



HANDBOOK FOR THE PH.D. IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

**School of Public Affairs
University of Colorado at Denver
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs**

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I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This Handbook will facilitate a student's progress toward the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Public Affairs*. The School of Public Affairs (SPA) and the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Science Center have procedures, rules and regulations for the Ph.D. that must be followed to obtain the degree. This Handbook explains those procedures, rules and regulations. If there are any important procedures that are not directly discussed in this handbook that you need to know about, consult with the Director of Doctoral Programs, the Student Services Team, or your faculty advisor.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The University of Colorado's Graduate School of Public Affairs offers and administers the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Public Affairs. The content of the courses, administration of doctoral exams, and the dissertation process and defense are the responsibility of the SPA faculty and the Ph.D. Committee, headed by the Director of the Doctoral Program. SPA faculty have a broad base of practical experience, as well as academic and research skills and accomplishments. SPA has an interdisciplinary faculty with a broad range of specializations within the field of public affairs. SPA is also affiliated with various research centers for public management and public policy to enhance the applied and basic research capabilities of the school.

THE DOCTORATE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The doctoral program is designed to address the strong demand for the services of people who are skilled in the theory, concepts, and research areas of public administration, public policy, and public management. It is a research-oriented degree. The program develops the conceptual, research, and analytic skills and knowledge of its students so that they will be able to advance the study and practice of public affairs in their subsequent careers. Graduates are able to generate and execute state of the art research on complex public and non-profit systems.

DOCTORAL STUDENTS

The Ph.D. prepares professionals for positions in academia, public management, research activities, and public policy roles. Many students are already practitioners working in government, private sector organizations concerned with government, and non-profit organizations; others are professionals, such as attorneys, health workers, court administrators, and others who desire additional training that will enable them to participate more effectively in the process of administration, management, and policymaking. Right now, most students work

* Public Affairs is meant to encompass the general fields of Public Administration, Public Management, Public Policy, and Criminal Justice.

during the day and pursue their doctoral studies on a part-time basis, but we are hoping to provide funding for more students to participate full-time.

RESIDENCY AND TIME REQUIRED FOR Ph.D. DEGREE

Students are required to take a minimum of six credit hours of courses during both the fall and spring semesters. They are also required to establish and maintain residency in the State of Colorado; see the University catalog for specific details. Additional courses are offered during the summer semester. Most courses and seminars are offered during evening hours, or weekends on an intensive basis. Students starting the doctoral program with a master's degree in public administration, public management, public policy, or cognate fields can expect to take at least three years to complete all of the requirements for the Ph.D. Any student entering the program with no prior graduate work in these areas should anticipate additional course work, sufficient to establish a background for the subsequent doctoral seminars. The Graduate School of the University of Colorado requires that doctoral students complete their degrees within seven total years from their entrance date.

DOCTORAL ADMINISTRATION/DIRECTOR OF DOCTORAL PROGRAM

SPA administers the doctoral program. The School has its own internal procedures and requirements for the Ph.D. degree. SPA's administrative office is the focal point for the necessary paper work. SPA forms that doctoral students need are available from the Student Services Team, as well as from the SPA website, and should be returned to the office when completed. The Student Services Team is a principal contact for Ph.D. students. The Director of the Doctoral Program serves as the key administrative officer for the program. The Director, who chairs the Doctoral Committee of SPA faculty, administers overall doctoral policies, approves student degree plans and committees, administers the various doctoral level examinations, and formally notifies students of their progress with respect to coursework, exams, and dissertations. It is the responsibility of the Doctoral Committee to make policy recommendations for the Program and to advise and assist the Director of Doctoral Program in administering the doctoral program. New and changed policies will be reviewed first by the committee, then reviewed and approved by the full SPA faculty.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Doctoral students are responsible for the management of their own academic studies. This Handbook, the Director of Doctoral Program, and faculty advisors provide the necessary information about the Ph.D. program. However, the specific contents of a doctoral program, the necessary approvals, and the initiation of its various procedures are matters that are the individual student's responsibility, as set out in this Handbook and the University catalog at the time of their admission.

FACULTY EXPECTATIONS

The SPA faculty explicitly assumes that each student arrives at the decision to pursue a doctorate only after seriously considering what such work entails. Much more is expected of doctoral students than is expected of undergraduate or master's students. The responsibilities of undergraduates and many masters' level students tend to be framed by the requirements of particular classes. Doctoral students, in contrast, have an entire field to study. It is their responsibility – with guidance from the faculty – to master the disciplines of public administration, policy, and management, as well as any additional individual areas of study they wish to pursue. Both independent thinking and scholarship are expected of doctoral students. The faculty assumes a higher level of maturity on the part of a doctoral student in terms of his/her progress towards the degree. Put in economic terms, doctoral students will be expected to make a gradual transition from consumers of knowledge, to producers of new knowledge and research.

FINANCIAL AID

A very limited amount of financial support is available to SPA doctoral students. Financial aid can be requested from the Director of the Doctoral Program, who administers financial assistance for the doctoral program. Each year the School selects students based mostly upon merit and also upon demonstrated need to receive these fellowships, such as the Buechner Fellowships or the Wirth Chair Fellowships (for students specializing in the environment, sustainability, or community development). Limited teaching and research assistantships may also be available. Other scholarships and financial aid are available through the financial aid office of the campus. Students are encouraged to seek additional financial support from outside sources (e.g., foundation support), whenever possible, and especially to fund their dissertation research.

