

HANDBOOK FOR THE PHD IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

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

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I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This Handbook will facilitate a student's progress toward the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Public Affairs, encompassing the fields of public administration, public management, and public policy, as well as criminal justice for those students electing to concentrate in that area. The School of Public Affairs (SPA) and the University of Colorado Denver have procedures, rules, and regulations for the PhD that must be followed to obtain the degree. This Handbook explains those procedures, rules, and regulations, and PhD students are expected to review and follow the Handbook. SPA updates the Handbook regularly, and the contents are subject to change; the Handbook is not intended to be a contract. If you have any questions, consult with the Director of the Doctoral Program, your Graduate Advisor, or your faculty advisor.

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The University of Colorado's School of Public Affairs offers and administers the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 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 PhD Committee, headed by the Director of the Doctoral Program and overseen by the University of Colorado Denver. 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 houses various research centers 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 theory, concepts, and research areas of public administration, public policy, public management, and criminal justice. 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 governing systems.

The PhD prepares its graduates for positions in academia and consulting firms, public management and administration, public policy analysis, politics and advocacy, and nonprofits. 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, policymaking, and politics.

RESIDENCY AND TIME REQUIRED FOR PhD DEGREE

The rules of the University govern residency, enrollment, and completion requirements. Students are required to take a minimum of six credit hours of courses during both the fall and spring semesters. Exceptions require approval of the Director of the Doctoral Program. They are also required to establish and maintain residency in the State of Colorado to be eligible for in-state tuition; 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 a related field (e.g., Master in Public Administration) can provide a useful foundation for many of the core courses but a graduate degree is not essential or required. Students can expect to take two to three years to complete all course requirements for the PhD and then to take two or three additional years to complete the dissertation. Most students complete the degree in 4 to 6 years. The University of Colorado Denver requires that doctoral students (whether full time or part time) complete all degree requirements with eight calendar years of matriculation, although extra time may be granted for circumstances beyond the candidate's control.

DOCTORAL ADMINISTRATION/DIRECTOR OF DOCTORAL PROGRAM

SPA administers the doctoral program. The School has its own internal procedures and requirements for the PhD degree.

The Director of the Doctoral Program serves as the key administrative officer for the program. The Director, who chairs the PhD 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 PhD Committee to make policy recommendations for the Program and to advise and assist the Director of the 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.

SPA's Student Service Team is the focal point for the necessary paperwork. SPA forms that doctoral students need are available from the Student Services Team, as well as from the SPA or University of Colorado Denver websites, and should be returned to the appropriate office when completed.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Doctoral students are responsible for the management of their own academic studies. This Handbook, the Director of the Doctoral Program, and faculty advisors provide the necessary information about the PhD 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 in the provisions of the University catalog in effect at the time of the student's admission. Failure to comply with the Handbook could result in dismissal from the program.

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 master's level students tend to be framed by the requirements of courses. 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, or criminal justice, 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 their progress towards the degree. Doctoral students will be expected to make a gradual transition from consumers of knowledge to producers of new knowledge and research.

In turn, faculty members teaching in the PhD program and those serving on dissertation committees are expected to be available to assist and mentor students in mastering the field and transitioning into scholars, including meeting regularly with students for informal advice and support, collaborating with students on grants, research projects, and publications, and introducing students to relevant professional networks. Questions about mentoring may be directed to the Director of the Doctoral Program.

FINANCIAL AID

A 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. Limited teaching and research assistantships may also be available. Other scholarships and financial aid opportunities 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.

Faculty research grants may also serve as a source of funding for doctoral students. Interested students should contact individual faculty members to discuss opportunities.

II. GENERAL TIMELINE FOR THE PHD AND THE ADVISORY PROCESS

In general, the PhD program has two parts. In the first part, which typically takes two to three years, the student takes required and elective coursework intended to build their knowledge of the field of public affairs and develop the skills necessary to conduct original research. The

student's mastery of this body of knowledge is tested through a comprehensive examination. In the second part of the program, students design and implement a significant research project, or dissertation. The student completes the program upon successful defense of the dissertation. Students typically take two to three years to write and defend the dissertation. These parts of the program are described in greater detail later in this handbook, and a sample timeline is attached as an appendix. Throughout the program, the student will be advised and mentored by faculty.

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The Director of the Doctoral Program approves all programs of study within the degree plan, approves admission to candidacy, and certifies the final completion and acceptance of the dissertation.

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 and their advisor(s) during their first semester or second semester in the program and mutually develop a preliminary program of study. This becomes a guidepost for students to follow while they pursue the degree. Students may change their preliminary program of study with the guidance of their advisor if they decide to refocus their studies. A final program of study must be submitted and approved by the Director of the Doctoral Program with a student's pre-dissertation review.

ROLE OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR/DISSERTATION CHAIR

Students are more likely to be successful in the PhD Program when their research interests overlap with members of the faculty. Upon admission, incoming doctoral students will be assigned to one or two of these faculty members whom they identified as advisors at the start of the Program. In situations where their requested faculty members are unavailable, the student will be assigned the closest match. These faculty advisors then serve as the initial mentors to students. The nature of the mentoring relationship varies and may include, but is not limited to, helping a student select electives, incorporating a student into research projects, discussing dissertation ideas, and providing academic and career advice.

