

# CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION, PHD

**Banner Code:** CA-PHD-CONF

The doctoral program, the first of its kind in the United States, provides advanced study for students in the field of conflict analysis and conflict resolution. Students are prepared for careers as researchers, theoreticians, and teachers in higher education, and as policy administrators, analysts, and consultants in the public and private sectors.

The program stresses a close link between knowledge of theory and process in the resolution of conflict. For this, training in the methods of research and analysis is emphasized. In addition, students are expected to obtain a background in a substantive area of conflict, usually related to the topic of the dissertation.

## Admissions & Policies

### Admissions

A master's or equivalent degree is required for admission to the PhD program.

### Application Requirements

In addition to meeting all admission requirements for graduate study, applicants must submit:

- all undergraduate and graduate transcripts
- three letters of recommendation, one of which should be from a faculty member in the applicant's undergraduate or graduate major field
- a 750 to 1,000 word essay on goals and reasons for seeking admission to the program
- a written sample of work that shows the applicant's potential for completing dissertation research in a doctoral program
- a resume or curriculum vitae.

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or other standardized test scores are not required but may be submitted. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is required of international students.

For more information, see the Admission of International Students. Although students may enroll on a full- or part-time basis, entry into the program is in the fall semester only.

### Policies

For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP.6.10 Requirements for Doctoral Degrees.

### Reduction of Credit

Since a master's degree or equivalent is required for admission, students will automatically receive a 15 credit reduction of the number of credits required.

Students may have the required number of credits reduced by up to 15 additional credits based on relevant previous coursework. The actual number of applied credits is determined in consultation with the student's advisor and the program director after a review of courses taken, subsequent to a student's admission to the program

### Completion Timelines

Students must satisfactorily complete their coursework, comprehensive paper, advance to candidacy, and complete the dissertation within 9 years of admission to the program. Students are expected to have advanced to candidacy within 6 years of admission to the program.

### Plan of Study Guidelines

All doctoral students should meet with their faculty advisor before starting classes to develop a plan of study. This plan should show the sequence of courses anticipated. It should be based on a discussion between the student and the advisor about the student's interest and goals. The plan should ensure that the student completes coursework efficiently and is able to build toward candidacy. The student and the advisor should then meet at least once each semester thereafter to review and amend the plan. The Program Director should receive a copy of each new or revised plan of study.

### Transfer of Non-Degree Credit

A maximum of 12 credits of S-CAR graduate courses taken at George Mason as a non-degree graduate student, or as part of S-CAR's graduate certificate program may be transferred into the PhD program. How credit will be counted will be determined in consultation with the student's advisor and the Doctoral Program Director. A maximum of 6 credits of non-S-CAR courses taken as non-degree credit can be counted toward the PhD program. Courses counted toward another degree cannot be transferred.

### Adding a S-CAR Certificate Program

Students may elect to complete a S-CAR graduate certificate in addition to the PhD program. Graduate certificates are opportunities for students to further tailor their academic program and specialize in a specific area of Conflict Resolution practice. Certain graduate certificate courses can be used to fulfill PhD program requirements. Students should consult with the Certificate Program Director and Doctoral Program Director for policies on counting certificate courses toward the PhD degree.

## Requirements

### Degree Requirements

Total credits: 72

#### Required Courses

CONF 801	Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution (Should be taken in the first semester of coursework)	3
CONF 900	Integrating Theory, Practice, and Method in Conflict Analysis (Should be taken in the last semester of coursework)	3
Total Credits		6

### Foundation Courses

Students complete 15 credits of foundation courses distributed as follows:

#### Theoretical Foundations

Select two courses (6 credits) from the following: 6

CONF 802	Theories of the Person	
CONF 803	Structural Theories	
CONF 804	Alternate Theoretical Foundations	
<b>Research Foundations</b>		
Select two courses (6 credits) from the following:		6
CONF 811	Quantitative Foundations	
CONF 812	Qualitative Foundations: Social Sciences	
CONF 813	Qualitative Foundations: Humanities	
<b>Practice Foundations</b>		
CONF 820	Reflective Practice in Interpersonal-Multiparty Conflicts	3
or CONF 890	Practicum in Conflict Analysis and Resolution	
Total Credits		15

## Specialization Courses

Students will take three courses (9 credits) of specialization courses evenly distributed across the areas of theory, research, and practice <sup>1</sup>	9
Total Credits	9

<sup>1</sup> The Doctoral Program Director must approve courses.

## Electives

Select 15 credits from electives that are any 500-, 600-, and 700-level CONF courses that are not required	15
Total Credits	15

With the advisor's approval, each student may include a maximum of 6 credits of electives from outside the S-CAR Program, including courses in other Mason departments, consortium courses, and transfer courses from other universities. The intent is to allow students to have maximum flexibility in selecting courses to build skills and knowledge needed in dissertation work. CONF 897 Directed Reading may be taken to meet the requirement. Only two directed readings classes (6 credits) can be applied toward doctoral elective requirements.

## Foreign Language Requirement

At the point of application to fulfill the comprehensive paper, students will indicate to the Director of the Doctoral Program the membership of their dissertation committee. This committee will determine, based on the scope and nature of the student's research, the specific language requirement a student must meet. This will be conveyed to the Director of the Doctoral Program. This language requirement must be completed prior to graduation.