II. ADMISSION

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students who have a master's degree in any field are eligible to apply for admission to the doctoral program. If a student does not have a master's in public affairs or a cognate field, he or she will in most cases have to take some prerequisite coursework, or demonstrate outstanding competence and/or experience in public affairs. Standard Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are required; there are no exceptions. Expected minimum requirements for doctoral students include the following:

- (1) The submission of scores on the verbal and quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Examination, with a minimum score of 500 in each section;
- (2) A minimum 3.5 graduate grade point average in previous graduate (or for those students applying directly from undergraduate) studies;

- (3) A well-articulated statement of purpose demonstrating an understanding of the research orientation of the degree and a strong motivation and determination to successfully complete the program; and
- (4) Three letters of reference attesting to a candidate's academic promise.
- (5) TOEFL for ESL applicants.

In exceptional circumstances, in order for a student to be eligible for admission, he or she may meet minimum requirements in only three of the four categories listed above. It should be emphasized the students who meet minimum entrance standards are not assured admission. The program is highly selective, and admits only persons who the doctoral committee considers to be genuinely qualified to complete the degree successfully and whose interests match well with our program.

ADMISSION CALENDAR

Students will be admitted to the doctoral program once a year during the spring semester, with their doctoral studies beginning the following fall semester. To be considered for admission for the fall semester, applications are due by February 1. Students are encouraged to apply well before the deadline to ensure that the applications will be completed by the deadline. The doctoral committee will endeavor to make admission decisions quickly, so that potential students can make their decisions.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Admission to the doctoral program is premised on the qualifications of the applicant. The SPA faculty also values racial/ethnic and cultural diversity and a productive and stimulating balance among relevant professional backgrounds, interests, and experience of students. Eligibility for admission is premised upon:

1. commitment to academic/research career and experience;
2. potential for career advancement;
3. potential to benefit from an integrative classroom/work experience;
4. the applicant's academic record in graduate studies;
5. Graduate Record Examination scores;
6. three letters of recommendation, with at least two from people well suited to judge a candidate's academic performance; and

7. if non-English speaking, demonstration of adequate language skills to succeed at the doctoral level of work, as indicated by a combination of TOEFL scores (ideally 550 or above), audio tape, and telephone conversation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants must submit the following items to the SPA office before they can be formally considered for admission:

1. Part I and Part II application forms (available from GSPA);
2. two official transcripts for all undergraduate and graduate work sent directly to SPA.
3. Graduate Record Examination scores;
4. current resume or vita;
5. minimum of three letters of recommendation from colleagues and previous professors, focusing on potential for (a) future leadership in teaching, research and public service and (b) deriving benefit from the doctoral program; at least two should be from former academic instructors;
6. a 1000-word statement of educational and career goals; and
7. application fee.

In addition, a student may submit samples of research reports or publications. All application materials will be retained by SPA and will not be returned.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

An oral interview may be required of applicant finalists. All applicants who can do so are encouraged to talk with (or email), and perhaps to meet with the Director of the Doctoral Program prior to applying to the program.

ADMISSION CATEGORIES

The SPA Doctoral Committee will classify each applicant for admission to the doctoral program into one of the following categories:

1. regular admission;
2. do not admit, but recommend that applicants enter a SPA master's program and reapply as their master's program nears completion;
3. do not admit at this time.

Applicants who have not been admitted have the right to reapply. Under exceptional circumstances, an admitted candidate may defer admission for one year.

III. DOCTORAL REQUIREMENTS

CREDIT HOURS

The doctoral program consists of 66 credit hours *beyond* the master's degree, including 36 credit hours of course work and 30 credit hours of dissertation credit. The course work must include 6 credit hours devoted to advanced methodology courses (e.g., intermediate statistics and qualitative research). A minimum of 24 credit hours of appropriate doctoral level course work must be taken at the University of Colorado. Up to nine credit hours of doctoral coursework may be transferred from another institution, with the approval of the Director of the Doctoral Program. These must be graduate level courses that were not utilized to earn another degree. Finally, 30 hours of dissertation credit are required, following the pre-dissertation colloquium. A nominal timetable, with suggested completion targets, is appended to this Handbook.

COMMON CORE COURSES

All doctoral students must take the following core courses:

1. *PAD 8010: Historical and Comparative Foundations of Public Administration*

An overview course on developments and changes in public administration as a field of study. PAD 8010 will examine how public administration has evolved and is defined, practiced, studied and taught. Entering students with no previous public administration coursework will be required to have had at least the equivalent of an introductory course in public administration before enrolling in P.Ad. 8010.

2. *PAD 8020: Doctoral Seminar on Public Management*

Generally, students should take this course in their first year of doctoral study. This seminar offers an in-depth examination of contemporary literature, concepts and theories of public management. Current issues and research problems are emphasized to prepare students for their advanced research. Students are

expected to have completed a master's level class in public management (or its equivalent) prior to taking this class.

3. *PAD 8030: Doctoral Seminar on Public Policy*

This first-year seminar offers an in-depth examination of contemporary literature, concepts and theories of public policy. Current issues and research problems are emphasized to prepare students for their advanced research. Students are expected to have completed a master's level class in public policy (or its equivalent) prior to taking this class.

4. *PAD 8040: Critical Issues for Public Affairs*

Students should take this course in the second year of their doctoral studies. This seminar identifies and examines emerging topics of public administration, policy, and management in which additional research and theory are critically needed. The intent is to help students understand a wider range of approaches to public affairs. PAD 8010, PAD 8020, and PAD 8030 are generally pre-requisites for this class.

