

Department of
Political Science and
Public Administration

Ph.D. In Public Policy and
Administration

Program Manual

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Program Objectives

Doctorates in public policy and administration concentrate on the application of theory to administrative practices in public sector and nonprofit organizations and on the environment in which these organizations function. Program graduates will possess the skills to delve into the complex policy issues and create organizational conditions that enable public organizations to achieve their public policy objectives. Program graduates will be prepared to teach and conduct research in public policy, public administration, and American politics. Mississippi State's program strives to increase the racial and gender diversity of academic, governmental, and nonprofit organizations.

Ph.D. Committee

The Ph.D. Committee will consist of the Graduate Coordinator, Department Head, and three other faculty members to be appointed by the Department Head. Committee responsibilities will include:

- a) Serve as the Ph.D. admissions committee. This committee will be responsible for gathering and evaluating all relevant data and for admitting students to the Ph.D. program.
- b) Review and recommend changes to the Ph.D. program and policies affecting the program to the faculty.
- c) Serve as an appeals Board for Ph.D. students.

Ph.D. Requirements and Procedures

The Graduate Coordinator will advise all students for their first semester of doctoral courses. A program of study will be developed after the major professor is designated and the student's preliminary committee is formed. The program of study will list all courses that the student must take to fulfill degree requirements. The major professor and the student's preliminary committee must approve programs of study.

Student Major Professor and Preliminary Committee

The student will select the major professor, who must be a member of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration Graduate Faculty, after completing the first semester (or equivalent) of doctoral work. The student and the major professor then will select other members of the student's committee. The committee will include the committee chair, and three additional committee members. If a faculty member outside of the department serves as a committee member, one additional committee member will be added from among the remaining department faculty members.

Course Requirements

Required Courses

PPA 9203 Constitutional and Political Framework of Public Administration

PPA 9303 Foundations of Public Administration

PPA 9403 Comparative Public Administration

PPA 9503 Qualitative Research for Public Affairs

PPA 9603 Scope of American Public Administration

PPA 9613 Rural Government Administration I: Theoretical and Environmental Aspects

PPA 9703 Organization Behavior in the Public Sector

PPA 9713 Administration of Human Resources in a Public Sector Environment

PPA 9723 Public Budgeting Processes and Their Policy Implications

PPA 9803 Multivariate Analysis and Design for Public Affairs

PPA 9813 Advanced Quantitative Analysis for Public Affairs

PPA 9903 Public Policy Formulation and Implementation

PPA 9993 Research Design and Philosophy of Science

Elective Hours

Students will select six hours of elective classes that will be consistent with their professional goals. The major professor and the student's preliminary exam committee must approve courses in the student's elective concentration.

Dissertation Research

PPA 9000 Dissertation Research and Dissertation

A minimum of 20 semester credits of dissertation research must be scheduled

Transfer Credits

Students who are enrolled in doctoral programs at other institutions may transfer up to nine credits of doctoral work if approved by the Ph.D. Admissions Committee.

Master Level Classes

Ph.D. students who take classes open to master's students should complete additional assignments over and above those completed by the master's students.

Student Progress Report

The student's committee will meet with each student after the completion of 18 hours of graduate work, but no later than the end of the second year, to discuss progress made and if the student should proceed with the program. In each case the student will be advised of what, if anything, should be done to improve the quality of the student's academic work. The decision of the faculty **will be** binding.

Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination

In order to ensure that the student has acquired the skills and basic knowledge to carry out the research necessary for the dissertation, the student will be required to pass comprehensive examinations, both written and oral, when all course work on the program of study has been completed. Students who pass all parts of the comprehensive examination will be admitted to the candidacy to the Ph.D. degree.

Comprehensive Written Examination

Each student will take four written exams. The first written exam consists of general field and foundational questions. The second written exam consists of one focus question in the area of administration of human resources and one focus question in the area of organizational behavior.

The third written exam consists of one focus question in the area of public budgeting and one focus question in the area of public policy. The fourth written exam consists of one focus question in the area of rural government administration and one focus question in the area of comparative public administration. Students must pass all four written exams. If a student fails any one of the four written exams, the student will be required to retake only that specific written exam. The exams will be graded by a committee of faculty members selected by the Graduate Coordinator.