In learning about the field of public affairs and in working with faculty members at SPA, students' research interests may change as well as their choice of faculty advisors. Students are not required to stay with their initial advisors throughout their time in the Program. Students wishing to move to a different advisor should contact the Director of the Doctoral Program. Students are also not required to have their initial advisor be the chair of the dissertation committee or even be on the committee. *The choice of a dissertation chair is the choice of the student.* In selecting a dissertation chair, students are welcomed to solicit advice from the Director of the Doctoral Program, any SPA faculty member, and fellow students. The PhD Committee recommends the following activities for faculty who mentor PhD students and for students who are seeking mentorship:

MENTOR ACTIVITIES RECOMMENDED FOR FACULTY

- Regularly meet with mentored students (e.g., monthly)
- Seek out project collaboration with students, leading to poster presentations, conference papers, working papers, book chapters, and journal submissions
- Introduce students to the pertinent professional networks
- Include students in grant writing efforts
- Offer on-going advice in course selection, including facilitating relations with other faculty members
- Be willing to meet with students looking to improve their methodological skills, especially on an informal basis; likewise for more theoretical issues

MENTEE ACTIVITIES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Meet regularly with faculty mentor/s (e.g., monthly)
- Seek out project collaboration with faculty, leading to poster presentations, conference papers, working papers, and journal submissions.
- Try to attend research seminars (outside of the classroom), brown bags, campus lectures, etc.
- Become familiar with university services, such as the Writing Center, the Auraria library, etc. for assistance outside of SPA.

PhD STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The SPA PhD Student Association's (SPAPSA's) mission is to establish a community of students who support each other through the sharing of experience and knowledge across PhD cohorts. The student association has three main functions: academic enrichment, social interaction, and new student orientation. Through these responsibilities, the student association supports academic development of students through information exchange, organizes relevant academic and social activities outside of SPA, and holds meetings for incoming PhD students prior to matriculation. The student association is open to all PhD students who are encouraged to participate in meetings and events as they please, except for those who hold formal positions on the executive board. The executive board typically holds at least one formal meeting per month where all association members are invited to attend. PhD students nominate two co-presidents, treasurer, and secretary to serve per year.

PhD COMMITTEE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

The PhD Committee will nominate one or two PhD students to serve as a liaison with the PhD Student Association. The nominated PhD student(s) will typically be one of the students serving in the leadership positions in the PhD Student Association. The PhD Committee Student Representative(s), typically SPAPSA's co-presidents, will serve a maximum two-year term, and may sit on the PhD program admissions committee.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

At the end of the spring semester of each year, each student must complete a Progress Report and submit it to the Director of the Doctoral Program. The Progress Report covers such areas as courses taken, research and teaching activities, and external activities related to the field of public affairs, and allows the PhD faculty to monitor student progress in the program. The Progress Report will be completed through an online survey sent by the Director of the Doctoral Program.

III. DOCTORAL COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS

CREDIT HOURS

The doctoral program consists of 60 credit hours *beyond* the master's degree, including 30 credit hours of coursework and 30 credit hours of dissertation credit. The course work must include nine credit hours devoted to advanced methodology courses (e.g., intermediate statistics and qualitative research). A minimum of 27 credit hours of appropriate doctoral level course work must be taken at the University of Colorado. Up to three credit hours of graduate-level coursework may be transferred from another institution, with the approval of the Director of the Doctoral Program, consistent with section XI of this handbook. Finally, 30 hours of dissertation credit are required, with at least 20 of them following the Comprehensive Exam. 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. *PUAD 8010 - Historical and Comparative Foundations of Public Administration*

Description: A doctoral seminar on developments and changes in public administration as a field of study. It examines how theory and practice have evolved and how the field is defined, studied, and taught. It must normally be taken during the first full semester of the doctoral program.

2. *PUAD 8020 - Seminar in Public Management*

Description: 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.

3. *PUAD 8030 - Seminar in Public Policy*

Description: Offers an in-depth examination of contemporary literature, concepts, and theories of public policy, with an emphasis on policy process. Current issues and research problems are emphasized to prepare students for their advanced research.

4. *PUAD 8040 - Seminar In Economic and Institutional Foundations of Public Affairs*

Description: Offers an in-depth examination of the economic and institutional foundations of public affairs, with an emphasis on the evolution of theory and research in these fields.

