



Ph.D. Program in Public Affairs

HANDBOOK, 2024-2025

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides a roadmap for your exciting intellectual journey in the Ph.D. program in Public Affairs offered by the Department of Public Policy and Administration at Florida International University (FIU), Miami's leading public research institution. Plan your career from the very first day. You are now a member of the community of scholars. Becoming a good scholar requires a lot of work of outstanding quality. You should continuously strive to present FIU with your best work. You are in a program that takes pride in turning its students into excellent scholars and placing them in research universities. The expectation is that you will become an example for the next cohort of students coming to the program. This handbook should help you successfully navigate your new journey. Each student faces their own challenges, but the good news is that you are not alone in your journey. You will work with your mentor and later with your dissertation committee who are all vested in your success as a scholar and professional. Below is some brief advice to keep in mind when setting your goals as a Ph.D. student.

First, delineate your research area carefully. Find a topic you are passionate about. Keep in mind that some research areas draw more attention than others. Discuss with professors in the department and identify possible topics. Then find a mentor who is also passionate about your topic. Be prepared to adjust your topic or even change your research question to better align with your mentor's expertise. You will benefit from their subject knowledge and advice.

Second, take advantage of all opportunities to maximize your career potential—enroll in appropriate courses, write papers of superior quality, present your best work at conferences, engage with external scholars. Look for coauthors within the program and outside. Ask the faculty members in the department if you can join their projects and help them. Approach your fellow doctoral students with ideas and work together on papers.

Third, your dissertation is the main intellectual product out of the Ph.D. program, and it generally shapes the research agenda in the first few years post-graduation. In this sense, it is essential to find an important research question for your dissertation. Be bold, you can always scale back.

Fourth, we expect that you publish at least one article in a high-ranking academic journal before graduation. This can be a single-authored or coauthored paper. Finding an academic job is extremely competitive. To be considered for a position with a research university, you should either have one publication in one of the best ranked journals in the field or several publications in mid-level journals. Plan accordingly.

WHO ARE WE?

The Ph.D. program in Public Affairs is the very first doctoral program at FIU (started in 1983). It is a dynamic program, with students from many states and countries around the world. The program features an “apprentice style” system for preparing students for their careers as academics or senior level public officials. Small classes of a diverse group of students encourage close interactions between faculty members and students and promote peer collaboration. Our Ph.D. program equips you with critical thinking and research capacity on various governance issues. Research areas broadly encompass public administration, management, policy, and service. We place students in academia as well as senior positions in university, public, and non-profit organizations.

FIU is a top-tier research institution located in Miami, a dynamic multicultural metropolis ideally suited for the study of wide array of urban management and policy issues, both domestic and international. The university has obtained the highest Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education category for doctoral research universities; it is recognized as R1—Doctoral University—Highest Research Activity. The university’s total research awards exceeded \$100 million annually in the recent years. With an enrollment of over 54,000 students, FIU is among the top 10 largest universities in the nation.

The Ph.D. program in Public Affairs is offered by the *Department of Public Policy and Administration*. The department’s emphasis is on creative problem-solving, leadership and management in complex urban environments domestically and internationally. In addition to the Ph.D. program, the department provides students with a professional education in public sector and nonprofit management by offering a Bachelor of Public Policy and Service and a NASPAA accredited Master of Public Administration. The Chair of the department, Dr. Shaoming Cheng, is responsible for all academic and financial aspects of the department. Dr. Alexander Kroll serves as the department’s Ph.D. program director.

The Department of Public Policy and Administration is one of the eight departments within the *Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs* (SIPA). SIPA also houses many of the University’s most prominent international centers, institutes, and programs. The SIPA Dean’s office provides the overall guidance and financial support to the Ph.D. program. Dean Shlomi Dinar closely monitors all Ph.D. programs in the SIPA and reviews all academic documents (e.g., dissertation, annual reviews).

The *University Graduate School* oversees the admissions process and compliance with all university and other formal requirements of graduate programs. The graduate school lays out the policies and procedures of the university graduate programs. It also monitors students’ progress and academic documents.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

FIU's requirement to complete a doctoral degree is 75 total credits. The Ph.D. program in Public Affairs is a 63-credit hour program beyond the Master's degree or its equivalent. Of these, 48 hours are awarded for coursework as follows: seven principal core courses (21 credit hours), two flexible core courses (6 credit hours), five specialization elective courses (15 credit hours), and a comprehensive examination (6 credit hours). The coursework generally takes two years for full-time students. The remaining 15 credit hours are for Ph.D. dissertation work.

Upon starting the program, students are assigned a faculty advisor who is a full-time faculty member, possibly relevant to the student's area of research interest. When completing all coursework, students must demonstrate competence in the following areas: American political economy, advanced statistical and qualitative research methods, international development administration, organizational theory and design, and local economic development and urban management. The program director may assign specific coursework to students with deficiencies in any of the above-mentioned areas.

Successful completion of course work entails obtaining at least a B letter grade. Students who fail to earn at least a B grade in a given course, will need to retake the course. While the program will assist students with enrollment, they themselves are ultimately responsible for identifying courses, enrolling in them, meeting registration deadlines, and paying late fees or other charges. Students should successfully complete core and specialization courses and pass the comprehensive examination in order to advance to Ph.D. candidacy and defend their dissertation proposal. Generally, students can retake failed courses or exams once. Failing a course or exam a second time will lead to dismissal from the program.

Residency Requirement

Ph.D. students must also establish residency defined as the completion of a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours within any consecutive 12-month period. The residency requirement is intended to ensure that doctoral students contribute to and benefit from the complete spectrum of educational, professional, and enrichment opportunities on campus.

Leave of Absence

The University Graduate School's registration requirements need to be followed during the course of the program. Generally, students need to be continuously registered, and any leave (even for one semester, including summers) needs to be approved by the program director. Before taking the comprehensive examination, a one-semester leave may be granted in cases of emergencies at the discretion of the program director. Leaves that span across multiple semesters are very rare, and if a student wants to be excused from registration for three or more consecutive

semesters, they must formally request a leave of absence, following the University Graduate School's process. After taking the comprehensive examination, a student needs to apply for a leave of absence for even one semester (continuous registration is required, including during summer semesters). A petition for "Exception to Graduate Requirements" needs to be submitted for obtaining leave of absence. The leave time must be approved by the University Graduate School. Leave will be granted only under exceptional circumstances.

International students must also contact the Office of International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) to ensure compliance with F-1 enrollment requirements.

Transfer of Credits

Admitted students may transfer a maximum of 12 semester credits towards Ph.D. degree requirements, subject to the approval of the Ph.D. Program Committee. Generally, transfer credits do not replace program requirements. In order to receive transfer credits, the following requirements must be met:

- Students must submit a formal request for transfer of credits, along with the syllabi of the courses (if they are not FIU courses).
- The transferred coursework must have been at the 5000 or higher level of study.
- Students must have received a B or better in those courses.
- The courses must be relevant to the student's area of research interest.

Graduate Assistantships

SIPA allocates a limited number of Graduate Assistantships (GA) to the Department. The program director then selects eligible students for the funding on a competitive basis. In order to receive the assistantship, doctoral students must be enrolled full-time (9 credit hours during the Fall and Spring terms, and 6 credit hours during the Summer term). Students with assistantships cannot hold other employment. The assistantship is awarded in one-year blocks and is generally provided for up to the first four years of the student's doctoral study. Students on GA contracts are required to work 20 hours a week during each semester they are on contract, including the summer term. GA assignments are made by the Ph.D. director for the Fall semester and then for the Spring and Summer semesters.

Please note that a Graduate Assistantship is in essence an employment contract that can be terminated for underperformance. To remain eligible for the GA Award, students must maintain a minimum of 3.3 Grade Point Average and make satisfactory progress towards completion of the Ph.D. degree. Furthermore, failure to satisfactorily perform all GA work responsibilities can result in immediate revocation of the GA Award and forfeiture of all associated privileges and benefits. Continuation of financial support beyond the initial appointment period is dependent upon the availability of funds and the student's performance in the Ph.D. in Public Affairs program.

The exact amount of assistantship depends upon funding provided by the University and the Florida legislature. The assistance includes a bi-weekly stipend and tuition waiver. The stipend is approximately \$24,000 annually. These assistantships do not cover additional student fees, such as health, parking, athletic fees, and per credit fees. FIU has partnered with the State University System's insurance broker, Gallagher Student Health and Risk, to provide the GA's health insurance through United Healthcare. All GAs are required to participate in this health insurance plan and are automatically enrolled by UGS. GAs pay roughly 20% of the insurance costs, with the rest being covered by the UGS.

Students with GA contracts work all year around, except on days when the university is closed (note, for example, that the university is open during Spring Break). Generally, these students are expected to be on campus during the duration of their contracts. Discuss the details of your work arrangement and possible adjustments to the general rule with the professor to whom you have been assigned. If students on GA contracts need to travel off-campus for **more than one week** during the Summer semester, they need to obtain permission/approval from the professor to whom they are assigned and from the Ph.D. program director.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

Principal Core Curriculum (21 credit hours)

PAD 7055	Scope and Theory of Public Administration	3 hours
PAD 7155	Organizational Development and Change in Public and Nonprofit Organizations	3 hours
PAD 7277	Public Administration and the American Political Economy	3 hours
PAD 7703C	Empirical Methods in Public Administration	3 hours
PAD 7705	Applied Quantitative Analysis I	3 hours
PAD 7707	Applied Quantitative Analysis II	3 hours
URS 7156	Research Practicum	3 hours
PAD 6915	Professional Development Workshop (PDW)	0 hours

Flexible Core Courses (6 credits)

(Select two courses from the following)

PAD 7808	Economic Development and Urban Management	3 hours
PAD 7865	Development Administration	3 hours
PAF 7002	Foundations of Policy Analysis	3 hours
URS 7644	Managing Public Financial Resources	3 hours

Specialization Courses (15 credit hours)

Students admitted with a completed master's degree are required to take at least five courses in an area of specialization in consultation with their advisor. Students admitted directly from an undergraduate program must complete at least 27 specialization credits. The courses must be at the 5000, 6000, or 7000 (graduate) level and may be taken within the University. These specialization electives may also be especially designed courses developed in conjunction with the student's faculty advisor and with the approval of the Ph.D. Director. Specialization areas may include subfields within the realm of public affairs (e.g., public budgeting and financing, human resource management, local government policies, urban management, international and comparative public administration, etc.) or may involve cognate disciplines. At least three hours must be URS 7926 (Supervised Readings).

In developing a specialization and program of studies, students may consult with their faculty advisor, appropriate faculty members in public administration, as well as others related to their area of interest. If a student's principal area of interest is in a cognate discipline outside of the Department of Public Policy and Administration, the student and Ph.D. Director should consult with appropriate faculty in designing the program of studies.

First Summer Research Paper: Requirements and Deadlines

During the first summer semester of the Ph.D. program, students begin working on an empirical research project under supervision by a faculty advisor. Students register with the Ph.D. director and work on the paper under the supervision of a faculty member with Graduate Faculty status of their choosing. Prior to registering for the summer paper course, students need to have completed PAD 7705 and PAD 7703C.

Together with their paper advisor, students should develop a completion plan for the paper, to which both sides commit. Students need to be proactive and take the lead on the paper project, while the faculty advisor will provide feedback. More detailed instructions for the completion of the paper will be provided by the Ph.D. director at the beginning of the Summer semester.

At the end of the Summer, students will receive a grade of incomplete (IN). Grades will be announced after paper presentations have been completed (typically) in mid-Fall. At that point, incompletes will be turned into letter grades. Like for all Ph.D. classes, grades below a B are not considered passing grades.

Failing grades (missing papers will receive an F) will be entered at the end of Fall. They document a student's failed first attempt. Students then have until the last day of classes of Spring A to submit their revised and improved paper. They will present their papers in Spring B. The grade for the second attempt will be

entered by the end of Spring. Failing the paper for a second time will lead to the student's dismissal from the program.

Once the paper has been successfully presented to the Ph.D. committee, students may want to consider involving their paper advisor as a co-author ([see here](#) what is expected of co-authors). Eventually, the goal should be to present the full paper at a conference and submit it as a possible publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

Choosing a Dissertation Chair and Dissertation Committee

The student is required to identify an appropriate Ph.D. Dissertation Committee Chair, who will guide them through the dissertation process. The Chair must be identified by the end of the second year in the program using the program's "Dissertation Chair Form," so that the student can advance adequately with the dissertation proposal. S/he may or may not be the same as the faculty advisor assigned during the first year. The Chair should have substantive expertise in the student's area of research interest. The Chair(s) must be a FIU faculty member with Graduate Faculty Status (the list is available on University Graduate School website).

The student should also select the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee with the help of the Chair, which should be no later than the semester in which s/he is taking the comprehensive examination. This is usually the Fall of the third year for full-time students and the Spring of the third year for part-time students. The University Graduate School's "Appointment of Dissertation Committee" online process should be completed prior to taking the comprehensive examination. The process requires students to explain how each committee member will contribute to guiding the student through their dissertation work and submit a brief dissertation abstract.

Comprehensive Examination (6 credit hours)

Subsequent to completion of course work, students are required to pass a three-part comprehensive examination. Usually, the Comps are completed during the Fall of the third year for full-time students and the Spring of the third year for part-time students. The first component is an about eight-hour long written examination spread over two days testing knowledge of the Ph.D. core and related materials. The second component is the 25-page research proposal that will form the basis of the student's dissertation work. Students are required to consult with their dissertation chair (and committee) about their proposal. A faculty committee reviews both the written examination and the research proposal. The third component is the face-to-face oral examination with the faculty committee. In the oral exam, the committee would seek clarifications and further explanations about the answers. The student will then get a passing or failing grade in the overall comprehensive examination from the committee.

If the student passes, s/he can move forward with the dissertation. S/he should then complete the University Graduate School's "Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy" online process. The student should not have an "IN" grade in any course at the time of submitting the Application for Candidacy; else the UGS will not accept the application. A student who fails the examination on the first attempt must retake the examination at its next offering. If a student **fails the examination twice, s/he will be automatically dismissed from the program** in accordance with general FIU policy.

In the Fall semester, the written component is generally held on the first Friday of November; the research proposal is due by the subsequent Friday; and the oral examinations are typically held two weeks after the written component. In the Spring semester, the written component is generally held on the first Friday of April; the research proposal is due by the subsequent Friday; and the oral examinations are held the next week. The comprehensive examination is not held during the Summer semester.

Dissertation work (15 credit hours)

Upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination, a student should finalize the dissertation proposal in consultation with their dissertation committee. Most chairs and dissertation committees require a full-fledged proposal (25 to 30 pages plus bibliography) to demonstrate the student's depth of knowledge and preparedness about the subject matter. Students are required to formally defend their dissertation prospectus in an oral presentation.

The formal proposal defense is required to be held before the end of the semester subsequent to passing the Comprehensive Examination. Part-time students have an additional semester to formally defend their proposal. Proposal defenses can be held fully via Zoom, in person, or hybrid. Students are required to share their 5-page proposal, defense date, time, and place (and possibly Zoom link) with the program director no later than one week prior to the defense. That way, it can be announced, and faculty and students can attend the public part of the defense.

The University Graduate School's "Doctoral Dissertation Proposal" process is completed after successful proposal defense. The Dissertation Proposal online process requires the submission of a five-page version of the proposal to the University Graduate School. Students should also obtain clearance from FIU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that their research meets the protocol for research with human subjects before initiating fieldwork. IRB approval and completion of the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Certification (which is different from the regular CITI certificate) are required for UGS's approval of the proposal. Students who do not collect data in their dissertations shall submit the IRB Human Subject Research Determination Form to FIU's IRB office and once approved attach this form in lieu of an IRB approval memo as a part of the proposal defense process. In consultation with their major professor, students may want to

submit their project IRBs prior to their defense date to save time. Changes to the IRB can still be made post-defense to the IRB through an amendment.

Dissertation Defense

After the proposal defense, students could start their formal research and analysis required for the dissertation. This is generally referred to as the All-but-Dissertation (ABD) stage. Upon completion of the dissertation research and writing, students need to formally defend the dissertation research at a meeting conducted by the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee. Students are required to submit their manuscript through Turnitin and share the respective report with the major professor and program director. If assistance is needed, they can reach out to the program coordinator.

Students will also need to submit an iThenticate report for their dissertation created by their major professor. The report needs to be submitted in full and be based on the final dissertation document, not any previous versions. The following filters shall be used: Exclude Quotes, Exclude Bibliography, Exclude sources that are less than 1%. High similarity scores due the fact that have chapters have been published prior to graduation require an explanatory statement by the major professor (including citations), which shall be attached to the beginning of the iThenticate report.

A full draft of the dissertation (along with the iThenticate report and a defense announcement) should be submitted to the Ph.D. Director five weeks before the planned date for Dissertation Defense. The University Graduate School's "Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense" online process should be completed and submitted along with the dissertation draft.

To ensure all UGS procedural requirements for the dissertation are met, students should review the Online Dissertation Milestones instructions and deadlines available on the UGS website. All committee members must approve the dissertation document before the student can apply for the dissertation defense. By their signatures, committee members certify that the dissertation is ready for defense. One copy of the dissertation, certified as complete and provisionally acceptable to the committee and the Dean, and one copy of the dissertation defense announcement must be submitted to UGS by the published deadline on their academic calendar. To facilitate the defense, both the student and major professor need to be on campus together. Committee members may attend the defense via Zoom, in which case the defense is considered hybrid.