5. *PAD 8060: Doctoral Seminar on the Conduct of Empirical Inquiry*
PAD 8070: Doctoral Seminar on Advanced Research Methods

This is a two-course sequence for advanced social science research. These classes examine a range of issues and approaches used in the study of public affairs. They explore philosophical and technical issues as well as methods relevant to public affairs research. Prerequisites include PAD 8010, 8020, and 8030; students are strongly urged to have at least one of their methodological competency courses as well. Normally, 8070 is taken as one of the last classes of the doctoral coursework.

METHODOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY

The Doctoral Program at SPA requires advanced proficiency in research methods or tools that will assist in completing dissertation research; six credit hours of advanced proficiency are required. All students are required to take PAD 7330, Intermediate Statistics (or its equivalent). Other appropriate elective methodological courses include: qualitative analysis or courses in other quantitative graduate-level research methods.

IV. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

PURPOSE

Ph.D. level coursework is perforce very demanding in order to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills required to successfully complete a dissertation and to enter the field as a “colleague.” Students benefit from timely evaluation of their progress throughout the Ph.D. program.

Basic evaluation of the progress of students in the Ph.D. program is provided by grades in individual courses, especially at the 8000 level. Evaluation is also provided each semester by the Director of the Program. Students must maintain a GPA of 3.5, and if they fall below this level will be placed upon academic probation, during which time they must achieve a 3.5 GPA. Additionally, students must have the required GPA at the time they take the comprehensive exam.

FIRST YEAR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

After completing each of their first two semesters of course work (e.g., the semesters in which 8010, 8020, 8030, and 8060 are completed), student performance is assessed by the Ph.D. Committee. The results of this assessment will be communicated to students through a letter from the Ph.D. director, and perhaps also a personal meeting. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide a more complete review of a student’s progress and potential for successfully completing the program, than is provided simply by grades in the coursework.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The purpose of the comprehensive examine is to evaluate the ability of students to conduct competent and original analytical research and writing of the caliber necessary to develop and complete a dissertation in the fields associated with public affairs. Students will generally take the comprehensive examination in August following their first two years of coursework.

All doctoral students must take a comprehensive examination upon completing a minimum of 24 hours of course work (including transfer credits). While each student’s degree plan will be somewhat unique, in most circumstances, courses that must be completed prior to the examination include PAD 8010, 8020, 8030, 8040, 8060 and Intermediate Statistics, and it is also useful to have completed the methodology elective class.

While the material to be covered generally corresponds to the subject areas introduced in the doctoral seminars (Historical and Comparative Foundations of Public Administration (PAD 8010); Seminar on Public Management (PAD 8020); Seminar on Public Policy (PAD 8030); and Critical Issues in Public Affairs (PAD 8040) and Research Design (PAD 8060)), the exam will include content beyond any particular course. Students will be provided with a reading list of other important public administration, public management, public policy and empirical research literatures about which they are expected to be conversant. While the range of potential examination questions is large, students can expect an exam, in any given year, that covers only

a more narrow range. Previous comprehensive examination questions are available for student inspection in the SPA office. In addition to reviewing carefully their course materials, students should become familiar with the arguments in the resources specified in the comprehensive examination reading lists and with past questions.

ADMINISTRATION OF COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Most qualifying students will take the comprehensive examination early in the fall semester before their third year of studies. The exam tests students on their ability to apply core knowledge in the fields of public affairs to problems that they might expect to encounter in fairly sophisticated policy analysis. Questions require the integration of theories, concepts, and methods from the 8000 level courses.

The exact format of the exam and its administration may vary somewhat each year. The comprehensive examination will be offered only once a year, typically in late August, at the start of the fall semester. The exam is likely to be comprised of a two-day written open-book (i.e., take home) test that will be designed and evaluated by faculty members appointed by the Director of the Doctoral Program for this purpose. The exact dates will be determined by the doctoral director, who will directly inform the candidates.

The comprehensive examination is administered under the University of Colorado's Student Honor Code. A violation of the code, including plagiarism in the answers, will result in a grade of "fail" and may be grounds for a student to be dismissed from the program. Students with documented disabilities should speak to the Director well in advance about making appropriate accommodations.

Each spring, the Director of the Ph.D. Program will meet with students planning to take their examination the following fall to discuss the timing for the examination, and address any other questions the doctoral cohort might wish to ask.

GRADING

Responses to the comprehensive examination questions will remain confidential throughout the examination sequence, until after final grades have been assigned. A faculty committee will grade the exam – this committee will generally consist of the members of the Ph.D. Committee plus a rotating group of 3 to 4 other faculty members. Faculty will be asked to grade portions of the exam for which they have expertise. Examiners may meet to discuss their individual grades.

Examination grades will be independently submitted by the readers to the Student Services Coordinator with responsibilities that year for the comprehensive examinations. The coordinator will compile the results, again honoring the anonymous nature of the examination. After all the graders have turned in their examination, the Coordinator will give the results to the Director. The overall grade will represent the consensus of the examiners (e.g., a majority of readers). Students will be notified about their grades by the Director of the Ph.D. program.

There are four grades students can receive for the comprehensive examination: (1) pass with distinction; (2) pass; (3) oral examination; or (4) fail. A grade of “pass with distinction” indicates exceptional performance. A grade of “pass” indicates acceptable performance. In both cases, students continue on with their doctoral studies and dissertation preparations.

A grade of “oral” indicates some acceptable elements to the answer, but also some deficiencies in the answer. After receiving specific written comments from the graders, students receiving this grade will take an oral examination fairly soon after the grading of the written exam, with as many of the grading faculty present as possible. The oral exam will focus mainly upon the deficiencies of the written exam, but students are also responsible for the full range of comprehensive exam material in this context. If the student addresses the committee’s concerns successfully in the oral, they will receive a “pass” grade for the comprehensive exam. If they do not, they will receive a “fail” grade for the comprehensive exam.