The Graduate Coordinator will distribute a memo to Ph.D. students at the beginning of each semester outlining the logistics for comprehensive examinations. This exam will ordinarily be offered during the last week in September and the third week in February. The Graduate Coordinator has the right to reschedule exams in certain situations as needed.

Notification of Exam Results

The student's performance on each written examination will be designated "pass with distinction," "pass", or "fail". The Graduate Coordinator will inform the student in writing as to whether the student passed or failed various areas of the written examination. Once the Graduate Coordinator notifies the student about performance on the written examination, the student may discuss the examination with faculty members. A student who fails any portion of the written exam cannot retake the failed portion of the exam until the next time it is offered and must retake it within one year of failing the written exam. Students who fail any portion of the exam a second time will be dropped from the doctoral program (see Bulletin of the Graduate School). Students who fails any portion of the exam second time might be permitted by the Graduate Coordinator, to request in writing that the student's answer to the question(s) in the portions of

the exam taken the second time be examined and decided upon by the full committee of the core faculty, which decision is final and binding.

Oral Examination

Oral Examination Committee

The oral examination committee will consist of the student's dissertation committee.

Oral Examination

Students must pass the written exam in all areas before proceeding to the oral exam. The major professor, in conjunction with the student and the graduate coordinator, will schedule the oral examination. The preliminary committee will designate the student's overall comprehensive examination performance "pass with distinction", "pass", "fail", "pass with conditions" immediately upon completion of the oral examination. Whether the preliminary committee consists of four or five persons, if more than one member votes to fail the person being examined, the student fails the comprehensive oral examination. All preliminary committee members must vote in the affirmative for the student to pass with distinction. The preliminary committee may terminate the oral exam at any point during the session. The preliminary committee may ask questions about public administration and public policy concepts and ideas not covered on the written examination.

Notification of Comprehensive Examination Results

The Graduate Coordinator will inform the student in writing whether or not the student passed or failed the comprehensive examination. Office of Graduate Studies policy specifies that two failures of the comprehensive examination result in automatic termination from the program.

Dissertation Committee

After the written comprehensive examinations have been passed, the student's dissertation committee will be constituted. The major professor may continue to serve in the capacity and as dissertation director, and the student and major professor will select the remainder of the committee members. A dissertation committee consists of four Political Science and Public Administration graduate faculty members. If the dissertation committee includes one additional graduate faculty member from outside the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, whether from other units of Mississippi State University or another university, the dissertation committee consists of five persons. If a faculty member serving on the dissertation leaves the university during this process, the student must show that the dissertation is substantially completed or they will select a replacement member to serve on the committee.

Admission to Ph.D. Candidacy

Students are admitted to Ph.D. candidacy once the following items are completed:

1. The comprehensive examination is passed.
2. The dissertation topic is selected and the prospectus has been approved.

Dissertation

The Dissertation must be an original work that makes a significant contribution to an area of public administration and / or policy. Students will prepare a written dissertation prospectus in

consultation with their dissertation committee. Once the written prospectus is completed to the satisfaction of the committee chair and committee members, students will conduct a scheduled oral defense of the prospectus before a joint meeting of the student's dissertation committee. These steps are intended to encourage adequate planning for the research and to correct problems at an early stage. Successful defense of the dissertation prospectus requires approval of at least four members of the dissertation committee.

Dissertation Defense

With the approval of the major professor, the student will circulate copies of the draft dissertation to all members of the dissertation committee. Whether the dissertation committee consists of four or five persons, if more than one member does not approve the dissertation prior to the oral defense, an oral defense may not be scheduled. Persons of interest are invited to attend.

The oral defense constitutes a seminar that affords the student an opportunity to share the results of the research with members of the dissertation committee and others present. Once the oral defense is completed, the dissertation must be approved by three of four (or four out of five, depending on the composition) committee members. After the student has successfully defended the dissertation, it shall be submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences and the Library.

General Program Procedures

Time Limit

A Ph.D. student must complete the degree program within five years after passing the comprehensive examination (per Graduate Council, March 2010). An extension of time form,

available on the Graduate School website, may be used to request a one-time, one-year extension. The request must be signed by the major professor and the dean of the college and submitted to the Office of the Graduate School.

Document Interpretation

Responsibility for the interpretation of this document resides with the Ph.D. Committee.