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Introduction

The Ph.D. 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 research, evaluation, and policy design skills to address the socioeconomic challenges facing Memphis and other cities. The combination of theory development and application training 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 various 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 Ph.D. 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 Ph.D. Program Director.

The policies and procedures 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 Ph.D. program within the University and explains the roles of various institutional organizations and individuals associated with the program. Chapter 3, “Ph.D. Program Requirements,” summarizes 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 in Chapter 3. Chapter 5, “Professional Development and Student Resources,” describes a variety of formal and informal extracurricular opportunities for professional development training. Chapter 6, “Office Policies,” contains important office and building-related information for students.

Chapter 2: Structure and Leadership

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

Dr. Davia Downey (dcdowney@memphis.edu), Director, Ph.D. Program in Urban Affairs

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

School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP) Leadership

The School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP) is an innovative and national leader in 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 the 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 Ph.D. Program Director. A SUAPP Director and an Associate Director lead the School. SUAPP has four full-time support staff members and a Business Officer who oversees budgeting and processes grants and contracts. In addition, SUAPP has a Pre-Award Officer who assists faculty teams in identifying and pursuing externally funded grant opportunities. Information about current SUAPP leadership and staff is available here: https://www.memphis.edu/suapp/people/index.php

SUAPP Program Leadership

Dr. Katherine Lambert-Pennington (k.lambert-pennington@memphis.edu) Director, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

Dr. Charles Santo (casanto@memphis.edu) 
Assistant Director, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

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Pre-Award Coordinator, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

Vickie Hankins-Peters (vpeters@memphis.edu) 
Business Officer II, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy
Faculty

The Ph.D. 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 program's core: Anthropology, City and Regional Planning, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Political Science, Public and Nonprofit Administration, Social Work, and Sociology.

Urban Affairs Ph.D. Committee

The Ph.D. 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 Ph.D. 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 Ph.D. students are supported throughout the program by advisors and committees who guide course selection, comprehensive exams, and dissertation development. More details are provided in the following chapters, especially Chapter 4, “Program Dynamics and Benchmarks.” Please note that Clinical Assistants or Clinical Associate Professors can serve as academic advisors; however, only tenure-track faculty can chair comprehensive exam or dissertation committees. See the University of Memphis Graduate Faculty Status Guidelines for more information about faculty status.

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 Ph.D. 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.
Chapter 3: Ph.D. Program Requirements and Regulations

This chapter summarizes curricular elements, obligations required to complete the degree program and program regulations. The requirements and procedures described here supplement 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 Ph.D. 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 Ph.D., all students must have at least **72 credit hours** of post-baccalaureate coursework.

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

**12 credits of Required 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**
Quantitative and qualitative methods courses should be chosen in consultation with an advisor, quantitative methodological courses should provide statistical training beyond ordinary least squares regression or cover qualitative methodologies including, but not limited to, ethnographic field research, content analysis, mixed methods, archival research, or case study research.

**NOTE:** Courses that qualify as “advanced” methods might require a prerequisite, which would not count toward the Ph.D. Students who have not taken a quantitative methods course in their master’s degree program are encouraged to take SUAP 7100/8100 Public Policy Statistics to prepare for courses that cover statistical methods beyond ordinary least squares regression.
However, SUAP 7100 cannot be used for the 6 hours required for a quantitative methods course.

18 credits of Focus Area courses
Chosen in consultation with an advisor. Students should select two theory courses in two different disciplinary areas (Fall 2023 and beyond)

Focus Area Interdisciplinarity Requirement
6 or more credits **must** come from a discipline outside the student’s master’s degree field to ensure interdisciplinarity.

Example: A student with a master's in city and regional planning can take 12 out of 18 hours of focus area coursework within their main subject area; however, this student would also need to take one theory course and one other course in another SUAPP discipline (i.e., Anthropology Theory and Critical Medical Anthropology for example).