A grade of “fail” (either on the written exam, or after an oral exam) means that the student does not advance in the program. To advance, the student must re-take the comprehensive examination the next time it is offered. The idea is that, since the student failed the exam the first time, they will need extensive further preparation to have a good chance to pass the next time. At that second taking of the exam, the student must pass (or pass after a follow-up oral exam), or s/he will be required to leave the program.

A student who fails the comprehensive exam after the first taking, but is otherwise in good standing in the program, may continue with additional coursework and preliminary research towards the dissertation, while the student is preparing to re-take the comprehensive exam the next year. That student can not, however, defend a dissertation colloquium. Furthermore, continuing in the program in this manner is no guarantee of passing the following year: The student must assume some risk of failing a second time and being terminated in the program.

A student who fails the comprehensive examination twice, but has otherwise successfully completed appropriate coursework may be awarded a terminal MPA by SPA, if s/he has not previously been awarded that degree and if s/he meets the degree requirements.

All of this sounds very rigorous and official, and it is. However, the goal of the comprehensive exam is to allow students to demonstrate a wide and deep knowledge of public affairs topics, so that the full faculty can be confident of their ability to move on to the dissertation phase of the doctoral studies. It is not a “gotcha” exercise aimed at finding a single book or area of research that a student does not know well. Good students who prepare appropriately generally should expect to pass comprehensive exams; the “oral” grade is meant to allow students who misinterpret or misunderstand a question, go off on an inappropriate tangent, or just had a bad weekend during the exam, to take the opportunity to show that they really are well prepared in their knowledge. The grade of “fail” is meant for overall performance that is clearly not adequate.

V. DISSERTATION AREAS

APPROPRIATE CONCENTRATION/DISSERTATION AREAS

Students have twelve credit hours (i.e., four semester courses) of electives in the doctoral program. Students are expected to use these electives to develop an emphasis in an area that furthers their dissertation and research interests. Careful consideration of electives can improve the preparation of student's dissertation research, as well as inform his/her comprehensive examination preparation. Elective courses must be approved by the Director of the Doctoral Program. Electives may be taken from any graduate program offered at the University of Colorado. With the permission of the Doctoral Director, some electives may be taken outside the University of Colorado.

VI. PRE-DISSERTATION REVIEW

CONCEPT

Prior to the dissertation colloquium, the student must apply for and pass a predissertation review. The purpose of the review is to make sure that the student has successfully completed all required coursework and examinations, and that the student is prepared to continue her/his doctoral work. No student will be permitted to hold a colloquium without a successful review.

REQUIREMENTS

At a minimum, to pass the review, a student must:

1. complete in a satisfactory manner all of the coursework indicated in his/her program of study;
2. pass the comprehensive examination;
3. achieve a grade point average of 3.5 in doctoral coursework indicated in their program of study, which they develop with the Ph.D. Director at the time of their admission to the program. Note that, prior to this review, if the student's GPA falls below a 3.5 level, the student is not in good standing, is on academic probation, and must raise the GPA above 3.5 within 2 semesters to continue in the program;
4. satisfy the methodological proficiency requirement;
5. file Colloquium paperwork with the SPA Office.

VII. THE ADVISORY PROCESS

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The Director of the Doctoral Program is the advisor to all doctoral students upon their entry into the program and until they pass the comprehensive examination and subsequently request or are reassigned another faculty advisor. Once the student is admitted to candidacy, the chair of her/his dissertation committee becomes that student's faculty advisor. The Director of the Doctoral Program must approve all programs of study within the degree plan and approve admission to candidacy as well as certifying the final completion and acceptance of the dissertation. Doctoral students are encouraged to consult with all faculty for advice concerning their program plans.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

A program of study is a degree plan that lists all of the academic coursework a student has done and plans to do to meet the requirements for the doctoral degree. All students should meet with the Director of the Doctoral Program during their first semester in the program and mutually develop a preliminary program of study. This becomes a guide post for students to follow while they pursue the degree. Students may change their preliminary program of study if they decide to refocus their studies. A final program of study must be submitted and approved by the Director for the Doctoral Program with a student's pre-dissertation review.

DISSERTATION ADVISOR/CHAIR

Upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination, a student should make a request to the Director of the Doctoral Program regarding a dissertation advisor or chair. The dissertation advisor coordinates a student's plans and progress with the Director of the Doctoral Program. Students should begin the process of identifying this faculty advisor as early as possible in their doctoral studies.

ROLE OF THE DISSERTATION ADVISOR

The dissertation advisor (who is probably not the Director of the Doctoral Program) is a student's principal mentor until the completion of the doctorate. S/he advises the student on how to choose a dissertation topic, what courses to select (if chosen early enough in the process), who might compose the student's dissertation committee, and other professors from whom to solicit advice. The advisory process works best when students and the professors/advisors share interests. Accordingly, students are urged to make an effort to learn who the members of the faculty are, their academic research interests, their resumes, and their various specializations. The GSPA office has available a list of all faculty and their various specializations. Students also can find out about faculty by taking courses, attending doctoral colloquiums and defenses, attending various faculty/student events, and by talking directly with faculty members, as well as

other members of the Ph.D. cohort. Any student who has been unable to locate an appropriate faculty advisor should consult with the Director of the Doctoral Program.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

During the course of a student's progress toward the degree, s/he will necessarily need a SPA faculty member to chair his/her dissertation committee. Typically, a student's faculty advisor will chair this committee. If a student changes his/her topic, s/he may choose another advisor. It is the faculty advisor's responsibility to help the student arrange an appropriate thesis committee.

