PUBLIC POLICY, PHD

Banner Code: PP-PHD-PUBP

Academic Advising

560 Founders Hall
Arlington Campus
A201 Robinson Hall
Fairfax Campus

This program is distinctive in its heavy emphasis on the combined influence of technology, culture, and institutions on public policy. Students investigate the increasing tensions created by technologically driven organizational change. This doctoral program prepares its graduates to assume positions of significant responsibility in academia, government, and the private and public sectors. With a focus on analytical and research-based approaches to public policy, our students seek to understand the underlying determinants of public policy choices, analyze and improve the implementation of policy, and identify and assess new opportunities to address emerging issues.

To investigate the policy issues associated with substantive policy areas, students develop in-depth understanding of American institutions, values, and culture; competence in research methods and advanced analytical methodologies; and a comparative, international perspective. At the time of admission, each student is assigned a faculty advisor who assists in the design and development of the student’s program.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions

Requirements

The program seeks students with exceptional potential for accumulating, sorting, analyzing, and communicating information and findings effectively. Public policy is inherently complex and value-laden. In the end, high-quality policy analysis requires thoughtful and judicious management of complex and incommensurate information, both quantitative and qualitative. Potential students must be able to manage and integrate both kinds of information and produce persuasive, well-organized, written syntheses and analytical insight.

The ideal applicant has demonstrated capabilities in research and writing, basic mathematical skills roughly equal to one semester of calculus, competence in statistics, some background in economics, and a theoretical and working knowledge of public policy processes. Applicants with strong records who are lacking in one or more of these areas may be admitted to the program and will receive assistance in making up deficiencies.

Applicants must hold a master’s degree from a regionally-accredited institution and have a GPA of 3.00 or higher. Prospective students are encouraged to attend an information session.

See Graduate Admission Policies for general information on graduate admission to George Mason University. See Schar Admissions (http://schar.gmu.edu/admissions) for application requirements and deadlines for the PhD in Public Policy. Students are considered for admission for the Fall term only.

Policies

For policies governing all graduate degrees, see Graduate Policies.

Program Requirements

Students are required to complete a minimum of 82 credits of graduate coursework, of which no more than 12 may be dissertation credits. Specific coursework requirements include four foundational core courses, one semester of participation in the research colloquium (public policy seminar), two advanced methodology courses, three courses in an area of program specialization, and three advanced courses tailored to the student’s research needs and interests. Courses are determined in collaboration with the student’s advisor and are drawn widely not only from Schar, but also from other programs at Mason.

At the completion of core skills coursework (Stage One), students must pass a qualifying exam that evaluates mastery of the first year’s material, as well as the ability to integrate that material when addressing important and complex public policy problems and issues. Students must then develop their research areas through specialized coursework, and pass a field exam structured around their specific field of proposed doctoral research (Stages Two and Three). Other requirements include the successful preparation and defense of a doctoral research proposal and the ensuing dissertation (Stage Four).

A complete description of the program policies, procedures, and requirements is in the PhD in Public Policy student and faculty handbook (http://schar.gmu.edu/current-students/student-services), which is published annually.

Reduction of Credit

Students must have a master’s degree before being admitted to the PhD in public policy. Up to 30 credits from a prior master’s degree may be applied toward the doctoral requirements at the program director’s discretion. The program director determines whether the credits are eligible for reduction of credit and the number of credits to be reduced. Students who receive less than a 30 credit reduction may take additional specialized elective credit in Stage Two.

Prerequisites: Methodological and Substantive Foundations

PhD students are required to have competence in the following three areas, either by taking these courses or by proving competence through a placement exam and/or evidence of previous relevant coursework.

Prerequisite courses will not count as part of the 82 credit requirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 511</td>
<td>Statistical Methods in Policy Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 720</td>
<td>Managerial Economics and Policy Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 730</td>
<td>US Institutions and the Policy Process</td>
<td>3</td>
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Requirements

Degree Requirements

Total credits: minimum 82
Doctoral Coursework and Requirements

Stage One - Core Skills

Four credits of

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 800</td>
<td>Culture and Public Policy</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

Four credits of

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 801</td>
<td>Research Design for Public Policy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 804</td>
<td>Multivariate Statistical Analysis in Public Policy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 805</td>
<td>Foundations of Social Science for Public Policy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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Pass the comprehensive Qualifying Exam

Total Credits: 16

Stage Two - Policy Fields and Skills

After passing the qualifying exam, students assemble a Field Research Committee. By the end of their third semester, full-time students (fourth semester for part-time) must choose a chair for their Field Committee.

