstration of the student's capability to design, execute and report on a major independent research project. In some cases, it is appropriate for students to use limited professional assistance in the project, such as computer programmers, data entry persons, transcription services, text editors and secretaries or typists. However, it is *inappropriate* for students to employ professionals to design the research, to select and/or interpret analytic techniques, to analyze results, or to do tasks that should be the student's responsibility. Violation

of this general guideline could invalidate the dissertation project. In cases of uncertainty, consult your dissertation chair or the Doctoral Director.

X. THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE

SCHEDULING

Dissertation defense dates will be scheduled by the Student Services Team in consultation with the dissertation chair and the Director of the Doctoral Program. No dissertation will be scheduled for defense without the concurrence of the dissertation chair that a defense is warranted. Students must contact the Student Services Team the semester *prior* to the anticipated commencement to obtain information on the relevant deadlines (e.g., from the Graduate School). (Most students will need several weeks after the defense to address the revisions indicated by their committee and to prepare final copies of the dissertation.) The Student Services Team must also be notified of the desired defense date and time so that room arrangements can be made. In effect, if a student does not have a substantially completed draft of his or her dissertation by the beginning of the semester in which he or she hopes to graduate, it reduces the prospect of completing the process in time.

CONDUCT OF DEFENSE

The dissertation defense is the final oral examination of the doctoral program. The candidate is expected to defend the dissertation, which means to demonstrate professional competence in the field in which it was written. The student should expect that revisions to the dissertation might be required as a result of the defense. The final authority on the extent and nature of any revisions rests with the committee. The chair of the dissertation committee chairs the defense, which will be open to all University of Colorado faculty and students.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

After the student completes his/her defense, the committee will vote on the acceptance of the dissertation; at least four faculty members must concur. The formal faculty response to a student's dissertation defense may take four forms to be reported to the Director of the Doctoral Program:

1. **ACCEPTANCE WITH DISTINCTION** – the student has performed with excellence in the dissertation research and defense;
2. **ACCEPTANCE** – the student has successfully completed all of the scholarly requirements for the PhD;
3. **CONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE** – the student must make minor changes requested by the committee, resubmit the dissertation for their approval, and the committee will – assuming changes are adequate – recommend acceptance to the Director; or

4. REJECTION – the dissertation and/or the candidate’s state of knowledge is still not sufficient. The student, in consultation with his/her committee, will have to make substantial revisions and eventually schedule another defense. Students will be allowed only two defenses.

REVIEW BY THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

After students have had their dissertation formally approved and signed by at least four members of the committee, a copy should be submitted to the Office of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado Denver for a final technical review in accordance with its guidelines at least six weeks before anticipated graduation. (The review period could change for any given semester; it is the student’s responsibility to be apprised of and meet these schedules.) Students must satisfy the form and style requirements of the doctoral program and the Graduate School before their dissertation will be formally accepted by SPA. Often the approval by the Graduate School can be accomplished on an informal basis prior to the completion of the final copy.

If the Graduate School Office determines that a dissertation has not met form and style requirements, the dissertation will be returned for adjustments, and the student may not be able to graduate that semester.

GRADUATION

To graduate in a given semester, a student must (1) file an Intent to Graduate form with SPA by the second week of the semester in which s/he plans to graduate; (2) submit three unbound, thesis bond copies of the dissertation to the Graduate School office at least two weeks prior to commencement and a fourth copy of the unbound thesis to the SPA office; and (3) submit fees for binding, microfilming, copyrighting, and abstract publication to the Graduate School Office at least two weeks prior to commencement. The three final bound copies will be distributed to the Library and the SPA office. No student will be permitted to graduate or attend commencement unless all three requirements for the degree have been met.

XI. ACADEMIC POLICIES

PHILOSOPHY

SPA expects superior performance from its doctoral students. The phrase “superior performance” has connotations beyond those related to minimum grade achievement, course work being no more than the essential foundation for independent reading and study; it also refers to promptness in doing work, reliability of performance, and steady progress through a course of study. These qualities should be reflected in the student’s performance in the comprehensive examinations and the dissertation.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

All doctoral students must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.33 in courses included in their program of study at the University of Colorado. No doctoral student will be advanced to candidacy if his/her grade point average is less than 3.33. Any grade less than a B- (B minus) is not acceptable for degree plan purposes.

