The ideal applicant has demonstrated capabilities in research and organized, written syntheses and analytical insight. 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 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.

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 Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degree Requirements
Total credits: minimum 82
## Doctoral Coursework and Requirements

### Stage One - Core Skills

Four credits of 4

- **PUBP 800** Culture and Public Policy
- **PUBP 801** Research Design for Public Policy
- **PUBP 804** Multivariate Statistical Analysis in Public Policy
- **PUBP 805** Foundations of Social Science for Public Policy

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 9

  - One advanced methods course chosen from the following: 1 3-4
    - **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
    - **PUBP 850** Seminar in Public Policy

**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.

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>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 998</td>
<td>Research/Proposal for Dissertation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposal Oral Defense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBP 999</td>
<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissertation Oral Defense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits 12