## Comprehensive Paper

Students are eligible to complete the comprehensive paper when they have completed all the requirements of coursework in the doctoral program with the exception of CONF 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal and CONF 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research and the language requirement. A student is advanced to candidacy upon successful completion of the comprehensive paper. Papers can be submitted for evaluation twice each year, once in the winter and once in the summer. Students who do not pass initially should form a plan of study with the chair of their dissertation committee and the Director of the Doctoral Program that will prepare them to resubmit. The comprehensive paper may be resubmitted two times for a total of three attempts. After three unsuccessful attempts, the student should consult with the Doctoral

and Master's Directors about the possibility of transferring to the MS program.

## Advancement to Candidacy

Upon successfully completing coursework (except dissertation) listed on the Plan of Study and passing the comprehensive paper, students will be advanced to candidacy and will be personally notified of this by the Dean of S-CAR. Students are expected to advance to candidacy within 6 years of admission to the program. Students have a total of 9 years from admission to complete all course requirements, including the dissertation.

## Dissertation Research

Students are required to complete 12 combined credits of CONF 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal and CONF 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research, including at least 3 credits of CONF 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research. Students must have a signed dissertation proposal in order to register for CONF 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research.

Select 12 credits from the following:		12
CONF 998	Doctoral Dissertation Proposal (All CONF 998 courses are graded In Progress until completion of the proposal. At that time, a grade of Satisfactory is issued.)	
CONF 999	Doctoral Dissertation Research (All CONF 999 courses are graded In Progress until the dissertation defense is successfully completed. At that time, a grade of Satisfactory is issued.)	
Total Credits		12

## Dissertation Committee

Students should propose a Dissertation Committee to the Director of the Doctoral Program and the Dean who then formally appoint the committee. This must be done prior to taking the comprehensive exam. The Dissertation Committee must include a chairperson from among S-CAR graduate faculty and at least two other members of the graduate faculty, one of whom must be a non-S-CAR Mason faculty member. The Dean will inform the student, committee members, and Director of the Doctoral Program when the committee has been appointed.

## Dissertation Proposal

After the student passes the comprehensive exam and advances to candidacy, the next job of the committee is to approve the candidate's dissertation proposal. The proposal is the candidate's description (in some detail) of his/her dissertation project, reflecting the successful work of the comprehensive examination paper. It will include an argument about the hypothesis/theory question being tackled and the specific methods of research to be used. It should be prepared in consultation with the chair of the committee, and must be approved by all committee members. After receiving permission from the full committee, the candidate makes an oral presentation of the dissertation proposal before the committee and the Director of the Doctoral Program that is also open to other S-CAR faculty, fellow students, and other scholars. In scheduling the defense, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that all members of the committee are available and will be present for the defense.

A signed cover page from that proposal must be filed with the Doctoral Director. Failure to complete the formation of a committee and an approved proposal by the end of the 12-month period will result in the candidate's dismissal from the doctoral program. (Candidates may

appeal to the Dean a further extension of this dissertation preparation period, but such appeals will be allowed only on grounds of documented illness, family emergency, or military deployment). Candidates should consult [thesis.gmu.edu/](http://thesis.gmu.edu/) (<http://thesis.gmu.edu/>) to ensure the proposal is in the correct format and has been submitted to all the appropriate offices.

### **Writing the Dissertation and its Defense**

The chair of the dissertation committee usually takes most of the responsibility for guiding the overall project and the writing of the dissertation, although all members (and other useful persons) should be consulted as appropriate. It is the committee's responsibility to ensure a quality piece of work. When advanced to candidacy, the *Guide for Preparing Graduate Thesis, Dissertation and Projects* tells exactly how to prepare an acceptable dissertation. Please visit [thesis.gmu.edu/](http://thesis.gmu.edu/) (<http://thesis.gmu.edu/>) to ensure formatting guidelines are met and submission procedures followed.

It is essential that doctoral committee members have sufficient time to read and evaluate dissertation drafts with care prior to the dissertation defense date. The committee may require no more than one month to read the final draft and provide feedback. It is also essential that students have sufficient time after the defense to do final revisions, editing and formatting. If the University determines the deadlines for final library submission deadline is May 1, for example, the defense must take place prior to April 1 and the full draft dissertation must be delivered to the full committee before March 1.

The dissertation is to be orally defended in public, minimally with the entire committee present. The S-CAR faculty and students must receive public notice of the defense at least two weeks prior. Students are welcome to invite family and friends. The University may also send a representative. The public defense helps ensure that the University's standards are met, and offers an opportunity to learn from the students' research. After a successful defense, the cover page is signed by the members of the Dissertation Committee, PhD Program Director and Dean; and the dissertation is filed with the University. An additional signed copy should be delivered to the S-CAR Burton Library.

Dissertations must be presented to the library in the proper format or they will not be accepted. Please visit the University Dissertation & Thesis Services web site at [thesis.gmu.edu/](http://thesis.gmu.edu/) (<http://thesis.gmu.edu/>) for dissertation formatting requirements and submission deadlines. Mason's Dissertation and Thesis Coordinator may be reached at [udts@gmu.edu](mailto:udts@gmu.edu) or 703-993-2222.