**Approved Theory Courses by Discipline: Effective June 1st, 2023**
Effective June 1, 2023, all admitted doctoral students must have two theory courses in the Focus Area. This ensures a theoretical grounding in the student's “home” field and at least one other field in our school. Approved theory courses are listed below, and wherever possible, doctoral students should enroll in the 8000-level of the courses listed:

- ANTH 7200/8200 Roots of Anthropology Theory
- CJUS 7541/8541 Criminological Theory
- PADM 7600/8600 Seminar in Administrative Theory and Ethics
- PLAN 7002/8002 Planning Theory and Perspectives
- POLS 7401/8104 History of Modern Political Thought
- POLS 7100/8100 Scope and Methods in Political Science
- SOCI 7201/8201 Sociology Theory Seminar
- SWRK 8040 Advanced Social Work Theory
- SWRK 7064/8064 Critical Theory and Social Work

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 conducting community-engaged research, and establish partnerships between Ph.D. students and community partners.

Descriptions of the core courses and a list of pre-approved advanced quantitative and/or qualitative methods courses are available here: [https://www.memphis.edu/suapp/areas/academic_requirements.pdf](https://www.memphis.edu/suapp/areas/academic_requirements.pdf). Please note that these courses are subject to change in availability semester-to-semester; students are encouraged to discuss with their advisor courses that make sense for a student’s methodological needs.
NOTE: Some students will likely enroll in more than 48 credit hours of coursework while pursuing a Ph.D. in Urban Affairs. Chapter 4 of the Handbook, “Program Dynamics 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.

Other Coursework Regulations
Directed Research courses designed to support the independent study of specific research topics can be used to meet Focus Area course requirements. Students can also use Directed Research (UAPP 8200) credits as preparation time for Comprehensive Exams or Dissertation Proposal preparation. Still, no more than three 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 Ph.D. degree.

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

Comprehensive Exams
Students must pass a comprehensive exam before 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 inclusive of the methods coursework. Students can, however, initiate the comprehensive exam process after they have taken 27 hours in the doctoral program if they wish. The exam’s structure and composition and the exam committee’s role are described in Chapter 4, “Program Dynamic and Benchmarks.” Comprehensive exams are scheduled in Fall and Spring semesters only.

NOTE: Six to eight weeks after completing the oral and written exams, students should plan to finalize their dissertation prospectus, set their dissertation committee, and apply for any Human Subjects review needed for their dissertation project.

Dissertation Credit Hours
The Ph.D. in Urban Affairs requires the completion of 12 hours of Dissertation credit. After completing 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 Before Admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. Program

Graduate credits earned before admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program will not automatically transfer. Students can complete a petition process to have a maximum of 12 such credits applied to the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs degree. Only courses related to the purpose and curriculum of the Urban Affairs Ph.D. 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 were taken while pursuing a different Ph.D. degree (at the UofM or another institution) that are related to the urban affairs curriculum.
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 completed 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 before admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program.

Chapter 4: Program Dynamics and Benchmarks

This chapter describes how the program works, the steps students will follow in moving through the program, and the 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 completing 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 before registering for classes each semester. Your advisor will help you identify relevant courses for the Advanced Methods and Focus Area course requirements. Please see the University of Memphis Graduate Faculty Status Guidelines for information on affiliate or clinical professors’ ability to serve as advisors or as chairs of dissertation and comprehensive exam committees.

Cohorts and Coursework Sequencing

While the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program allows a flexible course of study, you will be taking a common set of four core courses with the students that enter the program with you (i.e., your “cohort”). The cohort approach to education provides structure and creates an environment where 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, remember that UAPP 8012 and 8013 are linked, so please only enroll when you can 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 and Ph.D. director 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. Please note that these courses may change or may not be offered in subsequent semesters; thus, students need to
take quantitative methods courses that expose students to linear regression techniques. For students taking qualitative methods courses, exposure to methods beyond research design (i.e., fieldwork, archival research, participant observation, focus group management).

Other Advanced Methods courses may be substituted by the Faculty Advisor or Ph.D. program director so long as a substitution form is submitted to the Ph.D. program director.