IX. THE DISSERTATION

REQUIREMENT

All doctoral students must seek approval of a dissertation topic, then research, write and defend their dissertation.

PURPOSE

In general, a dissertation is a demonstration that a candidate for the doctoral degree is capable of doing independent, original scholarly research that constitutes a contribution to knowledge in the broadly defined field of public affairs.

CREDIT HOURS

All students must register for a minimum of 30 hours of dissertation credit before they are eligible to graduate. Once a student passes his/her pre-colloquium review, s/he must be continuously registered for five dissertation credit hours each fall and spring semester or s/he can be dropped from the program. A doctoral student may not register for less than five or more than 10 dissertation hours in any one semester. Prior to taking her/his pre-dissertation colloquium, a student may register for five dissertation hours per semester, but for not more than three semesters (i.e., 15 credit hours maximum). For a doctoral student to be enrolled on a full-time basis, he/she must be enrolled for at least five hours during both the fall and spring semesters. Any student who has not registered for five credit hours of coursework during a semester (excluding summer session) without first obtaining a formal "leave of absence" is subject to dismissal.

After registering for 30 hours, a student must continue to register for a minimum of five credit hours each fall and spring semester until the dissertation is completed. Under special conditions and with the approval of the Director of the Ph.D. program, a student may take a leave of

absence for no more than two semesters; during that leave, students must agree not to avail themselves of University facilities (e.g., the research library). A student must be registered for at least 5 dissertation credit hours during the semester when he or she has a dissertation defense.

PROCESS

The dissertation process has four distinct stages:

1. establishing the committee;
2. preparing/defending the colloquium proposal;
3. writing the dissertation; and
4. defending the dissertation.

IX. DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

A dissertation committee has three basic roles:

1. a resource of ideas and information for the student;
2. a source of guidance and feedback during the research and writing process; and
3. the evaluator of the final product.

A student's dissertation committee is the final authority for approving the proposal as well as the dissertation.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

A dissertation committee shall consist of at least four persons: a chair (who must be drawn from the full-time, tenured, or tenure-track SPA faculty); at least two other faculty members from SPA at the University of Colorado; and at least one (but sometimes two) "external advisor" – either a practitioner, researcher, or academic – selected for the knowledge and skills that the "external advisor" can bring to bear on the dissertation topic. The chair of the dissertation committee is selected by the student. All committee members must hold a terminal degree, or get a waiver from the program director.

COMMITTEE SELECTION

Doctoral students, in consultation with a dissertation advisor, are responsible for assembling their dissertation committee, especially the chair (see below). The composition of the committee must be submitted to the Director of the Doctoral Program for formal approval. The Director, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor, will either approve the committee as constituted or make specific recommendations or changes. A colloquium may not be scheduled until the Director has approved the committee composition. Since the working relationship between a doctoral candidate and the committee may extend over many months, sometimes years, the quality and continuity of relationships are very important to all parties. The committee must meet as a complete group at least once (i.e., at either the colloquium or final defense), though accommodations can be made if the appropriate external member resides a great distance from GSPA.

ROLE OF CHAIR AND COMMITTEE

The chair and the student will work closely throughout the dissertation process. Still, while the chair is the most important member of a student's dissertation committee, all committee members are important. Accordingly, the student's responsibility is to keep all committee members informed about the progress of the dissertation. Students who consistently seek and heed the advice of all committee members can expect to encounter fewer problems during the dissertation process.

COMMITTEE AUTHORITY

The committee decides when a student's work on a dissertation topic has advanced enough to warrant scheduling a pre-thesis colloquium defense. Subsequently, after a student writes and reviews his dissertation with the committee, the committee determines when the dissertation is acceptable for defense. Following the colloquium and dissertation defenses, the committee determines what, if any, changes must be made in the final version. The chair and at least three other members of a dissertation committee must sign off on the dissertation, thereby indicating their final approval of the thesis.

CHANGING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee membership may be adjusted with the permission of the Director of the Doctoral Program. Should the chair of a student's committee leave the University's employ during the dissertation process, he or she may remain on the committee as an outside reader – if the student desires. Otherwise, the student, after consultation with the committee chair, must choose a replacement member; the choice must be approved by the Director. The chair must always be a full-time, tenured or tenure-track, SPA faculty member.

X. THE DISSERTATION COLLOQUIUM

PURPOSE

At the colloquium, a doctoral student presents the dissertation proposal to SPA faculty and students, and to his/her dissertation committee. This colloquium provides a formal opportunity for feedback and suggestions for improvement from the entire SPA community before the writing of the dissertation. A candidate goes into a colloquium with a specific proposal for a dissertation. The candidate should gain from the colloquium a refined proposal and assurance from the dissertation committee that, if the refined proposal is executed according to appropriate standards and with the continuing advice of the dissertation committee, the final product will be accepted and the student will be awarded the doctorate. The colloquium is the last chance of the faculty to review the preparation of the student for admission to candidacy. Therefore, faculty may request students to demonstrate their mastery of portions of the literature of public affairs, through an oral examination of the student. In general, this oral examination will focus on subjects relevant to the student's dissertation topic. If the student fails to satisfy the committee that he or she has a satisfactory mastery of literature or methodology, the committee may refuse to accept the colloquium prospect.

SCHEDULING

A student must schedule his/her dissertation colloquium within one calendar year of completing the PAD 8070 course. A student who does not meet this deadline will be asked to re-take his/her comprehensive examinations, unless the student can obtain a waiver from the Program Director, demonstrating extreme family, work, or other reasons for the delay.