5. *PUAD 8050 - Quantitative Methods I*
Description: Introduces students to the foundational principles and techniques of quantitative analysis in the social sciences generally and in public affairs specifically, including statistical inference, regression analysis, other related estimation techniques, and commonly used statistical software packages.
6. *PUAD 8060 - Seminar On The Conduct Of Empirical Inquiry*
Description: Introduces basic elements of research design in the social sciences, focusing on the relationship between theories and methods, concept development and measurement, selection of observations or cases, and alternative methods of data collection and analysis.
7. *PUAD 8070 - Quantitative Methods II*
Description: Moves beyond basic linear regression techniques by covering advanced analytic methods for improved causal inference. Students will also be introduced to data management skills and techniques for using longitudinal data.
8. *PUAD 7007 – Qualitative Research Methods*
Description: Focuses on qualitative research methods that incorporate field work techniques such as observation, interviews, and content analysis. The main objective is to discover practicalities and limitations of ethnographic methods with a comparative methodology perspective. Students are required to conduct a research project. If students have already taken a PhD-level qualitative methods course, or need a more specific focus, they should consult with the Director of the Doctoral Program to find an appropriate option to fulfill this requirement.

Students interested in the criminal justice field may opt to replace one theory foundations course (8010, 8020, 8030, or 8040) with *PUAD 7002 – Criminological Theory*. Students interested in this option should consult with the Director of the Doctoral Program.

METHODOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY

The Doctoral Program at SPA requires advanced proficiency in research methods or tools that will assist in completing dissertation research; nine credit hours of advanced proficiency are required. All students are required to take PUAD 8050, Statistics I, PUAD 8070, Statistics II, and PUAD 7007, Qualitative Research Methods.

OTHER COURSEWORK

Students are required to take six credit hours (i.e., two 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 their 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 Director of the Doctoral Program, some electives may be taken outside the University of Colorado.

IV. POLICIES ON COURSE COMPLETION, GRADE CHANGES, ETC.

RETAKE COURSES

A student may retake no more than two courses during the course of the degree program, regardless of whether the need for a retake results from a low grade, an incomplete, or a course withdrawal. Discretion is applied by the Director of the Doctoral Program for exceptional, documented circumstances (i.e., military deployment, major medical emergency). If a student has exhausted the option to retake two courses and fails to meet program standards, the student will be suspended or dropped from the program.

A student who receives a letter grade for a course that is too low to qualify for credit may retake the course once. Both grades will be used to calculate the student's overall GPA. To retake a course, the student must re-enroll and pay tuition and fees for the course again.

INCOMPLETES

The course instructor has discretion as to whether to grant an Incomplete, and students should be aware that not all faculty members will grant Incompletes. An Incomplete is typically allowed when the student has successfully completed 75 percent or more of the course and is prevented from completing the class by circumstances beyond their control. If the instructor agrees to grant an Incomplete, the student must make arrangements to complete the remaining coursework with the original instructor within one year. The student may not "sit in" on the class in subsequent semesters. If the coursework is not completed within a year, the Incomplete will automatically change to an F unless the student and the instructor have agreed, in writing, to an extension.

A student may be granted no more than two Incompletes during the course of the degree program, absent documented exceptional circumstances and approval by the Director of the Doctoral Program. No Incompletes may be granted in capstone courses.

DROPS AND WITHDRAWALS

Deadlines for dropping a course are set by the Office of the Registrar and posted on the Academic Calendar each semester. Students are responsible for knowing these deadlines. Students can drop a course during the first week of the semester without being assessed full tuition and without having the course appear on their transcript. Students who drop a course after the first week but before census date may drop in the University of Colorado Denver Access portal, but a drop charge will apply. After census date (typically two weeks after the start of classes), the student may withdraw from the course in UCD Access. A "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

If the request to withdraw is made after the 10th week of classes, the student must use the Late Withdrawal form to withdraw from one or all classes after you can no longer withdrawal from classes through the Portal. (See the Academic Calendar: www.ucdenver.edu/academiccalendar). Withdrawals after this date require you to demonstrate circumstances beyond your control. To withdraw from all classes due to medical reasons, contact the Office of Case Management: (303) 315-7306, shareaconcern@ucdenver.edu. Students will not be allowed to drop after the 10th week of classes simply because they are failing the course; it is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to determine if the course should be dropped due to failing grades prior to the 10th week of classes. If the student is permitted to withdraw, a "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

No tuition reimbursements are available for withdrawals made after census date, and students may be required to repay financial aid received. Students who believe their circumstances justify an exception to financial obligations may appeal to the university's tuition appeals coordinator. Students must initiate a drop or withdrawal and follow the appropriate procedures. Students who fail to do this and do not complete the coursework will be issued a letter grade of "F" for the course.

A student is allowed to withdraw from no more than two courses during the course of the degree program, absent documented exceptional circumstances and approval by the Director of the Doctoral Program.

RETROACTIVE GRADE CHANGES

Students are not permitted to request grade changes for courses in which a final letter grade (other than an incomplete) has been received, except as a result of instructor error or as otherwise warranted through the academic grievance process. A student may not enter into an agreement with an instructor to retroactively change a final letter grade based on work completed by the student after the course has ended.

Course Revalidation Process: The revalidation process is required by university policy for any course that was taken more than seven years prior to graduation and any course used for transfer credits must have been taken within seven years of the PhD student's comprehensive exam. The PhD Committee will consider course revalidation on a case-by-case basis. To request revalidation of expired courses, submit for each course a request to the Director of the Doctoral Program. The PhD Committee will review the request and make a determination about revalidating the course.

V. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

PhD level coursework is performe 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 productive scholar or practitioner. Students will benefit from timely evaluation of their progress throughout the PhD program.

MINIMUM GPA REQUIREMENTS

Basic evaluation of the progress of students in the PhD program is provided by grades in individual courses, especially at the 8000 level. Students must maintain a GPA of 3.33, and if they fall below this level will be placed upon academic probation, during which time they must achieve a 3.33 GPA. Additionally, students must have the required GPA at the time they take the comprehensive exam. Courses in which the student earns a grade lower than B- may not be applied towards fulfillment of the coursework requirement.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Overall student performance in the PhD program is assessed by the PhD Committee on an annual basis. Each student is required to provide a Progress Report to the Director of the Doctoral Program at the end of each academic year. This report, along with other indicators, will be used by the PhD Committee to monitor student progress and provide an annual performance evaluation for each student, which will be shared with the student and the student's advisor and/or dissertation chair.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The purpose of the comprehensive examination 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. The comprehensive examination consists of two major parts: a theory examination and a methodological examination. The theory examination also includes an oral examination component.

All doctoral students must take the comprehensive examination upon completing relevant coursework. After the second year of the program, unless otherwise approved, students should have completed the core theory coursework (8010, 8020, 8030, and 8040) and will take the written and oral theory exam. After passing the theory exam, students will proceed to take the research methods written exam in the semester immediately following the completion of all methods coursework. Both written exams may be offered prior to the start of classes in August and January, depending on which students are prepared to take the exam. Students must take the comprehensive examination the first time it is offered after completion of the required coursework but not before the end of the second year in the program. Exceptions to these rules about the comprehensive examination may be requested. In such cases, the PhD Committee will consider the circumstances and decide on a case-by-case basis. Students who take *PUAD 7002 – Criminological Theory* in lieu of one other course (PUAD 8010-8040) will be examined on this content in the comprehensive examination in lieu of the replaced material.

The faculty on the PhD Committee and/or the Examination Committee will determine the structure of the exam, the exam questions, formatting requirements, and specific criteria for grading the exams at the time the students receive the exam. Although the material to be covered generally corresponds to the subject areas introduced in the doctoral seminars, the comprehensive examination includes content beyond any particular course. Students should be

familiar with the literature embodied in the themes of the core classes, whether or not that literature was covered in class.

Responses to the comprehensive examination questions will remain confidential throughout the examination sequence, until after grades on the written exam have been assigned. Students will submit exams and the Student Services Coordinator will distribute exams to the faculty committee for grading. The faculty committee members submit their grades to the Coordinator and after all grades are submitted to the Coordinator, students will receive their grades and comments on the written portion of the exam.

There are four grades students can receive for the comprehensive examination: (1) pass with distinction; (2) pass; (3) conditional pass; and (4) fail. A grade of “pass with distinction” indicates exceptional performance. A grade of “pass with distinction” or “pass” indicates acceptable performance. In both cases, students continue with their doctoral studies. A grade of conditional pass or (in some circumstances) a fail on a portion of the exam requires the student to meet additional requirements specified by the grading committee in order to receive an unconditional passing grade. Unsatisfactory performance on a significant portion of the examination will result in failure.

A final grade of “fail” means that the student does not advance in the program. To advance, the student must retake the comprehensive examination the next time it is offered. The understanding 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 examination, the student must pass, or s/he will be required to leave the program.

A student who fails the comprehensive examination 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 retake the comprehensive examination the next time it is offered. That student cannot, however, defend a dissertation proposal until the entire comprehensive exam is successfully completed. Furthermore, continuing in the program in this manner is no guarantee of passing the exam during the following iteration: 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 eligible for a terminal MPA by SPA, if s/he has not previously been awarded that degree and if s/he meets the degree requirements.

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 of the Doctoral Program well in advance about making appropriate accommodations.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

A student is admitted (or advanced) to candidacy for the PhD Degree only after they have completed all of the requirements for the degree except the colloquium and dissertation. Admission to candidacy, thus, includes completing in a satisfactory manner all of their coursework, passing the comprehensive examination unconditionally, and achieving a grade point average of 3.33 in doctoral coursework.

VI. THE DISSERTATION

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

PRE-DISSERTATION REVIEW

Prior to the dissertation proposal defense, the student must apply for and pass a pre-dissertation 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 their doctoral work. No student will be permitted to hold a colloquium without a successful review.

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

1. complete in a satisfactory manner all of the coursework indicated in their program of study;
2. pass the comprehensive examination unconditionally;
3. achieve a grade point average of 3.33 in doctoral coursework indicated in their program of study, which they develop with the Director of the Doctoral Program at the time of their admission to the program. Note that, prior to this review, if the student's GPA falls below a 3.33 level, the student is not in good standing, is on academic probation, and must raise the GPA above 3.33 within 2 semesters to continue in the program;
4. satisfy the methodological proficiency requirement; and
5. file required for dissertation proposal paperwork with SPA.

CREDIT HOURS DURING DISSERTATION WORK

Students will need to take a minimum of 30 hours of dissertation credit before they are eligible to graduate. Students typically register for at least five dissertation credit hours (and not more than 10, without approval from the Director of the Doctoral Program) each fall and spring semester until 30 hours is reached; thereafter, if additional time is needed before the dissertation is

completed, the student must register for at least one dissertation credit each semester. Students in research assistant positions should inquire to the Director of the Doctoral Program how many dissertation credits to take. Any number of dissertation credits convey full-time enrollment status for financial aid purposes.

Students who are not enrolled and who have not made arrangements with the Director of the Doctoral Program for a formal leave of absence are subject to dismissal. International students who register for only one credit in a semester and who need to maintain their visa status may have to have their academic advisor complete a “Less Than Full-Time Enrollment” form.

Under special conditions and with the approval of the Director of the Doctoral program, a student may take a leave of absence for up to one year; 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 one dissertation credit hours during the semester when s/he has a dissertation defense. A grade of “In Progress” (IP) will be assigned to all semesters of dissertation credit until the final approved dissertation is submitted to the Registrar’s office. The Registrar will then obtain the dissertation letter grade from the dissertation chair, and all IPs then will be changed to this final grade.

DISSERTATION PROCESS

The dissertation process has four distinct stages:

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

VII. 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; and at least one external (non-SPA member) who, if not already a member of the Graduate Faculty at the University of Colorado Denver, may be temporarily appointed subject to approval by the Director of the Doctoral Program and the University of Colorado Denver. Students may also have at least one (but sometimes two) “external advisors” – who may be practitioners, researchers, or academics – 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 prior to starting their research for the dissertation defense proposal or dissertation process. All committee members must hold a terminal degree or get a waiver from the University of Colorado Denver.

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 dissertation defense proposal 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.

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. The dissertation committee should meet with the student at least once every year to provide feedback on the student’s progress. If the committee determines that the student’s progress is unsatisfactory, they will forward a written report to the student and the Director of the Doctoral Program suggesting steps to be taken to rectify the situation. Students in good standing who have not had a meeting with their dissertation committee in the preceding 12 months will not be permitted to register for subsequent semesters.

COMMITTEE AUTHORITY

The committee decides when a student’s work on a dissertation topic has advanced enough to warrant scheduling a pre-thesis dissertation proposal defense. Subsequently, after a student writes and reviews their dissertation with the committee, the committee determines when the dissertation is acceptable for defense. Following the 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, they 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 of the Doctoral Program. The chair must always be a full-time, tenured or tenure-track, SPA faculty member.

VIII. THE DISSERTATION COLLOQUIUM

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 them 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 them 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 of the Doctoral Program's approval) that agrees that the topic is both worthy and feasible.

PURPOSE OF THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENSE

The doctoral student presents the dissertation proposal to SPA faculty and students, and to their dissertation committee. This dissertation proposal defense provides a formal opportunity for feedback and suggestions for improvement from the entire SPA community before the writing of the dissertation. A student will prepare a specific proposal for a dissertation in consultation with their chair. From the defense, the student should gain 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 dissertation proposal defense is the last chance of the faculty to review the preparation of the student for conducting dissertation research. 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 they have a satisfactory mastery of literature or methodology, the committee may refuse to accept the dissertation proposal.

SCHEDULING

A student should schedule their dissertation proposal defense within one calendar year of successfully completing the comprehensive exam – or by the end of the third year for full-time students. Students who do not meet this deadline could be asked to communicate their progress and plan to schedule their dissertation proposal to the Director of the Doctoral Program. Additionally, students could be dismissed from the program if the defense is delayed beyond the third year without approval from the Director of the Doctoral Program.

Before scheduling the dissertation proposal defense, students should give at least one, or more, drafts to the committee members. Prior to the actual 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 dissertation proposal defense at the request of a candidate only with the concurrence of the committee chair. Students must request Dissertation Proposal Defense paperwork 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 must be notified of the desired date and time so that room arrangements can be made. No dissertation proposal defense will be scheduled if the student has not completed all required coursework and has not passed the comprehensive examination.

THE 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 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.

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, and
7. a bibliography.

CONDUCT OF DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENSE

At least three committee members must be present (in-person or virtually) at the exam. All SPA students and faculty are welcomed to attend all defenses. Usually, they are held at SPA so interested parties may readily attend. Although formats may vary, usually students make a brief formal presentation of their proposal and then accept questions and comments, both from the committee members and from the audience. At the defense the student formally asks of their 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. Alternatively, the committee may ask a student to prepare a memorandum to the record outlining faculty suggestions and detailing how they will be addressed. A second failure would result in the student being asked to leave the program.

PREPARATION OF FINAL PROPOSAL

The final written draft of the proposal 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.