The **Focus Area** requirement should be met by content-area courses that contribute to developing 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. Students must have at least two theory courses as part of their program of study. To ensure interdisciplinarity, six or more of these credits must come from a discipline outside the student’s master’s degree field.

**Directed Research and Readings Courses**

Directed Research courses designed to support the independent study of specific research topics can be used to meet Focus Area course requirements.

Students can also use Directed Research or Directed Readings credits as preparation time for Comprehensive Exams. Still, no more than three such credits will count toward the Focus Area course requirement. Students should register for UAPP 8200 for at least one credit hour in the semester they intend to take comprehensive exams if all courses in their program of study are complete.

Students doing directed reading courses in SUAPP subject areas for the Focus Area requirement should register under that department’s Directed Research, Directed Study, or Independent Readings prefix (i.e., CJUS 8110).

**EXAMPLE:** Suppose a student does not want or need to enroll in UAPP 8200 to prepare for comprehensive exams. In that case, they can take comprehensive exams (as an unenrolled student) and complete a [Graduate Readmission](#) form to re-enroll in the program to begin the dissertation process (i.e., registering for UAPP 9000: Dissertation in the following semester).

Students should select the “former student seeking readmission” option on this form. The form should be **submitted after a passing grade on the comprehensive exams has been issued.**

The relevant part of university policies regarding enrollment can be found here: The relevant part of the Graduate Catalog can be found here: [https://catalog.memphis.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1557#minimum-requirements-for-doctoral-degrees](https://catalog.memphis.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1557#minimum-requirements-for-doctoral-degrees)
Expected Time to Completion

Because of the flexibility of the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program and the independent nature of doctoral studies, no two students will follow the same path to degree completion. If enrolled full-time, completing the 48-hour degree program in four years is possible. 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. Remember 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.

Students will form a Comprehensive Exam Committee of three to five faculty members, of which only one can come from outside programs affiliated with SUAPP. The committee should be formed after the student has completed the core of the urban affairs doctoral program and at least three Focus Area courses or when the student has completed at least 27 hours of coursework.

The committee should consist of faculty members the student anticipates serving on the Dissertation Committee. The Ph.D. director must be notified when students are ready to take their comprehensive exams.

Comprehensive exams will be scheduled in Fall or Spring semesters only.

Students should indicate their intent to sit for comprehensive exams by supplying the ComprehensiveExam Committee Declaration Form to the program director.

The student will work with the committee members to develop an annotated bibliography of works that best represent their knowledge of their Focus Area. The annotated bibliography should be comprehensive (i.e., a minimum of 75 primary sources) The Comprehensive Exam Committee will review this information and develop a set of three to five exam questions for each student.

Students should furnish an annotated bibliography to the committee for review, and the committee should ensure that exam questions are related to the student’s specific research area and dissertation topic. The committee, wherever possible, should connect the dissertation topic to the broader context of 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 Comprehensive Exam is a two-part process including a written three-to-five question exam followed by an oral exam. The oral exam will be taken no more than two 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 program director will issue comprehensive exams on Mondays to each student. The exam will be timed, and students will have up to 72 hours to complete the exam. Fall (written and oral) exams should be scheduled for completion by October 30th (FALL) and March 30th (SPRING) to ensure that both parts of the comprehensive exams are completed in time to submit forms to the Graduate School.

The written portion of the exam will be organized as follows:

Students will be required to answer at least three questions on the exam regardless of the number of members on the exam committee. Word limits for answers will be set by each student's exam committee but should be a minimum of 10 pages double-spaced.

Submissions of comprehensive exams that answer less than the required minimum will result in failure.

Students can use notes, but all sources (journals, books, reports, policy documents, etc.) must be cited and included in a bibliography.

Students must use a 12-point font, and answers should be double-spaced.

Students should transmit their finished exams to the Ph.D. director, and the document should be saved as a pdf to ensure no tampering.