PROBATION/DISMISSAL

When a doctoral student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.33, he/she will be placed on academic probation. Students may not take their comprehensive examination or be advanced to candidacy while on academic probation. Students on probation will have two semesters in which to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.33 or above. The student will be subject to dismissal if:

1. the student does not earn a 3.33 GPA in all courses taken in the first of these two probationary semesters, or
2. after the two-semester probationary period, the cumulative GPA is still below 3.33.

The final decision on dismissal will be made by the Director of Doctoral Studies. Students may use academic grievance procedures described below to appeal a dismissal.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Upon application to the Doctoral Director, a student will be allowed a reasonable leave of absence prior to admission to candidacy. However, once a student has been admitted to candidacy, no leave can be granted for more than one year. The Student Services team has the appropriate form, which must be signed by the director. Still, SPA has a strong preference that students remain continuously enrolled until graduation.

Requests for a leave of absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Doctoral Director, upon the specific petition of a doctoral student; justifications for leaves might include illness, accident, and family emergencies. General guidelines include:

1. Students must be in good academic standing;
2. Students must present their cases with a specific date for their return to graduate studies. If they are unable to abide by their anticipated return date, they must re-petition, again to the satisfaction of the Doctoral Director.
3. During leave status, a student is expected to minimize her/his relationship with the University, its faculty, and its facilities.

Approved leaves of absence do not automatically extend the time limits for earning a degree, but they may be used as a reason to request an extension if needed.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Doctoral students are allowed to apply up to nine semester hours of graded graduate-level credit taken at other appropriate universities toward their doctoral degree plan. Any such credits must be approved for transfer by the Director of the Doctoral Program. Courses taken more than ten years prior to the submission of the application will not be considered for transfer credit.

Transfer credit will not be permitted for required doctoral seminars. Elective credit – including transfer credit – is expected to be clearly related to the dissertation plans of the student. Criteria for acceptance include quality and relevance of the course. Note: transferred credit will count towards a student's cumulative credit hours but the grades will *not* be counted in calculating that student's GPA. Credit may not be transferred until the student has been enrolled at SPA for at least one semester, with a GPA of at least 3.0.

INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

With the permission of the Doctoral Director, independent study courses may count for up to 6 credit hours towards the coursework for the Ph.D. To ensure that faculty sponsors and students arrive at clear definition of the expectations of an independent study project, a "Special Processing" form must be filed with the SPA office at the beginning of the semester in which the project is undertaken.

TIME LIMIT

Students are expected to complete all degree requirements within eight years from the date of the start of course work in the doctoral program. Extra time granted for doctoral work must be approved by the Director of the Doctoral Program and the Graduate School of the University of Colorado Denver, typically for reasons beyond the candidate's control (e.g., illness or extreme work-related conditions). Approved leaves do not automatically extend the deadline for completion.

GRADUATE SCHOOL RULES

All students must also comply with the Graduate School Rules, available from the SPA office or the Graduate School. SPA doctoral rules as outlined in this Handbook are consistent with CU-Denver Graduate School rules.

SPA GRIEVANCE POLICY/PROCEDURES

This policy describes formal procedures by which a currently enrolled student may seek to remedy academic grievances within the School of Public Affairs. Academic grievances are challenges to academic actions or decisions, including but not limited to actions such as an academic grade or evaluation of a student's work in a course, seminar, or other academic forum; a decision with respect to a student's academic standing in a program or at the School; unjust treatment by a faculty member in a class; actions related to dissertation or capstone procedures, etc.

This policy refers only to academic grievances within the School of Public Affairs. The University of Colorado Denver has established mechanisms for non-academic grievances such as claims of sexual harassment, complaints against university administrative employees, policies, or procedures, interpersonal conflict resolution, and issues relating to student employment, and students should use those mechanisms for non-academic grievances. In addition, challenges involving an allegation of academic misconduct such as plagiarism or cheating are subject to a different policy. Please contact the Associate Dean if you need more information.