IX. CONDUCTING RESEARCH AND WRITING THE DISSERTATION

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 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, defenses will be scheduled only during the fall and spring semesters.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

All students must obtain approval for dissertation research involving human subjects through the Colorado Multiple Institutional Review Board (COMIRB) at the University of Colorado Denver prior to conducting their research if it includes data covered under IRB rules whether for the dissertation or other projects. Students are responsible for understanding the requirements for IRB approval. Please refer to the policies and training documents found on the COMIRB website. Students may discuss any questions about the process with their dissertation chair and/or the Director of the Doctoral Program.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR PREPARATION

The final authority for the technical preparation of doctoral dissertations is the SPA PhD program. The Dissertation chair should be consulted early in the dissertation process for directions and dissertation format. The Writing Center has updated the university's thesis and dissertation format guidelines and has also created a canvas shell to walk students through the format review and ProQuest submission processes. If you are interested in learning more, use the link to self-enroll in their canvas shell: <https://ucdenver.instructure.com/enroll/EJT6FL>

The final and most consequential part of the PhD in Public Affairs is the dissertation. The dissertation builds on the coursework and exams, which will have prepared the student to conduct original, independent research. The dissertation is expected to be solo-authored work, conducted under the supervision of a Committee Chair and dissertation committee. As such, the specific contents, methodological approach, topic, and other elements are up to the student and their committee. While students work with their dissertation committees to plan, execute, and defend their dissertation work, there are some common guidelines that PhD students in the School of Public Affairs should follow:

1) The dissertation should be solo-authored work and not include co-authored scholarship. Data from a collaborative project can be used, but the analysis and writing should be completed entirely by the student. Two general formats exist for dissertations and are accepted by the School of Public Affairs: (1) the book model, and (2) the three-paper model. **Some faculty members prefer one format over another, so students should coordinate with their Committee Chair when determining which format to employ.**

- a. The book model is typically organized as though students are writing a book about the dissertation topic, whereas the three-paper model consists of three standalone, but related manuscripts linked by introductory and concluding chapters.
- b. The book model typically consists of an opening chapter that explains the research question and its importance, followed by a chapter that provides a review of relevant literature, followed by a chapter that describes the research design, followed by a chapter (or multiple) that reports findings, and concluding with a chapter that uses findings reported in the prior chapter to answer the research question posed in chapter 1. Additionally, the concluding chapter points the way to future research.
- c. The three-paper format typically consists of an introductory chapter that explains the conceptual framework for the three essays/studies that appear in chapters 2, 3, and 4. These three papers should be interrelated either thematically, methodologically, or employ the same dataset(s) or conceptual framework(s). The fifth chapter discusses the implications of the integrated findings across the three papers.

2) To encourage students to publish their work and prepare for the job market, the School of Public Affairs accepts published work (including accepted and conditionally accepted work) to be included in the dissertation as long as it is the student's solo-authored work. **At the discretion of the student's Dissertation Chair, solo-authored publications already submitted to or published by a peer-reviewed journal may be included as part of the dissertation.** SPA

approaches the dissertation experience as an opportunity for the student to work with their chair and committee to develop a multi-part project as a cohesive whole, not simply pasting manuscripts together for a 3-paper project. As such, it is expected that decisions about the inclusion of any material published or submitted for publication will be made in coordination with the Dissertation Chair.

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 Director of the Doctoral Program.

X. 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 University). 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 their dissertation by the beginning of the semester in which they hope 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. All members of the committee must be present for the defense, although a minority of members may participate by interactive video, but the Chair or student can only do so in exceptional circumstances with prior approval. In the event of an emergency that prevents one faculty committee member from attending the exam, the exam can proceed with the faculty members who can attend, and the student will schedule a separate meeting with the absent faculty member at an alternate time. The defense will be open to all University of Colorado faculty and students.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

After the student completes their 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 of the Doctoral Program; or
4. **REJECTION** – the dissertation and/or the candidate's state of knowledge is still not sufficient. The student, in consultation with their committee, will have to make substantial revisions and eventually schedule another defense. Students will be allowed only two defenses.

FORMAT REVIEW

After students have had their dissertation formally approved and signed by at least four members of the committee, a copy should be submitted to the Director of the Doctoral Program or committee chair for a final technical review in accordance with formatting guidelines at least six weeks before anticipated graduation. (The review period could change for any given semester; it is the student's responsibility to be aware of and meet these schedules.) Students must satisfy the form and style requirements of the doctoral program before their dissertation will be formally accepted by SPA.

If 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.

GRADUATION

To graduate in a given semester, a student must (1) apply for graduation in UCD Access and (2) submit copies of the dissertation according to UCD policies (see the University of Colorado Denver website for the most up-to-date rules <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/Graduate-School/student-services/Pages/ddcetsubmission.aspx>). No student will be permitted to graduate or attend commencement unless all requirements for the degree have been met.

XI. 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 3.33 in courses included in their program of study at the University of Colorado. No doctoral student will be advanced to candidacy if their grade point average is less than 3.33. 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 3.33, they 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 3.33 or above. The student will be subject to dismissal if:

1. the student does not earn a 3.33 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 3.33.