Written exams will be checked for plagiarism, and any incidence of cheating will result in an automatic failure.

The oral examination should be scheduled no more than two weeks after the written exam is received by the committee. The comprehensive exam committee will provide comments to students before the oral examination for preparation.

If a student does not pass their comprehensive exam, a second exam must be scheduled in the following Fall or Spring semester. Students can only register for Directed Readings until exams are passed.
Students (or comprehensive committee chairs) are responsible for collecting needed signatures and submitting their Comprehensive Exam Results Form to the Graduate School and the program director after completing their exam’s written and oral portions.

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 responsibility of the student to determine when committee members are available for the examination.

Performance must be acceptable to the Comprehensive Exam Committee (a maximum of one dissenting vote is allowed). The results 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 listed on the Graduate School’s website.

Students who do not pass may take the exam a second time. Students can only register for Directed Readings until exams are passed (if applicable).

A second failure results in termination from the program, 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 or find the appeals form on the Center for Academic Retention and Enrichment Services’ website.)

Students who pass the Comprehensive Exams are considered late-stage doctoral students at the UofM. For late-stage doctoral students, one credit hour is considered full-time enrollment per university policy.

Six to eight weeks after the Comprehensive Exam has been passed, students should expect to finalize their dissertation committee, complete their dissertation prospectus, and submit any documents needed for Human Subjects work necessary for their dissertation project. Students should work with their dissertation committee chair to schedule a proposal defense.

Students will not be able to register for Dissertation Credits until both the comprehensive exam has been passed and the dissertation proposal defense has been completed. Additionally, all forms: Comprehensive Exam Results, Dissertation Committee Appointment Form, and Dissertation Proposal Defense Form should be submitted to the graduate school before enrolling in any dissertation credits.

Dissertation Proposal and Advancement to Candidacy

After completing the Comprehensive Exam, 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. Before enrolling in Dissertation credit hours, the student must complete an approved Dissertation Proposal. The dissertation proposal establishes the student’s credibility, demonstrates an appropriate level of knowledge of the dissertation topic, and provides a work plan for the dissertation research and analysis. This proposal must describe a clear research question(s), 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 by the Committee. The Chair of the Committee, in consultation with the student and the other committee members, will arrange the time and location for the Dissertation Proposal Defense. 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.

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

After completing 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 Ph.D. in Urban Affairs requires completing 12 hours of Dissertation credits. 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 completing 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 committee members. 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 before 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, including an oral presentation (not to exceed 30 minutes) and questions from the audience, will be scheduled as a public seminar. 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. The 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.

University regulations require a unanimous positive vote 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 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 writing. This guide contains important information about University policies, specific formatting requirements, paperwork requirements, and steps for submitting the final dissertation to the repository.

The student must submit a graduation application (“Apply to Graduate”) in the term the dissertation will be completed and submitted to the 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 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 review will also offer the opportunity to collect information on students’ achievements to support the assessment of the Ph.D. program. This will include the number of grants or fellowships received, reports written, presentations made, publications, etc.

Near the end of the spring semester, the Ph.D. program director will initiate the Annual Review workflow. Students will first complete a self-assessment and 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 the 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. Advisors are responsible for providing the signed self-assessment form along with any additional comments on student progress to the director of the Ph.D. program by the end of the Spring Semester.
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.

Suppose an annual review indicates that a student is not progressing satisfactorily toward program benchmarks and degree completion. In that case, the Advisor and Ph.D. 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 students’ behavior 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 Office of Student Accountability 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 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 acknowledgment.

Plagiarism can also include the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials. Self-plagiarism, or knowingly presenting previously written work for multiple assignments or classes unless
explicitly authorized by the instructor, also counts as plagiarism. See the Academic Misconduct Section of the Office of Student Accountability for more information.

Academic misconduct can also include furnishing false information to university officials, faculty members, and 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 based on 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. These actions may also subject a student, faculty member, or staff member to criminal or civil liability under state law. For more information, please refer to: https://www.memphis.edu/oie/title9/sexualmisconduct.php

Chapter 5: Professional Development and Student Resources

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 Ph.D. students 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. It is expected that students who will be presenting at academic conferences to present their work at the Works in Progress series.