Step One: Informal Resolution. The student is strongly encouraged to first attempt to informally resolve the grievance through discussion with the faculty member(s) involved.

Step Two: Filing the Grievance. If the student is unable to resolve the dispute with the faculty member(s), he or she should file a written grievance with the Associate Dean, with a copy to the Dean. Absent unusual circumstances, the grievance should be filed within 30 days after the student learns of the event giving rise to the grievance.

The written grievance may be filed via e-mail or delivered directly to the Associate Dean. The grievance should clearly state the basis for the complaint and the remedy requested, and should include any evidence that supports the grievance, such as class syllabi, assignments, statements from other students, etc.

Students should be aware that grades and other evaluations of student work are traditionally within the jurisdiction of individual instructors, and are not likely to be changed absent evidence that the faculty member (1) determined the grade based on considerations other than student performance; (2) substantially differed from previously announced criteria or procedures in determining the grade; or (3) violated university or school policy in determining the grade. The student bears the burden of proof on these allegations.

Step Three: Investigating the Grievance. The Associate Dean will acknowledge receipt of the grievance, forward a copy to the faculty member(s) involved, and begin the investigation of the circumstances of the grievance. He/she may request additional information from the student. The faculty member(s) involved may submit a written response to the grievance, including any evidence in opposition to the grievance, within 21 days of receipt of the grievance.

If the grievance involves the need for substantial academic expertise in a particular field in order to assess whether there is a basis for the grievance, the Associate Dean may appoint a panel of faculty members with expertise in the area to investigate the grievance and recommend a decision to the Dean.

In the event that the Associate Dean is involved in the grievance, the Dean shall refer the investigation of the grievance to another faculty member. In the event the Dean is involved in the grievance, the matter will be forwarded to the Graduate School for investigation pursuant to the rules of the Graduate School.

Step Four: Decision by the Dean. Within 30 days of the filing of the grievance, the Associate Dean (or the members of the faculty panel, if one has been appointed) shall give the Dean a

written report containing recommendations as to the disposition of the grievance, together with the reasons for the conclusions contained in the report. Within one week of receiving the report, the Dean shall forward the report to the student and the faculty member(s), together with his/her decision on the disposition of the grievance.

Appealing the Decision of the Dean. If the student is not satisfied with the Dean's decision, he or she may make a written request to the Dean within five days that a faculty panel be appointed to review the grievance and consider the appeal. The appeal panel should be different from any panel appointed to investigate the grievance. The appeal panel shall consider all relevant information and make a written recommendation to the Dean within two weeks of the filing of the appeal, with copies to the student and the faculty member(s) involved in the grievance. The Dean shall consider whether to uphold or deny the appeal, and shall notify the student and faculty member(s) within five days.

Students in the Ph.D. program may appeal the decision of the Dean to the Graduate School Council, pursuant to Graduate School procedures, and the Graduate School Council's decision is final.

General. Any deadline in this policy may be waived with the agreement of the student and the School if needed to ensure that all relevant information is considered.

APPENDIX: SAMPLE TIMETABLE

The following is a typical timetable for a student's progression through the program. *Please note that it is NOT meant as an imperative; rather, it is a suggestion as to what would constitute "normal" progress through the SPA doctoral program for students who are working during the day. Students who are pursuing the Ph.D. full-time, and not working at a job during the day, might be able to complete 3 classes each semester, meaning that they can finish all coursework in 4 academic semesters and finish a dissertation within 3-4 total years.*

Year 1:

Begin selection of faculty advisor

Fall: PUAD 8010 and PUAD 8030

Spring: PUAD 8020 and PUAD 8040

Summer: Possible elective courses.

Year 2:

Fall: PUAD 8050 and PUAD 8060

Spring: PUAD 8070; electives; select dissertation adviser if have not done so already

Summer: Prepare for comprehensive exam in August

Year 3:

Fall: Additional elective and/or methodology coursework

Spring: Prepare prospectus; hold colloquium (within one year of completion of PUAD 8070)

Years 3-4-5: write dissertation

Year 5-6: Defend dissertation. GRADUATE!!! Do amazing things with your career!