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1. **Introduction**

The PhD in Urban Affairs focuses on urban problem-solving with an interdisciplinary framework and a community-engaged approach. It is designed to prepare graduates with the necessary skills in research, evaluation, and policy design to address socioeconomic challenges that face Memphis and other cities in the United States and beyond. The combination of training in theory development and application will prepare graduates for careers in public, nonprofit, private, and educational sector positions as advanced policy analysts, researchers, administrators, and academics. The program draws from a wide range of Social Science disciplines including Anthropology, City and Regional Planning, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Political Science, Public and Nonprofit Administration, Social Work, and Sociology.

This handbook describes the program requirements, policies, and procedures of the PhD in Urban Affairs program. The document is updated regularly to reflect changes to program policies and procedures. Hyperlinks to other resources are used throughout this document. If you find broken links, please notify the PhD program Director or a relevant Administrative Associate.

The policies and procedures contained in the handbook supplement those of the Graduate School as published in the Graduate Catalog (https://catalog.memphis.edu).

The handbook is intended as a guide to help students move through program benchmarks and toward degree completion as efficiently and effectively as possible. In parts of the handbook, the language is addressed specifically to the student; however, the handbook also serves as a valuable resource for faculty affiliated with the program to ensure that processes regarding advising, comprehensive exams, and dissertations are consistent.

Chapter 2, “Structure and Leadership,” describes the context of the Urban Affairs PhD program within the University and explains the roles of various institutional organizations and individuals associated with the program. Chapter 3, “PhD Program Requirements,” provides a basic summary of the program’s curricular elements and student obligations for degree completion. Chapter 4, “Program Dynamics and Benchmarks,” describes how students will move through the program to accomplish the requirements laid out in Chapter 3. Chapter 5, “Professional Development and Student Resources,” describes a variety of formal and informal extracurricular opportunities for professional development training.
2. Structure and Leadership

The PhD in Urban Affairs is an interdisciplinary program that connects faculty from multiple departments. As such, it does not have a single departmental home, but is coordinated by a PhD Program Director within the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP). The purpose of this chapter is to provide a “who’s who” in the Urban Affairs PhD program.

PhD Program Leadership

Dr. Davia Downey
Director, PhD Program in Urban Affairs

The PhD Program Director serves as the primary administrative leader of the Urban Affairs PhD program. The Director is responsible for admissions review, coordinating affiliated faculty and advisors, curricular development, and review, representing the program within and outside of the University, and supporting and developing community partnerships.

School or Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP)

The School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP) is an innovative, national leader for building academic and community collaborations that address urban challenges. The mission of the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy is to assist in identifying and implementing policies and programs that enhance quality of life, well-being and prosperity in metropolitan settings. As a hub for collaboration, SUAPP creates a diverse range of resources and disciplinary perspectives necessary for effective comprehensive metropolitan action.

For information about SUAPP’s academic units, degree programs, research centers, community connections, and faculty, visit: https://www.memphis.edu/suapp/

SUAPP provides infrastructure and administrative support to the PhD Program Director. The School is led by a SUAPP Director and an Associate Director. SUAPP currently has four full-time support staff members and a Business Officer who oversees budgeting and processes grants and contracts. In addition, SUAPP hosts a Pre-Award Officer, who assists faculty teams in identifying and pursuing external funding opportunities. Information about current SUAPP leadership and staff is available here: https://www.memphis.edu/suapp/people/index.php

Faculty

The PhD in Urban Affairs is supported by nationally-recognized faculty who are actively engaged with students and deeply committed to public service and urban affairs scholarship. They bring real-world experience into the classroom and offer connections to experiential learning locally and globally. Faculty and research centers associated with the following academic disciplines contribute to the core of the program: Anthropology, City and Regional Planning, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Political Science, Public and Nonprofit Administration, Social Work, and Sociology. A complete list of affiliated faculty members can be found on the program website.
Urban Affairs PhD Committee

The PhD Committee, chaired by the Program Director, serves as the primary consultative body for the program. The interdisciplinary Committee includes faculty representation from all affiliated departments. The PhD Committee may act as a due process body to hear and rule on matters involving any exception to policy, or misconduct within the graduate program.