By the start of their fourth semester, full-time students (fifth semester for part-time) must submit to the chair of their Field Committee a plan for their Field of Study. The Field of Study Plan will describe a proposed research area, including citations relevant to current research in that Field. The Plan must be approved by both the student’s Field Committee chair and the program director.

Coursework taken in Stage Two includes:

- Three courses in an area of program specialization, chosen in collaboration with advisor
- One advanced methods course chosen from the following:
  - PUBP 705 Advanced Statistical Methods in Policy Analysis
  - PUBP 754 Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Analysis for Public Policy
  - PUBP 791 Advanced Field Research for Policy: Theory and Method
  - PUBP 792 Advanced Economic Analysis for Policy Research
  - PUBP 793 Large-Scale Database Construction and Management for Policy Research

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<tr>
<td>PUBP 705</td>
<td>Advanced Statistical Methods in Policy Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 754</td>
<td>Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Analysis for Public Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>PUBP 792</td>
<td>Advanced Economic Analysis for Policy Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 793</td>
<td>Large-Scale Database Construction and Management for Policy Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUBP 850</td>
<td>Seminar in Public Policy</td>
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Total Credits: 13-14

1 Other courses may be approved by the program director.

Stage Three - Research Foundations

In Stage Three, students take coursework approved in the Field of Study Plan. Courses in the Field of Study Plan are intended to be taken concurrently with work on the Field Statement and Field Exam. Students may not present a dissertation proposal for approval until they have passed the Field Exam.

Students may choose one of the established fields of study or work with a faculty committee to create their own field of study. The established fields in the doctoral program are: regional development and transportation; technology, science and innovation; entrepreneurship, growth and public policy; U.S. governance; culture and society; organizational and information technology; and global and international systems.

Students must complete all of the following:

- Three substantive Field of Study courses that will serve as a foundation for their Field
  - PUBP 810 Regional Development and Transportation Policy
  - PUBP 811 Applied Methods in Regional Development and Transportation Policy
  - PUBP 820 Technology, Science, and Innovation: Institutions and Governance
  - PUBP 821 Analytic Methods for Technology, Science, and Innovation Policy
  - PUBP 834 Entrepreneurship, Growth, and Public Policy
  - PUBP 835 Entrepreneurship, Creativity, and Innovation
  - PUBP 840 U.S. Policy-Making Institutions
  - PUBP 841 U.S. Policy-Making Processes
  - PUBP 860 Social Theory, Culture, and Public Policy
  - PUBP 861 Culture and Social Policy Analysis
  - PUBP 880 Global and International Public Policy I
  - PUBP 881 International Trade Policy

- One Advanced Methods course
  - PUBP 705 Advanced Statistical Methods in Policy Analysis
  - PUBP 754 Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Analysis for Public Policy
  - PUBP 791 Advanced Field Research for Policy: Theory and Method
  - PUBP 792 Advanced Economic Analysis for Policy Research
  - PUBP 793 Large-Scale Database Construction and Management for Policy Research

Field Statement

Field Exam

Total Credits: 13-16

1 Courses must include at least one 800 level Schar from this list and no more than one substantive graduate course from outside Schar.

2 Other courses must be approved in writing by the Field Committee Chair and program director.

Note: Where appropriate courses are not available from Schar, students may petition the program director for substitute courses to count for their Field of Study Plan.

Dissertation Research

Qualifying Exams

Students must pass both a qualifying exam which is taken after the core courses are completed and a field examination.

When students have completed all coursework, have passed both the qualifying and field exams, have an approved dissertation committee and presented and successfully defended a dissertation proposal, they advance to candidacy.
Stage Four - Dissertation
Twelve credits of PUBP 998 and PUBP 999 must be applied to the degree. A minimum of six credits must be PUBP 999.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up to six credits of</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 998</td>
<td>Research/Proposal for Dissertation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal Oral Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>At least six credits of</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 999</td>
<td>Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Oral Defense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
<td>12</td>
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