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 Ph.D. program also offers a brief “Job Talk 101” learning module for dissertation-stage students interested in pursuing academic jobs.
Student Resources and Professional Development

Student Identification
All students must obtain a [University Identification Card](#) to use campus services. To obtain a university id, visit 115 Wilder Tower: bring official photo identification (e.g., a driver’s license or passport).

Email/Internet
All students should establish and use university email accounts when communicating with professors and staff. Visit [https://iam.memphis.edu/idmaint.jsf](https://iam.memphis.edu/idmaint.jsf) to get your unique UM email address.

University Counseling Center
The [Counseling Center](#) supports students’ emotional well-being, offering free counseling, wellness, and psychiatric services.

University Student Health Center
The Student Health Center offers immunizations, health checks, and assistance with short-term, acute illnesses and injuries. Visit the [Student Health Center](#) website for a description of services.

The University of Memphis Graduate Student Association (GSA)
The GSA represents the interests of all graduate students campus-wide. It is the official liaison for graduate students to communicate 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.

*The program provides students access to formal and informal professional development training through various 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 support doctoral students pursuing externally funded research endeavors. The Pre-Award Coordinator prepares a quarterly Grants Bulletin and coordinates interdisciplinary research teams to seek external funding.

Graduate Teaching

The University’s Graduate School offers teacher training workshops for Graduate Assistants who will be instructing undergraduate courses. Doctoral students wishing to teach courses within SUAPP must have a master’s in the teaching discipline or have acquired 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline.

(Example: A student with a master’s degree in Sociology can only teach courses in Sociology unless or until they have acquired 18 hours in a related SUAPP discipline in the program.)

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) should expect direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, seek regular in-service training, and plan for periodic evaluations of their teaching.

Students can only teach after their first year of doctoral studies and can only teach if the chair of the respective department has approved the student as the instructor of record.

More information on the qualifications to teach as Graduate Teaching Assistants can be found here.

Students who wish to teach in one of the constituent units must notify the Ph.D. Director, the Dean/Director of the program they wish to teach, and have an agreement for compensation before being assigned to a graduate or undergraduate course. Again, it should be stressed that for a student seeking to teach for a constituent unit in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, they must have a master’s degree or have amassed 18 graduate credit hours in the subject they wish to teach.

All GTA’s should expect to submit their academic transcripts to Faculty Services before being assigned to teach a course.
Community Engagement Opportunities

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.

Conferences and Travel

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

Students can and should apply for Graduate Student Association Travel Funding to offset conference costs. The College of Arts and Sciences also has travel funds and students are encouraged to apply. See the CAS Travel Enrichment Funds website for deadlines.

Chapter 6: Office Policies

Main Office

The SUAPP and Ph.D. in Urban Affairs Office are located on the 2nd floor of Browning Hall (200 Browning Hall). Please restrict visits to business matters (mail, picking up forms, reserving rooms/equipment, meeting with faculty) and treat staff courteously and respectfully. The office is open during normal business hours (8:30-4:30 pm M-F). You can reach the office at 901-678-4090.

Photocopies

While the school has a copier located in room 213 Browning, only authorized use is allowed, and it requires a personal access code. Student use is authorized for Graduate or Teaching Assistants preparing materials for class or research assignments; students with a code number assigned to his/her grant; one-time requests approved by the program director. No personal use of the copier is permitted. Students are encouraged to print at home or use the McWerter Library using their printing allowance for printing needs.

Mail

Mail is delivered daily to the SUAPP offices. Graduate students share a mailbox in the copier room on the second floor. Students can use the main office address for any first-class mail. Use of department stationary or university bulk stamping is prohibited.
Fax
If students need to receive a fax, they can route to the 2nd floor copier using the following number: 901-678-2981.