Faculty Advisors and Committees

Urban Affairs PhD students are supported throughout the program by advisors and committees who provide guidance on course selection, comprehensive exams, and dissertation development. More details are provided in the following chapters; especially Chapter 4, “Program Dynamics and Benchmarks.”

Other Administrative Structures

All graduate programs and graduate students are subject to the standards and regulations of the University’s Graduate School. Students and their advisors will interact with the Graduate School Dean and the Graduation Analyst for various approvals as described in Chapter 4, “Program Dynamics and Benchmarks.”

SUAPP, the PhD in Urban Affairs, and affiliated faculty are part of the College of Arts and Sciences. Any changes to the program curriculum must be approved by the College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Council and the University Council for Graduate Studies.
3. PhD Program Requirements and Regulations

The chapter provides a basic summary of curricular elements, obligations required to complete the degree program, and program regulations. The requirements and procedures described here constitute a supplement to the University of Memphis Graduate Catalog. When departmental minimum requirements are more stringent than those stated in the Graduate Catalog, the departmental requirements take precedence. Students should carefully review the “Minimum Degree Requirements” section of the graduate catalog (https://catalog.memphis.edu) for important University policies regarding:

- Credit hour requirements for Doctoral Degrees
- Time limitation
- Residency requirement
- Admission to candidacy
- Continuous enrollment
- Graduation

Curriculum Requirements

The Urban Affairs PhD curriculum requires students who enter with a master's degree to earn a minimum of **48 credit hours**. To meet University requirements for earning a PhD, all students will need to have at least **72 credit hours** of post-baccalaureate course work.

The 48-credit hour curriculum is broken down as follows:

12 credits of Core Courses
- UAPP 8010 Exploration of Urban Research Theories
- UAPP 8011 Scope and Methods in Urban Affairs Research
- UAPP 8012 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving I
- UAPP 8013 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving II

6 credits of Advanced Methods (Quantitative and/or Qualitative) courses
- Chosen in consultation with advisor
- Courses that qualify as “advanced” methods might require a prerequisite, which would not count toward the PhD

18 credits of Focus Area courses
- Chosen in consultation with advisor
- 6 or more of these credits must come from a discipline outside that of the student’s master’s degree field to ensure interdisciplinarity

12 credits of dissertation (UAPP 9000)

The core courses are intended to operationalize the program’s mission and prepare students to focus on urban problem solving through interdisciplinary, collaborative engaged scholarship. The courses will introduce students to interdisciplinary perspectives, provide theoretical grounding in the scholarship of engagement, offer training in how to conduct community-engaged research, and establish partnerships between PhD students and community partners.
Descriptions of the core courses and a list of pre-approved advanced quantitative and/or qualitative methods courses is available here:  
https://www.memphis.edu/suapp/areas/academic_requirements.pdf

It is likely that some students will enroll in more than 48 credit hours of coursework while pursuing the PhD in Urban Affairs. Chapter 4 of the Handbook, “Program Dynamic and Benchmarks” provides additional insights into navigating the curriculum and preparing for a successful comprehensive exam and dissertation. Chapter 4 also describes the preferred sequencing of courses.

Coursework Regulations

Directed Research courses that are designed to support independent study of specific research topics can be used to meet Focus Area course requirement. Students can also use Directed Research credits as preparation time for Comprehensive Exams, but no more than 3 such credits will count toward the Focus Area course requirement.

No more than 6 hours of 6000-level courses may be applied to the Urban Affairs PhD degree.

Students should also review the “Minimum Degree Requirements” section of the graduate catalog for important University policies regarding to credit hour requirements for Doctoral Degree.

Comprehensive Exam

Students must pass a comprehensive exam prior to enrolling in dissertation credit hours. The exam should be taken when a student in good standing has completed all required coursework for the degree or is enrolled in the last semester of coursework. The structure and composition of the exam and the role of the exam committee are described in the Chapter 4, “Program Dynamic and Benchmarks.”

Dissertation Credit Hours

The PhD in Urban Affairs requires the completion of 12 hours of Dissertation credit. After the completion of the dissertation, the candidate will defend the dissertation in a presentation that includes a final oral examination dealing with the dissertation and its relation to the candidate’s area of research.