Before scheduling the colloquium, students should give at least one, or more, drafts to the committee members. Prior to the actual colloquium date, students should give what they expect to be the "final" draft to all committee members no less than one month before the expected date, so that committee members will have time to make suggested revisions and additions.

The Student Services Team will schedule a colloquium at the request of a candidate only with the concurrence of the committee chair. Students must request a Colloquium Handbook from the Student Services Team; the appropriate paperwork needs to be submitted in a timely manner as indicated in the Handbook. The Student Services Team member must be notified of the desired date and time so that room arrangements can be made. No student will be scheduled for a colloquium who has not completed all required coursework and who has not passed the comprehensive examination.

THE COLLOQUIUM PROPOSAL

A dissertation proposal should generally include a clear explanation of what the student plans to do and how the student expects to do it, a discussion of how the proposed work will contribute to knowledge in the area of inquiry, a fairly thorough review of the literature, and a careful

articulation of the methodology the student will employ, the prospectus will also include a bibliography that includes all relevant literature known to the candidate.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

While it is the role of a student's dissertation committee to suggest or require specific items to be included in the proposal, all proposals should, at a minimum, contain the following:

1. a title page,
2. an abstract of not more than two double-spaced pages,
3. an introductory statement of the significance of the study,
4. a literature survey,
5. a statement of the propositions to be tested or issues to be examined,
6. an explanation of methodology,
7. a bibliography.

A proposal generally should be no shorter than 25 double-spaced pages, exclusive of abstract and bibliography, and no longer than 40 pages.

CONDUCT OF COLLOQUIUM

The colloquium is chaired by the chair of the student's dissertation committee. All GSPA students and faculty are welcomed to attend all colloquia. Usually they are held at SPA so interested parties may readily attend. While formats may vary, usually students make a brief formal presentation of their proposal and then accept questions and comments, first from the committee members, then from the audience. At the colloquium, the student formally asks of her/his committee:

1. Will the work proposed, if competently carried out, represent an original contribution to the literature that measures up to generally accepted standards in the field and in relevant sub-fields?
2. What revisions in the approach would strengthen the inquiry proposed?
3. What other literature and other data sources should be included?

The Committee must agree unanimously on the student's prospectus and dissertation plan. Should the student not pass his/her Colloquium, s/he will have a second opportunity. A second failure would result in the student being asked to leave the program.

XI. ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

CONCEPT

A student is admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. Degree only after he or she has completed all of the requirements for the degree except the dissertation. Students admitted to candidacy must have successfully passed both their pre-colloquium review and their colloquium. Upon certification by all members of a student's dissertation committee that the student has passed the colloquium, the student will be admitted to candidacy. No student will be permitted to defend his/her dissertation without having been admitted to candidacy.

PREPARATION OF FINAL COLLOQUIUM PROPOSAL

To be admitted to candidacy, students must complete and deposit with the Student Services Coordinator a final written draft of the colloquium proposal acceptable to all committee members. This final written draft must reflect the comments and suggestions of all committee members and signatures certifying satisfaction with the document and must be affirmed by all committee members. Alternatively, the Committee may ask a student to prepare a memorandum to the record outlining faculty suggestions and detailing how they will be addressed; this document should also be provided to the Student Services Team.

XII. DISSERTATION WRITING GUIDELINES

SELECTION OF A TOPIC

Doctoral students should start thinking about an appropriate dissertation topic as early in the program as possible. If a student knows in general what s/he wants to do, the student can take related courses that will help him/her further that interest and talk informally with those faculty most suited to serve on such a committee. The student can also write term papers in courses that help him/her define the topic more clearly. This statement is not meant to limit a student's flexibility or explorations of topics early in their doctoral career. Some students know exactly what they want to study and should get to it quickly, while others will want to examine different fields before settling on a topic. In either case, it is useful to think about possible topics.

The student has the ultimate choice of a dissertation topic. But this choice is constrained by the student's ability to assemble a committee (subject to the Director's approval) that agrees that the topic is both worthy and feasible.

FACULTY AVAILABILITY

Students should note that most faculty members are on nine-month appointments and are not always available during the summer for dissertation supervision, colloquia, and defenses. Thus, students should not assume summer faculty availability unless faculty are teaching during the summer session or prior arrangements are made. Under normal circumstances, colloquia and defenses will be scheduled only during the fall and spring semesters.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR PREPARATION

The final authority for the technical preparation of doctoral dissertations is the Office of the Graduate Dean of the University of Colorado at Denver. This Office should be consulted early in the dissertation process for directions and dissertation format. The Graduate Dean's Office should be consulted whenever questions arise concerning acceptable dissertation formats. Since this Office must approve the format and style, but *not* the content, of the final drafts of all GSPA dissertations before a student may graduate, a student may want to contact the Graduate Dean's Office at the proposal stage, but, in any case, certainly before preparing the final draft for the dissertation defense. GSPA has available copies of the Graduate School guidelines.

COMMITTEE RELATIONS

It is the student's responsibility, with direction from the committee chair, to coordinate the work of the committee. Members of the committee have the right to participate in the dissertation process in the manner they choose; some members may wish to see each chapter as it is completed, while others may wish only to read complete drafts. The student should accommodate the various dissertation review styles of faculty. The faculty members, by serving on a committee, assume the responsibility to respond in a timely fashion. The dissertation process is a cooperative effort involving the candidate as well as all members of the committee.

USE OF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

The dissertation is a demonstration of the student's capability to design, execute and report on a major independent research project. In some cases, it is appropriate for students to use limited professional assistance in the project, such as computer programmers, data entry persons, transcription services, text editors and secretaries or typists. However, it is *inappropriate* for students to employ professionals to design the research, to select and/or interpret analytic techniques, to analyze results, or to do tasks that should be the student's responsibility. Violation of this general guideline could invalidate the dissertation project. In cases of uncertainty, consult your dissertation chair or the Doctoral Director.