The final decision on dismissal will be made by the Director of the Doctoral Program. 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 Director of the Doctoral Program, a student will be allowed a reasonable leave of absence. The Student Services team has the appropriate form, which must be signed by the Director of the Doctoral Program. 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 Director of the Doctoral Program, 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 Director of the Doctoral Program.
3. During leave status, a student is expected to minimize their relationship with the University, its faculty, and its facilities.

Approved leaves of absence do not automatically extend the time limits for earning a degree, but they may be used as a reason to request an extension if needed.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Doctoral students are allowed to apply up to three semester hours of graded graduate-level credit taken at other appropriate universities toward their doctoral degree plan. Any such credits must be approved for transfer by the Director of the Doctoral Program. Courses taken more than seven years prior to the student's comprehensive examination will not be considered for transfer credit. 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. 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. Credit may not be transferred until the student has been enrolled at SPA for at least one semester, with a GPA of at least 3.0.

INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

With the permission of the Director of the Doctoral Program, independent study courses may count for up to 6 credit hours towards the coursework for the PhD. To ensure that faculty sponsors and students arrive at clear definitions 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 eight 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 University of Colorado Denver, typically for reasons beyond the candidate’s control (e.g., illness or extreme work-related conditions). Approved leaves do not automatically extend the deadline for completion.

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE PROGRAM RULES

All students must also comply with the University of Colorado Denver rules, available from the SPA office. SPA doctoral rules as outlined this Handbook are consistent with University of Colorado Denver rules.

SPA GRIEVANCE POLICY/PROCEDURES

This policy describes formal procedures by which a currently enrolled student may seek to remedy academic grievances within the School of Public Affairs. Academic grievances are challenges to academic actions or decisions, including but not limited to actions such as an academic grade or evaluation of a student’s work in a course, seminar, or other academic forum; a decision with respect to a student’s academic standing in a program or at the School; unjust treatment by a faculty member in a class; actions related to dissertation or capstone procedures, etc.

This policy refers only to academic grievances within the School of Public Affairs. The University of Colorado Denver has established mechanisms for non-academic grievances such as claims of sexual harassment, complaints against university administrative employees, policies, or procedures, interpersonal conflict resolution, and issues relating to student employment, and students should use those mechanisms for non-academic grievances. In addition, challenges involving an allegation of academic misconduct such as plagiarism or cheating are subject to a different policy. Please contact the Associate Dean if you need more information.

Informal Resolution of Academic Grievances

Absent unusual circumstances, students must first discuss the situation with the faculty member involved to see whether an informal resolution is possible.

Filing a Grievance

If the student and the faculty member are unable to reach resolution, the student may file a grievance with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. All grievances should be filed as quickly as possible, preferably within the same or following semester but in no case to exceed six months after the decision that is the subject of the grievance.

The grievance may be filed via email or in paper format, and should contain all of the following information:

- The student's name, degree program, and student ID number;
- The name of the faculty member involved, if any;
- The course name and semester, if the dispute involves a course;
- A brief statement of the nature of the grievance (not to exceed two pages);
- Any evidence that the student wishes to be considered in support of the grievance, such as a course syllabus, assignments, and communications with the faculty member; and
- The remedy requested by the student.

The Grievance Investigation

The Associate Dean will acknowledge receipt of the grievance, forward a copy to the faculty member involved and to the faculty program director. The faculty program director may decide to seek informal resolution by mediating between the student and the faculty member. If the faculty program director does not seek or obtain informal resolution, the Associate Dean will begin investigating the grievance. Investigation of the grievance will include speaking to the student and to the faculty member involved, and the Associate Dean may request additional information from the student or the faculty member. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs may also seek input or support on the investigation from the Associate Dean of Faculty affairs as needed.

In the event that the Associate Dean for Student Affairs is involved in the circumstances leading to the grievance, the grievance will be investigated by the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. The Associate Dean will conclude the investigation and prepare a written report. The Associate Dean will strive to complete this report within 30 days of the filing of the grievance; however, please note that additional time may be required due to breaks between semesters or over the summer or efforts by the faculty program director to resolve the dispute informally.

Decision by the Dean

The Associate Dean's report shall be submitted to the Dean and shall include a recommendation about the disposition of the grievance. Within ten business days, the Dean will decide whether to follow the recommendation and will forward a copy of the report together with the Dean's decision on the disposition of the grievance to the student, the faculty member, and the faculty program director.

Appealing the Dean's Decision

If the student is not satisfied with the Dean's decision, he or she may make a written request to the Dean that a faculty panel be appointed to review the grievance and consider the appeal. This request should be submitted within ten business days after receipt of the Dean's decision and may be submitted via email. The Dean shall appoint a panel consisting of three faculty members who were not involved in the original circumstances of the grievance. The faculty panel will consider the evidence and will make a written report with recommendations to the Dean within 30 days, unless additional time is required due to breaks between semesters or over the summer. The Dean will decide whether to uphold or deny the appeal and will notify the student and faculty member of that decision in writing within ten business days.

Resolution of Other Types of Disputes

This policy only relates to academic grievances at SPA. Other types of disputes are handled in different offices and/or with different procedures, as follows:

- Disputes relating to academic integrity are handled according to SPA's Academic Integrity Policy. Contact your advisor or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for more information.
- Disputes related to protected category discrimination (such as race, sex, or disability discrimination) are handled by the Office of Equity.
- Disputes related to the conduct of other students are handled by the Office of Student Conduct.
- The Ombuds' Office is available to discuss or mediate other types of interpersonal disputes if needed.

General. Any deadline in this policy may be waived with the agreement of the student and the School if needed to ensure that all relevant information is considered.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As members of the CU Denver academic community, faculty, staff, and students accept the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty and ethical conduct in all forms of academic work.

CU Denver Honor Code

As a member of the University of Colorado Denver community, I pledge to:

Act with honesty and ethics in academia and in society by building mutual trust and responsibility as a foundation for lifelong integrity;
Advance learning, knowledge, generation, and the free exchange of views and ideas as the lifeblood of academic freedom and of democracy;
Embrace diversity and practice inclusion, showing civility, respect, and care toward ALL persons, standing up for the essential worth and dignity of every individual;
Take responsibility for the consequences of my own actions and share responsibility for the well-being and safety of the community by also holding others similarly responsible.
I will honor these commitments in every part of my life.

What is Academic Integrity and why is it so important?

Academic Integrity is defined by the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) as “a commitment to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.” (ICAI, 2021 p. 4)

Handling Academic Dishonesty

The CU Denver Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) is charged with promoting and enforcing the CU Denver Academic Integrity Policy. The AIC is composed of faculty, students, and staff as well as a non-voting member from the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards who coordinates the committee. There are two Canvas Classes designed to inform faculty and students regarding Academic Misconduct at CU Denver:

While most student violations center on cheating or plagiarism, the CU Denver Academic Integrity Policy is more comprehensive and includes the following categories:

Academic Misconduct

Use of unauthorized assistance in attempt to deceive an instructor or other person who is assigned to evaluate the student's work in meeting course and degree requirements; or actions that interfere with the ability of the instructor to fairly judge the work of the student or other students.

Plagiarism

Use of another person's distinctive ideas or words without acknowledgment. The incorporation of another person's work into one's own requires appropriate identification and acknowledgment, regardless of the means of appropriation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following, when the source is not noted: 1) Word-for-word copying of another person's ideas or words; 2) The mosaic (the interspersing of one's own words here and there while, in essence, copying another's work); 3) The paraphrase (the rewriting of another's work, yet still using their fundamental idea or theory); 4) Fabrication of references (inventing or counterfeiting sources); 5) Submission of another's work as one's own; or 6) Neglecting quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged.

Cheating

The possession, communication, or use of information, materials, notes, study aids, or other devices not authorized by the instructor in an academic exercise, or communication with another person during such exercise for the purpose of obtaining or providing unauthorized information or materials. "Authorization" is legitimate only if given by the faculty member responsible for the evaluation of the student's work. Examples of cheating include but are not limited to: 1) Copying from another's paper or receiving unauthorized assistance from another during an academic exercise or in the submission of academic assignments; 2) Using a calculator, cell phone, or other electronic device when not permitted; 3) Collaborating with another student during an academic exercise without the prior consent of the instructor.

Fabrication

Inventing or counterfeiting information, such as creating results not obtained in a study or laboratory experiment.

Falsification

Deliberately altering or changing results to suit one's needs in an experiment or other academic exercise.

Multiple Submission

The submission of academic work for which academic credit has already been earned, when such submission is made without instructor authorization.

Misuse of Academic Materials

Includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Stealing or destroying library or reference materials or computer programs

Stealing or destroying another student's notes or materials, or having such materials in one's possession without the owner's permission
Receiving assistance in locating or using sources of information in an assignment when such assistance has been not been authorized by the instructor
Possessing or using prior examinations or answer keys, unless authorized by the instructor
Altering, forging, or falsifying academic materials
Selling or purchasing prior examinations, papers, or assignments.
Complicity in Academic Dishonesty
Knowingly contributing to another's academic misconduct.

For more about Academic Integrity and misconduct, see the University of Colorado Denver's website (<https://www.ucdenver.edu/student/wellness/student-conduct/academic-integrity>). **In the SPA PhD program, academic integrity and the Student Code of Conduct apply to coursework as well as other expectations inherent in a doctoral program such as: the dissertation and proposal, Comprehensive Exams, conference papers, journal articles, and similar scholarly products.**

APPENDIX: SAMPLE 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 PhD 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:

Begin selection of faculty advisor

Fall: PUAD 8010 and PUAD 8030

Spring: PUAD 8020 and PUAD 8040

Summer: Possible elective courses or summer research with faculty

Year 2:

Fall: PUAD 8050 and PUAD 8060

Spring: PUAD 8070 and PUAD 7007

Summer: Prepare for comprehensive exam in August

Year 3:

Fall: Prepare dissertation proposal (prospectus) and additional elective coursework

Spring: Prepare dissertation proposal (prospectus), pre-dissertation review;; dissertation proposal defense

Years 3-4-5: Write dissertation

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