Transferring Credits Earned Prior to Admission to the Urban Affairs PhD Program

Graduate credits earned prior to admission to the Urban Affairs PhD program will not automatically transfer. Students can complete a petition process to have a maximum of 12 such credits applied to the PhD in Urban Affairs degree. Only courses that relate to the purpose and curriculum of the Urban Affairs PhD program will be considered. Credit can only be granted for courses taken with the time limitations set in the Graduate Catalog (10 years). Evaluation of transfer credits is subject to all other University regulations described in the Graduate Catalog.

Transferred credits can be counted toward "Focus Area" or "Advanced Methods" requirements in the Urban Affairs curriculum.

Categories of eligible transfer coursework:
- Relevant graduate classes taken at the UofM as a non-degree seeking student
• Relevant graduate courses taken while pursuing a different PhD degree (at the UofM or another institution)
• Relevant graduate courses taken after the completion of a master’s degree
• Relevant 8000-level courses taken during completion of a master’s degree

The petition for transfer credits must be complete after admission to the Urban Affairs PhD program and before the end of the second semester of enrollment.

See Appendix A for instructions on how to petition to transfer credits earned prior to admission to the Urban Affairs PhD program.
4. Program Dynamics and Benchmarks

This chapter describes how the program works, the steps students will follow in moving through the program, and benchmarks that will be reached along the way. Two important appendices provide “at a glance” summaries:

- Appendix B includes sample degree paths and timelines
- Appendix C offers a summary of the program benchmarks described in this chapter.

Advising and Mentorship

The Program Director will serve as an *interim* Faculty Advisor for entering students. After the first semester, and no later than the completion of 18 credit hours, you will choose a Faculty Advisor whose expertise is relevant to your course of study.

The Faculty Advisor plays multiple roles, including assisting you with registration, helping you develop a course path that supports your research interests and meets the degree requirements, connecting you with other faculty mentors, and reviewing your progress. Your Faculty Advisor will serve as the Chair of your Comprehensive Exam Committee and will likely participate in or lead your Dissertation Committee.

You will be required to meet with your Faculty Advisor prior to registering for classes each semester. Your Faculty Advisor will help you identify relevant courses for the Advanced Methods and Focus Area course requirements.

Cohorts and Coursework Sequencing

While the Urban Affairs PhD program allows flexibility course of study, you will be taking a common set of four core courses with the group of students that enter the program with you (i.e., your “cohort”). The cohort approach to education provides structure and creates an environment in which students can support, motivate, and learn from one another. Proper sequencing is important in supporting the cohort model.

All students, regardless of full-time or part-time status, should enroll in **UAPP 8010 Explorations of Urban Research Theory** and **UAPP 8011 Scope and Methods in Urban Affairs Research** in the first year of study.

Full-time students should enroll in the two-course *Collaborative Urban Problem-Solving* sequence, **UAPP 8012** and **UAPP 8013**, in the second year of study.

Part-time students are strongly encouraged to enroll in the two-course Collaborative Urban Problem-Solving sequence in the second year of study to remain with their entering cohort. However, keep in mind that **UAPP 8012** and **8013** are linked, therefore part-time students should only enroll when they are able to take these two courses in consecutive Fall and Spring semesters.
Courses to fulfill the **Advanced Methods** requirement (6 credits) and the **Focus Area** requirement (18 credits) can be taken at any time; however, students are encouraged to take their advanced methods courses after completing UAPP 8010 and UAPP 8011.

**Advanced Methods and Focus Area Courses**

Your Faculty Advisor will help you identify relevant courses for the Advanced Methods and Focus Area course requirements.

A list of pre-approved **Advanced Methods** courses is available here: [https://www.memphis.edu/suapp/areas/academic_requirements.pdf](https://www.memphis.edu/suapp/areas/academic_requirements.pdf)

Other Advanced Methods courses may be used at the direction of the Faculty Advisor.

The **Focus Area** requirement should be met by content-area courses that contribute to development of the comprehensive exam and dissertation. Courses that focus on professional development (e.g., writing or grantsmanship), while useful and encouraged, will not typically count toward the Focus Area requirement. To ensure interdisciplinarity, 6 or more of these credits must come from a discipline outside that of the student’s master’s degree field.