Office Space
Students have access to office space to study on the first floor of Browning Hall (room 103). Please respect others who share this room by keeping areas tidy and professional in appearance. There is a community kitchen and a bathroom in this space for convenience. SUAPP is not liable for personal property brought to campus and stored in offices or classroom spaces. The building is locked overnight and unavailable for weekend use without prior authorization. If you need to use the office after hours, please contact Campus Security for assistance. If you are GA and need after-hours access, please contact Vickie Hankins Peters to obtain a key. Graduate assistants and fellows will be assigned office spaces at the start of their contracts.

Appendices

Appendix A. Petition to transfer credits earned before admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program.

Graduate credits earned before admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program will not automatically transfer. Students can complete a petition process to have a maximum of 12 such credits applied to the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs degree. Only courses that relate to the purpose and curriculum of the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program will 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, but no substitutions for the core are allowable.

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 Ph.D. degree (at the UofM or another institution) related to the urban affairs curriculum.
- Relevant graduate courses taken after the completion of a master’s degree.
- Relevant 8000-level courses taken during the completion of a master’s degree.

Instructions: The petition for transfer credits must be complete after admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program and before the end of the second semester of enrollment. Please use the Substitution Form located on the program’s website.
Appendix B. Example Degree Paths and Timelines

Because of the flexibility of the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program and the independent nature of doctoral studies, no two students will follow the same path to degree completion. If enrolled full-time, completing the 48-hour degree program in three years is possible. 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. Remember that many factors can increase or decrease the time to degree completion.

Some students will likely enroll in more than the required 48 credit hours of coursework while pursuing the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs:

In some cases, students must complete prerequisite coursework before enrolling in courses that meet the Advanced Methods requirement. These prerequisite courses would not count toward the Ph.D.

Students might enroll in more than six credits of Advanced Methods courses or more than 18 hours of focus area courses to develop a course profile that suits their interests and career objectives.

Students might enroll in professional development courses 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 to 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 can transfer in credits, as Chapter 3 of the Handbook describes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full-Time</th>
<th>Part-Time*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year Fall: UAPP 8010, One Theory, One Focus Area</td>
<td>First Year Fall: UAPP 8010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Year Spring: UAPP 8011, One Theory, One Focus Area</td>
<td>First Year Spring: UAPP 8011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Year Fall: UAPP 8012, Two Focus Area</td>
<td>Second Year Fall: UAPP 8012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Year Spring: UAPP 8013, Two Methods Courses</td>
<td>Second Year Spring: UAPP 8013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Year Fall: Directed Readings and Comprehensive Exams</td>
<td>Third Year Fall: One Theory Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Year Spring: Dissertation Credits</td>
<td>Third Year Spring: One Theory Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Year Fall: Focus Area Course</td>
<td>Fourth Year Spring: Focus Area Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Year Fall: Focus Area Course</td>
<td>Fifth Year Spring: Focus Area Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Year Fall: Focus Area Course</td>
<td>Sixth Year Spring: Methods Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Year Fall: Methods Course</td>
<td>Seventh Year Spring: Comprehensive Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth Year Spring: and Beyond: Dissertation Credits</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Note: Part-time students may take two courses a semester if they choose accelerating their path to comprehensive exams and dissertation.

### Appendix C. Program Forms and Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify Faculty Advisor</td>
<td>Before enrolling beyond 18 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form Comprehensive Exam Committee</strong></td>
<td>Between completing 27 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Coursework</td>
<td>36-39 credit hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Comprehensive Exams</td>
<td>During last semester of coursework</td>
<td>Comprehensive Exam Committee Declaration Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass Comprehensive Exams</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive Exam Result Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form Dissertation Committee</td>
<td>After passing comprehensive exams</td>
<td>Dissertation Committee Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete IRB Human Subjects Review (if needed)</td>
<td>Before conducting dissertation research</td>
<td>UM IRB Human Subjects Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Doctoral Candidacy Form</td>
<td>With Dissertation Proposal</td>
<td>Doctoral Candidacy Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Dissertation Defense Date</td>
<td>After approved proposal</td>
<td>Dissertation Announcement Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apply for Graduation</strong></td>
<td>During term of dissertation defense.</td>
<td><strong>Apply for Graduation</strong></td>
</tr>
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Graduate Annual Self-Assessment Form