XIII. THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE

SCHEDULING

Dissertation defense dates will be scheduled by the Student Services Team in consultation with the dissertation chair and the Director of the Doctoral Program. No dissertation will be scheduled for defense without the concurrence of the dissertation chair that a defense is warranted. Students must contact the Student Services Team the semester *prior* to the anticipated commencement to obtain information on the relevant deadlines (e.g., from the Graduate School). (Most students will need several weeks after the defense to address the revisions indicated by their committee and to prepare final copies of the dissertation.) The Student Services Team must also be notified of the desired defense date and time so that room arrangements can be made. In effect, if a student does not have a substantially completed draft of his or her dissertation by the beginning of the semester in which he or she hopes to graduate, it reduces the prospect of completing the process in time.

CONDUCT OF DEFENSE

The dissertation defense is the final oral examination of the doctoral program. The candidate is expected to defend the dissertation, which means to demonstrate professional competence in the field in which it was written. The student should expect that revisions to the dissertation might be required as a result of the defense. The final authority on the extent and nature of any revisions rests with the committee. The chair of the dissertation committee chairs the defense, which will be open to all University of Colorado faculty and students.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

After the student completes his/her defense, the committee will vote on the acceptance of the dissertation; at least four faculty members must concur. The formal faculty response to a student's dissertation defense may take four forms to be reported to the Director of the Doctoral Program:

1. **ACCEPTANCE WITH DISTINCTION** – the student has performed with excellence in the dissertation research and defense;
2. **ACCEPTANCE** – the student has successfully completed all of the scholarly requirements for the PhD;
3. **CONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE** – the student must make minor changes requested by the committee, resubmit the dissertation for their approval, and the committee will – assuming changes are adequate – recommend acceptance to the Director; or
4. **REJECTION** – the dissertation and/or the candidate's state of knowledge is still not sufficient. The student, in consultation with his/her committee, will have to make substantial revisions and eventually schedule another defense. Students will be allowed only two defenses.

REVIEW BY THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

After students have had their dissertation formally approved and signed by at least four members of the committee, one copy on plain white paper must be submitted to the Office of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado at Denver for a final technical review at least six weeks before anticipated graduation. (The review period could change for any given semester; it is the student's responsibility to be apprised of and meet these schedules.) Students must satisfy the form and style requirements of the doctoral program and the Graduate School before their dissertation will be formally accepted by SPA. Often the approval by the Graduate School can be accomplished on an informal basis prior to the completion of the final copy. If the Graduate School Office determines that a dissertation has not met form and style requirements, the dissertation will be returned for adjustments, and the student may not be able to graduate that semester. If the student submits to the Graduate School two acceptable final copies on thesis bond paper, and one final copy on plain white paper, along with fees, at least two weeks prior to commencement, and if the Graduate School notifies SPA in writing that the dissertation is in conformance with all specifications, the Director of the Doctoral Program will forward for graduation the name of the student.

GRADUATION

To graduate in a given semester, a student must (1) file an Application for Diploma with SPA by the second week of the semester in which s/he plans to graduate; (2) submit three unbound, thesis bond copies of the dissertation to the Graduate School office at least two weeks prior to commencement and a fourth copy of the unbound thesis to the SPA office; and (3) submit fees for binding, microfilming, copyrighting, and abstract publication to the Graduate School Office at least two weeks prior to commencement. The three final bound copies will be distributed to the Library and the SPA office. No student will be permitted to graduate or attend commencement unless all three requirements for the degree have been met.

XIV. ACADEMIC POLICIES

PHILOSOPHY

SPA expects superior performance from its doctoral students. The phrase "superior performance" has connotations beyond those related to minimum grade achievement, course work being no more than the essential foundation for independent reading and study; it also refers to promptness in doing work, reliability of performance, and steady progress through a course of study. These qualities should be reflected in the student's performance in the comprehensive examinations and the dissertation.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

All doctoral students must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.5 in courses included in their program of study at the University of Colorado. No doctoral student will be advanced to candidacy if his/her grade point average is less than 3.5. Any grade less than a B- (B minus) is not acceptable for degree plan purposes.

PROBATION/DISMISSAL

When a doctoral student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.5, he/she will be placed on academic probation. Students may not take their comprehensive examination or be advanced to candidacy while on academic probation. Students on probation will have two semesters in which to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.5 or above. The student will be subject to dismissal if:

1. the student does not earn a 3.5 GPA in all courses taken in the first of these two probationary semesters, or
2. after the two-semester probationary period, the cumulative GPA is still below 3.5.

The final decision on dismissal will be made by the Director of Doctoral Studies. Students may use academic grievance procedures described below to appeal a dismissal.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In a predominantly mid-career program, interruptions may occur owing to the demands of families and jobs. Upon application to the Doctoral Director, a student will be allowed a reasonable leave of absence prior to admission to candidacy. However, once a student has been admitted to candidacy, no leave can be granted for more than one year. The Student Services team has the appropriate form, which must be signed by the director. Still, SPA has a strong preference that students remain continuously enrolled until graduation.

Requests for a leave of absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Doctoral Director, upon the specific petition of a doctoral student; justifications for leaves might include illness, accident, and family emergencies. General guidelines include:

1. Students must be in good academic standing;
2. Students must present their cases with a specific date for their return to graduate studies. If they are unable to abide by their anticipated return date, they must re-petition, again to the satisfaction of the Doctoral Director.
3. During leave status, a student is expected to minimize her/his relationship with the University, its faculty, and its facilities.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Doctoral students are allowed to apply up to 9 semester hours of graduate credit taken at other appropriate universities toward their doctoral degree plan, but only if those courses were not utilized towards earning another degree. Any such credits must be approved for transfer by the Director of the Doctoral Program. Transfer credit will not be permitted for required doctoral seminars. Elective credit – including transfer credit – is expected to be clearly related to the dissertation plans of the student. Criteria for acceptance include quality and relevance of the course. Only graduate coursework taken no longer than five years prior to request for credit are considered acceptable for transfer. Note: transferred credit will count towards a student's cumulative credit hours but the grades will *not* be counted in calculating that student's GPA.

INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

With the permission of the Doctoral Director, independent study courses may count for up to 6 credit hours towards the coursework for the Ph.D. To ensure that faculty sponsors and students arrive at clear definition of the expectations of an independent study project, a "Special Processing" form must be filed with the SPA office at the beginning of the semester in which the project is undertaken.

TIME LIMIT

Students are expected to complete all degree requirements within seven years from the date of the start of course work in the doctoral program. Extra time granted for doctoral work must be approved by the Director of the Doctoral Program and the Graduate School of the University of Colorado at Denver, typically for reasons beyond the candidate's control (e.g., illness or extreme work-related conditions).

GRADUATE SCHOOL RULES

All students must also comply with the Graduate School Rules, available from the SPA office or the Graduate School. SPA doctoral rules as outlined in this Handbook are consistent with CU at Denver and Health Sciences Center Graduate School rules.

XV. GRIEVANCE POLICY/PROCEDURE

GENERAL

This section describes formal procedures by which a student may seek to remedy academic grievances within the School of Public Affairs. A "grievance" may be defined as a perceived

irregularity in the School's grading or procedural policies in terms of student-faculty relations. The School strongly encourages that these matters be settled informally whenever possible. Formal procedures should be used only when satisfaction cannot be obtained by informal means. Procedures described below are for grievances of an academic nature. Students with non-academic grievances may use established University mechanisms for such actions. Authority for final action on any grievance within SPA shall rest with the Dean, except as specified below.

FACULTY

Students are expected to attempt to settle academic grievances first through discussion and negotiation with the faculty member(s) involved. Appeals may be filed by the student with the Dean only if the matter is not settled to the satisfaction of the student with the faculty member(s).

NOTICE OF APPEAL

An appeal is initiated by the student. Barring exceptional circumstances, appeals must be filed within 30 days of the event that is the basis of the grievance. To appeal, the student must file a statement with the Dean setting forth the nature of the appeal and the remedy sought by the student. The student should append to the statement of appeal any relevant documentation or other information (e.g., statements of witnesses or others with knowledge of the basis for appeal). If such information is not available at the time the appeal is filed, it should be provided as soon as possible after filing; barring exceptional circumstances, it must be presented within 30 days of filing. The Dean shall provide a copy of the appeal to the faculty member(s) involved within five (5) working days. The faculty member(s) may respond in writing to the appeal, or provide such other documentation and information deemed relevant to decision making on the appeal.

ACTION BY THE ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE DEAN

If the Assistant/Associate Dean on the campus where the student is enrolled is not named in or a party to the grievance, the Dean shall refer the appeal to that person. The Dean shall instruct the student to make an appointment to meet with the Assistant/Associate Dean within five (5) working days to review and resolve the appeal. The Assistant/Associate Dean shall review and investigate the appeal and reach a determination as to its quality. S/he shall report in writing to the Dean within 30 days of initial referral of the matter to his/her office, and shall recommend appropriate action to the Dean. The Dean shall forward a copy of the report, together with proposed final action, to the student. Within 10 days of receipt of the report, the Dean shall take final action on the appeal. Final action shall take the form of a letter to the student stating the action and the reasons for taking it. The Dean's decision shall constitute final action by the SPA. In cases in which the Dean is a party to the appeal, the recommendations by the Assoc./Asst. Dean will be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School, where decision will be considered final from the standpoint of SPA.

APPEAL TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL

If the student does not accept the Dean's action, appeal can be made to the Graduate Council of the University of Colorado at Denver, as specified in the catalog. The Council's decision on appeal shall constitute final action by the University of Colorado at Denver.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Nothing in this procedure is intended to nor should be construed as abrogating the rights under law accruing to any student in the School of Public Affairs.

APPENDIX: PROTOTYPICAL TIMETABLE

The following is a typical timetable for a student's progression through the program. *Please note that it is NOT meant as an imperative; rather, it is a suggestion as to what would constitute "normal" progress through the SPA doctoral program for students who are working during the day. Students who are pursuing the Ph.D. full-time, and not working at a job during the day, might be able to complete 3 classes each semester, meaning that they can finish all coursework in 4 academic semesters and finish a dissertation within 3-4 total years.*

Year 1:

Fall: P.Ad. 8010 and P.Ad. 8030

Spring: P.Ad. 8020 and P.Ad. 8060

Summer: Possible elective courses.

Year 2:

Fall: P.Ad. 8040; Intermediate Stats or other methodology; or elective

Spring: P.Ad. 8070; Elective (1) and (2); select dissertation adviser

Summer: Prepare for comprehensive exam in August

Year 3:

Fall: Additional elective and/or methodology coursework

Spring: Pre-dissertation review; prepare prospectus; colloquium (within one years of Completion of P.Ad. 8070)

Years 3-4-5: write dissertation

Year 5-6: Defend dissertation. GRADUATE!!! Do amazing things with your career!