**Directed Research Courses**

Directed Research courses that are designed to support independent study of specific research topics can be used to meet Focus Area course requirements. Students can also use Directed Research credits as preparation time for Comprehensive Exams, but no more than 3 such credits will count toward the Focus Area course requirement.

**Expected Time to Completion**

Because of the flexibility of the Urban Affairs PhD program and the independent nature of doctoral studies, no two students will follow the same path to degree completion. If enrolled full-time, it is possible to complete the 48-hour degree program in three years. However, it is more likely to take at least four years for a full-time student to complete coursework, pass the comprehensive exam, and successfully write and defend the dissertation. Bear in mind that many factors can increase or decrease the time to degree completion. Review Appendix B for some example degree paths with various timelines.

**Comprehensive Exam Committee and Procedures**

Students must pass a Comprehensive Exam before being considered “late-stage” doctoral students and proceeding to the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation phase. The Comprehensive Exam is taken after completing all required coursework, or during the final semester of coursework. Students will form a Comprehensive Exam Committee consisting of three to five faculty members. The committee should be formed after the student has completed 18 hours of coursework and no later than when the student has completed 27 hours. The committee should consist of faculty members that the student anticipates serving on the Dissertation Committee.

The student will work with the committee members to develop a bibliography and a set of three exam questions. The bibliography and exam questions should be related to the student’s specific research area and dissertation topic and should connect the dissertation topic to the broader context covered in
the student’s coursework. The comprehensive exam demonstrates that the student has gained mastery over substantive bodies of literature appropriate to their research interest and the general topic to be addressed in the dissertation.

The exam will be taken during or after the last semester of coursework. The Comprehensive Exam includes a written three-question exam followed by an oral exam. The oral exam will be taken no more than three weeks following the written exam and will be used to clarify or expand on responses in the written portion. The oral exam is another opportunity to demonstrate the breadth and depth with which the student understands the field in general and the student’s specialty.

The oral exam will not exceed two hours. The time and location for the oral exam will be arranged by the Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee, in consultation with the student and the other members of the committee. It is the student’s responsibility to determine when committee members are available for the examination.

Students can use Directed Research credits as preparation time for Comprehensive Exams, but no more than 3 such credits will count toward the Focus Area course requirement.

Performance must be acceptable to the Comprehensive Exam Committee (not more than one dissenting vote is allowed). The result of the exam (positive or negative) will be communicated to the Graduate School on the Comprehensive Exam Results Form within the same semester the exam was taken or by the specified deadline in the Graduate Catalog.

Students who do not pass may take the exam a second time. A second failure results in termination, which can be appealed. The retention appeals process is formalized and must be followed in all cases. (See the section on Retention Appeals in the Graduate Catalog.)

Students who pass the Comprehensive Exams are considered late-stage doctoral students at the UofM. For late-stage doctoral students, 1 credit hour may be considered full-time enrollment.

Dissertation Proposal and Advancement to Candidacy

After completing the Comprehensive Exam (or earlier) the student will select a dissertation committee of at least four faculty members. This committee will often have the same composition as the Comprehensive Exam Committee. The chair of the Dissertation Committee must hold full graduate faculty status. Only one external graduate faculty member may serve as a voting member of a dissertation committee. A completed Dissertation Committee Appointment Form must be submitted to the Graduate School.

The dissertation is individual research that reflects the student’s ability to delineate, investigate, and analyze an appropriate topic of inquiry in a professional manner. Prior to enrolling in Dissertation credit hours, the student must complete an approved Dissertation Proposal. The dissertation proposal establishes the student’s credibility and demonstrates an appropriate level of knowledge in the area of the dissertation topic and provides a work plan for the dissertation research and analysis. This proposal must describe a clear research question, identify a clear scope, provide a complete background/literature review, and describe an appropriate research design.

The student may enroll in Directed Research credits while developing the proposal.
The student will work with the Dissertation Committee Chair to set a timeline and plan for the completion of the proposal. In most cases, the Chair will review the first draft of the proposal and suggest revisions that might be needed. After revision, the next draft version will be circulated among the other committee members. The student and Chair will schedule committee review meetings as needed. The student may work individually with committee members to obtain feedback and advice. The student must present the Dissertation Proposal for review and approval of the Committee. The time and location for the Dissertation Proposal Defense will be arranged by the Chair of the Committee, in consultation with the student and the other members of the committee. It is the student’s responsibility to determine when committee members are available for the examination. The committee may approve the proposal or request further revision and a subsequent review.

Once the proposal is approved, a Dissertation Proposal Defense Form will be submitted to the Graduate School.

If the research proposal includes any research or scholarly activity involving the use of human subjects, approval must be obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before research begins. The Dissertation Proposal phase is the appropriate time to initiate IRB review. In most cases, an expedited review is appropriate. However, students should plan appropriately as the review process takes several weeks and revisions are often requested before approval is granted. Information about IRB human subject research protocol can be found here.

In addition to the approved Dissertation Proposal Defense Form (described above), the student should also complete a Doctoral Degree Candidacy form.

With the completion of these steps, the student will be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree and allowed to register for dissertation hours.

Dissertation Completion and Defense

The PhD in Urban Affairs requires the completion of 12 hours of Dissertation credit. Doctoral candidates must register for at least 1 hour of dissertation credit each academic semester (fall and spring) until the dissertation is completed. Students must enroll in the summer semester if they plan to complete and defend their dissertation then. See the Graduate Catalog for information on exceptions to the continuous enrollment policy.

After the completion of the dissertation, the candidate will defend the dissertation in a presentation that includes a final oral examination dealing with the dissertation and its relation to the candidate’s area of research. All members of the Dissertation Committee must be present at the Defense. The time and location for the Dissertation Defense will be arranged by the Chair of the Committee, in consultation with the student and the other members of the committee. It is the student’s responsibility to determine when committee members are available for the examination.

The Defense will be open to the public and the candidate must complete the Dissertation Defense Announcement form three weeks prior to the date of defense. The defense presents an opportunity for intellectual exchange among the wider Urban Affairs community, as well as an opportunity to learn about graduate student research. As such, approximately one hour of the defense, to include an oral presentation (not to exceed 30 minutes) and questions from the audience, will be scheduled as a public
The final oral examination will be conducted by the candidate’s advisory committee. The oral examination will also be open to the public; the audience may remain in the room but may not ask questions. An executive session will follow the oral examination, during which time the student’s advisory committee will discuss the presentation and examination performance and a vote on approval of the dissertation defense. The executive session is closed to the public and to the candidate.

By University regulations, a unanimous positive vote is required for a successful dissertation defense. If the student fails the final oral examination, or presents an unacceptable dissertation, the student’s committee will advise the Urban Affairs Program Director whether the student must submit a revised dissertation, or whether the student should be dropped from the Ph.D. program. Unsuccessful students will normally be given a second chance.

After the successful defense, the committee approval form must be submitted to the Graduate School for review by the Graduation Analyst. After the Graduation Analyst has reviewed and approved the dissertation, it will be delivered to the ProQuest electronic dissertation repository.

Students should familiarize themselves with the Graduate School’s Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Guide before starting to write. This guide contains important information about University policies, specific formatting requirements, paperwork requirements, and steps for submitting the final dissertation for repository.

The student must submit a graduation application (“Apply to Graduate”) in the term the dissertation will be completed and submitted to Graduate School for final approval. This application is available in the student’s MyMemphis account under the MyDegree tab. A student must have at least a 3.00 grade point average in all graduate work before applying to graduate.
Annual Progress Review and Basis for Termination

Advisors will review individual student success and movement through the program on an annual basis. The results will be made available to the student in writing. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the student makes adequate progress toward the degree, to document outstanding achievements by the student, and to identify any potential problems for the student related to their performance. The review is meant to be an opportunity for the student and the advisor to discuss the student’s experiences in order to facilitate the successful completion of the degree requirements. For students with Graduate Assistantships, the review provides a basis for the student’s request for reappointment. The annual reviews will also offer the opportunity to collect information on students’ achievements to support assessment of the PhD program. This will include number of grants or fellowships received, reports written, presentations made, publications, etc.

Near the end of spring semester, the PhD Program Director will initiate the Annual Review workflow. Students will first complete a self-assessment, after which they will meet with their Faculty Advisor to review the assessment and overall progress. The Advisor will add written comments and forward the assessment to the Program Director.

The self-assessment should consider:

- progress towards completion of coursework;
- classroom performance and experience;
- preliminary plan for comprehensive exams (for students in coursework phase);
- preliminary plan for dissertation proposal;
- conference and other presentations;
- articles and other publications;

In addition to the self-assessment, the Advisor’s review will consider the pace of the student’s progress toward reaching the program benchmarks described in this chapter and summarized in Appendix C.

Basis for Termination

Students whose cumulative GPA drops below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation. Students who are on academic probation for consecutive semesters may be terminated from the program. Students may also be terminated from the program for a second failure of the comprehensive examination, an unsuccessful defense of a dissertation, or failure to complete the degree within 12 years.

If an annual review indicates that a student is not making satisfactory progress toward program benchmarks and degree completion, the Advisor and PhD Program Director will consult to recommend whether the student’s financial support or academic program, or both, will be terminated.

Any graduate student has the right to appeal retention decisions made by the program. The Graduate Catalog outlines specific steps for the termination process and for student retention appeals in the Academic Regulations section of the catalog.
Academic Misconduct

All graduate students at the University of Memphis are expected to follow the regulations and policies that govern the behavior of students as members of our academic community. The Student Handbook has a list of these policies. Generally, student misconduct as defined by the University of Memphis Code of Student Conduct defines academic misconduct as all acts of cheating, plagiarism, forgery or falsification. See the Graduate Catalog for additional details.

The term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to:
- Using unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes or tests;
- Using sources beyond those authorized by instructors in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out any other assignments;
- Using tests or other academic materials before materials are revealed or distributed by instructors;
- Failing to abide by test taking instructions provided by instructors or proctors of exams
- Influencing, or attempting to influence University employees in order to affect a student’s grade or evaluation;
- Any forgery, alteration, unauthorized possession or misuse of University documents.

The term “plagiarism” includes but is not limited to the use by paraphrase or direct quotation, any published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgement. Plagiarism can also include the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Academic misconduct can also include the furnishing of false information to university officials, faculty members, university offices, and includes the forgery, alteration or misuse of any University documents.

The University of Memphis is committed to providing an equitable environment for all students that is free from discrimination on the basis of sex. In compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, sexual misconduct is strictly prohibited by the University. Sexual misconduct is defined as:
- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Dating violence
- Domestic violence
- Stalking

As such, any reports of sexual misconduct will be investigated by the Office for Institutional Equity. Actions that result in a violation of this policy will be subject to University disciplinary action. Faculty members are also mandatory reporters, thus if they observe suspected harassment they are required to report to the University. Any reports of sexual misconduct if found credible may also subject a student, faculty member, or staff member to criminal and/or civil liability under state law. For more information, please refer to: https://www.memphis.edu/oie/title9/sexualmisconduct.php
5. Professional Development and Student Resources

The program provides students with access to formal and informal professional development training through a variety of extracurricular opportunities.

Writing, Research, and Dissertation Resources

Students needing additional help refining their writing skills will have access to the University’s Center for Writing and Communication.

The University’s McWerter Library and the Center for Writing and Communication offer a two-week Dissertation Writers’ Retreat each winter break.

The Library, with the Graduate School and the Center for Writing and Communication, maintains a Dissertation Writers Resources portal. This thorough set of online resources, which builds on the workshops and materials developed for the retreats, guides students through the dissertation research and writing process. The resource also includes tips on maintaining mental health and advice on navigating the academic and non-academic job markets.

The University’s Division of Research and Innovation (DRI) offers a variety of trainings and networking opportunities as well as access to services in English language editing, scientific editing, and external reviewer of grant proposals.

SUAPP’s Pre-Award Coordinator can provide support for doctoral students pursuing externally funded research endeavors. The Pre-Award Coordinator prepares a quarterly Grants Bulletin and coordinates interdisciplinary research teams to pursue external funding.

Disability Resources for Students

The University has a Disability Resource office and is committed to assisting students with disabilities and is compliant with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act. If you require assistance from this office, please visit: https://www.memphis.edu/drs/

Teaching

The University’s Graduate School offers teacher training workshops for Graduate Assistants who will be instructing courses.