Name________________________  UMID________________________
Semester and Year_________________

Instructions: This annual evaluation aims to provide some time for self-reflection and promote a dialogue with your advisor concerning your strengths and weaknesses. After completing this questionnaire, you should provide a copy to your advisor and schedule a meeting to discuss your answers and overall progress in the program. All graduate students should fill out this form as honestly as possible. You are welcome to skip any questions you feel are inappropriate or intrusive. After the meeting, a signed copy of this questionnaire should be provided to the director of the Ph.D. program by the student's advisor. Rate yourself in the following categories on a scale of 1 to 5. Include any comments you feel are important.

1 = poor  2 = fair  3 = average  4 = good  5 = outstanding (PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER)

Methodological Skills  1 2 3 4 5
(Comprehension of descriptive statistics, understanding of univariate and bivariate statistics, understanding of linear regression, survey development, data cleaning, hypothesis testing, etc.)

Presentation Skills  1 2 3 4 5
(Ability to effectively communicate your research results in an oral presentation, ability to communicate your research results in writing effectively)

Depth of Technical Knowledge  1 2 3 4 5
(Knowledge of your specific project and area, familiarity with relevant literature)

Breadth of Technical Knowledge  1 2 3 4 5
(Knowledge of areas outside your project, familiarity with general literature)

Creativity  1 2 3 4 5
(Developing new ways to solve specific problems in the lab, developing new project ideas, combining your chemistry with other group members in a collaborative way, pushing science forward)

Work Ethic  1 2 3 4 5
(Hours spent working on projects, hours thinking about data or the academic literature, priority of graduate school)

Efficiency/Productivity  1 2 3 4 5
(Efficient use of time, ability to multi-task, time management)
Independence 1 2 3 4 5
(Thinking critically for yourself and solving problems on your own; knowing when to ask for help)

Leadership 1 2 3 4 5
(Helping other group members; taking charge of things that need to be done without being asked; setting a good example for undergraduate researchers)

Teamwork 1 2 3 4 5
(Good group citizen, helping and supporting others)

Record Keeping 1 2 3 4 5
(Keeping good records, handling course workload, use of citation program, service of Google Drive/Dropbox/OneDrive for data and articles, etc.)

Describe how you have produced complete, accurate records of your research activities during the previous year or how you have worked to improve your record-keeping during the year.

Describe one or more specific instances during the previous year in which you worked to help improve the environment in the cohort by helping someone else with their research or classwork, assisting with uncovering important literature, preparing a presentation, etc.

Describe one or more ways in which you took charge in the group, without being asked to do so, to accomplish a task that needed to be done, or to set a good example for other researchers.

Describe one or more specific instances in a course during the previous year in which you independently solved a research-related challenge or problem.

What are your personal strengths?
1.
2.
3.
4.

What are your personal weaknesses?
1.
2.
3.
4.

Specific target areas for improvement in the next 12 months:

Goals for the next 12 months (specific project-based and personal development goals). If you plan to graduate this year—state your graduation plan:

What are your long-term career goals?

Are there any broader issues you wish to discuss?

The graduate student and the major advisor reviewed and discussed the above evaluation.

Advisor Name (Print, Sign, and Date)  

Student Name (Print, Sign, and Date)
SUAPP Graduate Assistant and Fellow Evaluation Form

Instructions: Please submit a copy to Dr. Davia Downey (dcdowntey@memphis.edu) by the end of the Spring semester (or at the end of the GA’s contract).

Graduate Assistant or Fellow Evaluation

Graduate Assistant Name_________________  Semester/Year_________________
Supervisor Name ______________________  Email ________________________

Number of Hours (per week) assigned ______

Nature of Responsibilities and General Comments on Performance: