PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.)

Program mission
The mission of the Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration program is to provide students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to conduct original and scholarly research in academic institutions, governmental agencies and public policy research institutions. The purpose of the program is to prepare students for scholarly and leadership roles in government, universities, research organizations and other settings where knowledge and research skills in public policy and administration are needed. The doctoral program is committed to accomplishing this mission by creating an intellectually vibrant atmosphere for scholarship involving an active faculty from a broad spectrum of academic disciplines and substantial interaction with government agencies and community groups.

Program goals
1. Enable students to develop expertise in a particular area of public policy
2. Enable students to apply their knowledge and skills in order to conduct original and scholarly research

Student learning outcomes
1. Students will be able to expertly apply public policy theories, integrating relevant ideas, concepts and approaches from the humanities, social sciences, law and public administration to policy analysis, formulation and implementation.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate mastery of a particular area of public policy.
3. Students will be able to formulate appropriate research questions related to public policy and apply methodological knowledge to develop an appropriate research design for a research proposal.
4. Students will be able to conduct original and scholarly research on public policy issues.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs)

Degree candidacy requirements
A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student’s faculty regarding the student’s academic achievements and the student’s readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy)

Graduation requirements
As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info)

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://www.graduate.admissions.vcu.edu).

Admission requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry:</th>
<th>Deadline dates:</th>
<th>Test requirements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Dec 15 for assistantships</td>
<td>GRE, GMAT, MAT or LSAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 30 final date for admission consideration</td>
<td>International applicants TOEFL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special requirements
- Master’s degree, J.D. or M.D. from an accredited university. Graduate assistantships are only awarded for fall admission. For students wishing to be considered for a limited number of fellowships, materials must be received no later than Dec. 15. Spring admissions are considered exceptions and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Admission is open to qualified persons without regard to age, physical disability, national origin, race, religion or gender. Admission is competitive. The admission process is intended to assure a reasonable fit between the student’s professional and research interests and faculty...
considered on a case-by-case basis. Assistantships are only offered
by Dec. 15 from those students wishing to be considered for assistantships.

A small number of special admissions may be offered (Oct.15 application
deadline) for entry the following spring semester; however, these are

following fall semester; however, materials must be received no later than

The primary admission deadline is Jan. 30 for enrollment to begin the

In order to apply for admission to the Ph.D. in Public Policy and
Administration program, prospective students must submit:

1. A VCU application for graduate study
2. Transcripts from all previous colleges or universities
3. Scores from a standardized examination (GRE, GMAT, MAT or LSAT
   and TOEFL for international students)
4. Three letters of reference
5. A personal statement describing reasons for applying to the program
6. A current professional resume

Admission standards

Applicants are evaluated based on the entire admission package;
however, the following provides some guidelines for a competitive
application.

1. Cumulative minimum GPA of 3.6 (on a four-point scale) or equivalent
   for graduate-level work
2. Standardized examination scores less than five years old (GRE
   preferred)
3. Three references – a minimum of one academic recommendation
   attesting to the applicant's ability to succeed in doctoral-level work
4. Personal statement, resume, curriculum vitae that:
   a. Clearly articulates the applicant's academic research interests
      whereby a decision can be made as to the applicant's "fit" with
      the program
   b. Shows a clear indication of a faculty match and expertise for the
      applicant's research interests
   c. Displays enthusiasm for the field of public policy and
      administration
   d. Is well-written and error-free
5. All students admitted to the program must have completed prior
   to admission, or are required to complete during the first year, the
   following graduate-level courses (or their equivalents):
   b. Statistics (equivalent of PADM 624)
   c. Public policy, economics or administration/management

The primary admission deadline is Jan. 30 for enrollment to begin the
following fall semester; however, materials must be received no later than
Dec. 15 from those students wishing to be considered for assistantships.
A small number of special admissions may be offered (Oct.15 application
deadline) for entry the following spring semester; however, these are
considered on a case-by-case basis. Assistantships are only offered
to those offered full-time admission in the fall. Applicants who wish to
be considered for the Oct.15 deadline must include a letter requesting
and justifying early admission. If the request for early consideration is
not accepted, the application will be held over to the Jan. 30 application
deadline for consideration for the following fall admission.

While VCU Graduate School policy allows up to six credit hours of
course work to be taken as a nondegree-seeking student prior to formal
admission, taking such courses in no way guarantees admission to the
program. Also, transfer credit hours are only considered for elective
courses. Core courses must be taken at VCU.

Application information is available from the L. Douglas Wilder School
of Government and Public Affairs Office of Graduate Advising or the
Graduate Admissions Office. International applicant information
and materials are available from International Admissions (http://
international.admissions.vcu.edu).

Degree requirements

The doctoral program is structured around a core curriculum and four
areas of concentration. The curriculum is designed to provide a sound
intellectual foundation for the pursuit of scholarly research in areas of
public policy, urban and regional policy, public administration and criminal
justice policy. Students will select a concentration after the first year of
study and after passing the comprehensive examination.

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements
(http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info), students
take a minimum of 45 graduate credit hours of course work and
dissertation research in addition to any prerequisites that might be
necessary. Six of these courses are part of the core, and at least four
are concentration courses. The remaining two electives are to be taken
outside the concentration with additional methodology courses highly
recommended. Required courses generally will be available on an evening
or weekend schedule.

Course work in the Ph.D. program has a strong orientation toward
research, both applied and theoretical. Where appropriate, course work
may be linked to funded university projects or to external agency-based
analytical work. Courses emphasize research, writing and presentation
skills.

All students must take a comprehensive qualifying examination on
the core course requirements and a written or oral comprehensive
examination in the concentration and must be approved by the VCU
Graduate School for degree candidacy before beginning work on their
dissertations.

Curriculum requirements

Core courses (required)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 711</td>
<td>Seminar in Public Policy I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 712</td>
<td>Seminar in Public Policy II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 721</td>
<td>Survey of Applied Research Methods in Public Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 722</td>
<td>Survey of Data Analysis Techniques in Public Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 724</td>
<td>Seminar in Advanced Analytical Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Policy and Administration, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Concentration courses
All students will select a concentration after the first year of study and after passing the comprehensive examination. They will take four courses in one of the following areas of concentration. Courses will be selected from a list designated by the concentration committee for each area. The concentration committee will approve the program of study for each student in the concentration.

Electives outside of the concentration
Students will take at least three elective courses outside the concentration with the approval of their advisers. Students may take courses at the 500-level or higher from other Ph.D. concentration areas (as listed under each concentration) and other programs, such as homeland security and emergency preparedness, criminal justice, public administration and urban and regional planning within the Wilder School. In addition, students may choose elective courses from among the following three-credit courses:

Sample plan of study

Year one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 780</td>
<td>Synthesizing Seminar in Public Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPER/STAT 636</td>
<td>Machine Learning Algorithms</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation

After completing all of the core courses in the Ph.D. program, each student takes a comprehensive qualifying examination on the core. The examination is designed to evaluate the mastery students have achieved over the body of knowledge represented by the core. It is intended to measure the ability of students to organize, integrate and creatively apply the knowledge in the field to important problems. Although organized around the courses in the core, the examination is not restricted to material covered in those courses. It is expected that doctoral students will read well beyond the confines of individual courses.

In order to continue in the program, students must attempt the qualifying examination no later than the next regular semester following the completion of the core course requirements. They must pass the exam by the end of the second regular semester after completing the core course requirements. A student may attempt the examination twice. Examinations are offered twice per year.

A student also must take a written or oral comprehensive examination in the concentration. The concentration faculty will determine the form of the examination. A student may attempt the examination twice. Each student must pass this second examination before defending a dissertation proposal.

Dissertation research

Course | Title | Hours |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 898</td>
<td>Dissertation Research (minimum nine credits)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 45

Qualifying examinations

After completing all of the core courses in the Ph.D. program, students must prepare a dissertation involving original research that contributes to the body of knowledge in the field. A committee approved by the associate dean of the Wilder School supervises the dissertation work. The chair of the committee must be appointed as graduate faculty and be a core or affiliate faculty member of the Ph.D. program.

The first formal step in the dissertation process is the development and defense of a dissertation prospectus that frames the problem to be studied, provides background on the problem, presents a review of relevant literature and justifies the methodology to be used. The defense of the prospectus as well as the completed dissertation must be presented orally and be approved by the dissertation committee. The dissertation defense is conducted in a forum open to other students and faculty.

Sample plan of study

Year one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 711</td>
<td>Seminar in Public Policy I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 717</td>
<td>Law and Public Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 721</td>
<td>Survey of Applied Research Methods in Public Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours: 9
### Spring semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 712</td>
<td>Seminar in Public Policy II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 716</td>
<td>Public Policy Economics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 722</td>
<td>Survey of Data Analysis Techniques in Public Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours: 9

### Summer semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other optional courses</td>
<td>variable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours: 0

### Year two

**Fall semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 724</td>
<td>Seminar in Advanced Analytical Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 780</td>
<td>Synthesizing Seminar in Public Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concentration courses</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First comprehensive examination on the core</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours: 12

### Spring semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concentration courses and electives</td>
<td>variable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours: 0

### Year three

**Fall semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 898</td>
<td>Dissertation Research (variable credit hours)</td>
<td>1-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second comprehensive examination on the concentration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>variable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours: 1-12

**Spring semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPAD 898</td>
<td>Dissertation Research (variable credit hours)</td>
<td>1-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours: 1-12

Total Hours: 32-54

1. Recommended: See concentration listings for required and elective courses.
2. Students on 12-month assistantships are required to register for a minimum of three graduate credit hours.

### Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 45

#### Graduate program director
Sarah Jane Brubaker, Ph.D.
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Email: sbrubaker@vcu.edu
Phone: (804) 827-2400

#### Additional contact
Denia A. Lee-Hing, Ed.D.
Director of graduate studies
Email: dleehing@vcu.edu
Phone: (804) 827-1430

#### Program website:
[academic/pubpolicy.html](http://wilder.vcu.edu/academic/pubpolicy.html)