Community Engagement

Students can gain additional exposure to community-engaged research methods or assistance in identifying and cultivating community research partnerships through the University’s Engaged Scholarship Faculty Network, a peer-to-peer mentoring and support network. The University’s Center for Service Learning and Volunteerism provides infrastructure support for engaged learning and research.
Conference and Travel

Advisors and committee members will assist students in identifying appropriate conference presentation opportunities as well local speaking opportunities so that they may gain additional experience and exposure to networking opportunities.

Students can apply for [Graduate Student Association Travel Funding](#) to offset conference costs.

The College of Arts and Sciences also allows students to apply for [CAS Travel Enrichment Funds](#).

General Presentation Skills and Job Preparedness

SUAPP hosts a regular “works-in-progress” discussion series in which faculty members share early-stage research ideas and outcomes, receive feedback, and identify potential collaborators. Urban Affairs PhD students who are in the research phase of their curriculum are invited to participate in the series to receive guidance from a broad audience of faculty members and colleagues.

The program offers a “Practitioners’ Brown Bag Discussion Series” that invites local practitioners in various urban affairs disciplines to share their work, discuss programs and interventions, and express research needs. This allows students additional exposure to translating research for a lay audience.

The PhD Committee offers a brief “Job Talk 101” learning module for dissertation stage students interested in pursuing academic jobs.

University Counseling Center

The [Counseling Center](#) provides supports students’ emotional wellbeing, offering free counseling, wellness, and psychiatric services.

The University of Memphis Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The GSA represents the interests of all graduate student’s campus-wide and is the official liaison for graduate students to communicate as a group with University and Graduate School administrators. The GSA advocates for the support of graduate student research and teaching experiences. All graduate students are automatically members of the GSA.
Appendices

Appendix A. Petition to transfer credits earned prior to admission to the Urban Affairs PhD program

Graduate credits earned prior to admission to the Urban Affairs PhD program will not automatically transfer. Students can complete a petition process to have a maximum of 12 such credits applied to the PhD in Urban Affairs degree and will be subject to review by the program director. Only courses that relate to the purpose and curriculum of the Urban Affairs PhD program will be considered. Credit can only be granted for courses taken with the time limitations set in the Graduate Catalog (10 years). Evaluation of transfer credits is subject to all other University regulations described in the Graduate Catalog.

Transferred credits can be counted toward "Focus Area" or "Advanced Methods" requirements in the Urban Affairs curriculum.

Categories of eligible transfer coursework:

A. Relevant graduate classes taken at the UofM as a non-degree seeking student
B. Relevant graduate courses taken while pursuing a different PhD degree (at the UofM or another institution)
C. Relevant graduate courses taken after the completion of a master’s degree
D. Relevant 8000-level courses taken during completion of a master’s degree

Instructions

The petition for transfer credits must be complete after admission to the Urban Affairs PhD program and before the end of the second semester of enrollment.

Provide the following information for each course you wish to be considered for transfer credit:

Student name
Course Prefix and No.
Course Title
Course Institution
Semester Taken
Grade Earned
Credit Hours

Provide a brief description of how the course relates to the purpose and curriculum of the Urban Affairs PhD program (250 words max).

Indicate which category of eligible transfer coursework the course best fits.

Indicate whether the course should be counted as Focus Area course or an Advanced Methods course.

Attach a copy of the course syllabus.

Submit completed petition to suapp@memphis.edu with the subject line “transfer petition_name.”
Appendix B. Example Degree Paths and Timelines

Because of the flexibility of the Urban Affairs PhD program and the independent nature of doctoral studies, no two students will follow the same path to degree completion. If enrolled full-time, it is possible to complete the 48-hour degree program in three years. However, it is more likely to take at least four years for a full-time student to complete coursework, pass the comprehensive exam, and successfully defend the dissertation. Bear in mind that many factors can increase or decrease the time to degree completion.

It is likely that some students will enroll in more than the required 48 credit hours of coursework while pursuing the PhD in Urban Affairs:

- In some cases, students will be required to complete prerequisite coursework before enrolling in courses that meet the Advanced Methods requirement. These prerequisite courses would not count toward the PhD.
- Students might choose to enroll in more than 6 credits of Advanced Methods courses or more than 18 hours of focus area courses to develop a course profile that serves their interests and suits career objectives.
- Students might enroll in professional development courses that are not applied toward the Focus Area course requirement.
- Students might enroll in multiple sections of Directed Research to prepare for the Comprehensive Exam.

Students might be able shorten their time to degree completion by enrolling in courses during the summer semester or by using the summer to prepare for Comprehensive Exams or develop dissertation proposals, instead of using Fall or Spring Directed Research courses to do so. Some students will be able to transfer in credits, as described in Chapter 3 of the Handbook.

The following figures illustrate some potential degree paths with various timelines.
**Figure 1. Example Full-Time 3-Year Degree Path**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Coursework</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>UAPP 8010 Exploration of Urban Research Theories (3)</td>
<td>UAPP 8011 Scope/Methods in Urban Affairs Research (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Advanced Methods Course (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Benchmarks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choose Faculty Advisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td><strong>Coursework</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UAPP 8012 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving I (3)</td>
<td>UAPP 8012 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving II (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced Methods Course (3)</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Benchmarks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Form Comprehensive Exam Committee</td>
<td>Coursework complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coursework complete</td>
<td>Pass Comprehensive Exam after end of semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td><strong>Late Stage</strong></td>
<td><strong>Coursework</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directed Research to prepare Dissertation Proposal</td>
<td>Dissertation (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Benchmarks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defend Dissertation Proposal</td>
<td>Defend Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apply for Admission to Candidacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 2. Example Full-Time 4-Year Degree Path (More Likely)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>UAPP 8010 Exploration of Urban Research Theories (3)</td>
<td>UAPP 8011 Scope/Methods in Urban Affairs Research (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Prerequisite for Advanced Methods Course (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmarks</strong></td>
<td><em>Choose Faculty Advisor</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>UAPP 8012 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving I (3)</td>
<td>UAPP 8012 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving II (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced Methods Course (3)</td>
<td>Advanced Methods Course (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmarks</strong></td>
<td><em>Form Comprehensive Exam Committee</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Directed Research for Dissertation proposal prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directed Research for Comp Exam prep (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmarks</strong></td>
<td><em>Coursework complete</em></td>
<td><em>Defend Dissertation Proposal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Pass Comprehensive Exam after end of semester</em></td>
<td><em>Apply for Admission to Candidacy</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late Stage</td>
<td>Dissertation (6)</td>
<td>Dissertation (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmarks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Defend Dissertation</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3. Example Part-Time Degree Path

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>UAPP 8010 Exploration of Urban Research Theories (3)</td>
<td>UAPP 8011 Scope/Methods in Urban Affairs Research (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>UAPP 8012 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving I (3)</td>
<td>UAPP 8012 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving II (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced Methods Course (3)</td>
<td>Advanced Methods Course (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Benchmarks**

- Choose Faculty Advisor
- Form Comprehensive Exam Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
<td>Focus Area Course (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Benchmarks**

- Coursework complete

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>Directed Research for Comp Exam prep</td>
<td>Directed Research for Dissertation Proposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Benchmarks**

- Pass Comprehensive Exam after end of semester
- Defend Dissertation Proposal
- Apply for Admission to Candidacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late Stage</td>
<td>Dissertation (6)</td>
<td>Dissertation (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Benchmarks**

- Defend Dissertation
## Appendix C. Program Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Form/Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify a Faculty Advisor</td>
<td>Before enrolling beyond 18 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form Comprehensive Exam Committee</td>
<td>Between completing 18 and 27 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Coursework</td>
<td>36 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive EXAM</td>
<td>During or after the last semester of coursework</td>
<td><a href="#">Comprehensive Exam Result Form</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form Dissertation Committee</td>
<td>After comprehensive exam (or earlier)</td>
<td><a href="#">Dissertation Committee Appointment Form</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete IRB Human Subjects Research Review (if applicable)</td>
<td>With Dissertation Proposal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Doctoral Degree Candidacy Form</td>
<td>With Dissertation Proposal</td>
<td><a href="#">Doctoral Degree Candidacy form</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Dissertation Defense date</td>
<td>After approved proposal</td>
<td><a href="#">Dissertation Defense Announcement form</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply to Graduate</td>
<td>in the term the dissertation will be completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>