The announcement of the dissertation defense is an invitation to members of the University community to observe the defense (if "hybrid," a Zoom link should be included in the announcement). Announcements will be posted on the UGS website for the academic community to view. Dissertation abstracts should be written clearly, in a language accessible to lay people, and free of unnecessary disciplinary jargon; all acronyms should be fully identified.

Dissertation Research Funding

There are two forms of dissertation research funding available within FIU through the University Graduate School. The *Doctoral Evidence Acquisition (DEA)* Fellowship is specifically intended to support doctoral students for whom their current means of financial support would significantly interfere with or preclude their ability to collect the evidence needed for their doctoral research. A DEA Fellow is awarded a stipend to enable evidence acquisition that otherwise would not be possible. Evidence acquisition activities that might be supported by the DEA Fellowship include, but are not limited to, off-campus library/archive research, field work, experiments, interviews, collection of specimens, etc.

The *Dissertation Year Fellowship (DYF)* provides support to highly qualified FIU doctoral students during the writing phase of their dissertation. It is intended to facilitate the timely completion of high-quality manuscripts and dissertations. Dissertation Fellows are expected to graduate within one year after receiving the award.

Besides FIU funding, there are possibilities for external funding for dissertation research, depending on the topic. Students should consult with the dissertation chair to explore such opportunities.

Satisfactory Progress toward Degree

Doctoral students should make satisfactory progress toward the Ph.D. degree. Below is a list of the minimum requirements that students in the Ph.D. Program in Public Affairs are expected to meet in order to be in good standing before and after candidacy (i.e., successful passing of the comprehensive exam). Students who fail to meet one or more of the below requirements will be placed on **probation** for at least one semester. The probation letter will specify improvement standards that need to be met during the probation period. Lack of improvement or additional violations of the minimum requirements during that period will result in a **dismissal** from the program.

Minimum Requirements before Candidacy:

- Maintain continuous enrollment for 9 credit hours for full-time students and at least 6 credit hours per semester for part-time students (for the summer semester, the requirement is 6 credit hours), any leaves or deviations from this enrollment schedule need to be approved by the program director;
- Pass the First Summer Research Paper requirement in the semester in which the course is taken;
- Receive no grades below "B";
- Complete annual student evaluation prior to the program deadline;
- Identify Dissertation Chair by the end of the second year in the program;

- No severe delays regarding the completion of the summer paper, research practicum, dissertation committee formation, and Comprehensive Exam (see the respective sections for more details);
- Pass the Second Summer Prospectus Writing requirement in the semester in which the course (URS 7156 Research Practicum) is taken (usually, the summer of the second year).
- Pass all three components of the program's comprehensive examination in no more than two attempts (see "Comprehensive Examination" section above). Failure to comply with this requirement will lead to dismissal from the program, not probation.

Minimum Requirements after Candidacy:

- Maintain continuous enrollment for at least 3 credit hours;
- Receive no F (failure) or U (unsatisfactory) grade for dissertation credits;
- Complete annual student evaluation prior to the program deadline;
- Defend Dissertation Proposal in the semester following successful completion of the comprehensive exam (PAD 7960) for full-time students; this requirement is extended to two semesters for part-time students (this includes receiving the IRB approval memo and completing IRB's RCR training as well as the related UGS "Doctoral Dissertation Proposal" process);
- Interact with Dissertation Chair/Committee members at least once a month;
- No violation of DEA, DYF, or tuition-waiver stipend requirements (where applicable);
- Submit dissertation draft no less than 3 semesters after successful defense of dissertation proposal.

Annual Student Evaluations

Each year, the Ph.D. Committee conducts an Annual Progress Review meeting with each Ph.D. student. Typically, the dissertation chair (or advisor) is a part of the meeting. The intent of the review is to assess students' progress in the Ph.D. program and to address any concerns that the student may have. The meetings typically are held in Spring semester (usually April). You will need to complete the online evaluation form found in the MyFIU portal prior to the program deadline. Students should provide a copy of the completed evaluation as well as a brief summary of their work addressing the points below via email to the program coordinator no later than three weekdays prior to the date of the evaluation meeting:

- Coursework (taken and planned) along with grades and overall GPA
- Dissertation (progress and/or plan for defense of proposal/dissertation)
- Teaching/GA work

- Publications/R&Rs/conference papers
- Service (at FIU or in professional associations)

Students are responsible for the on-time completion of their formal evaluation process. Once submitted, they shall regularly check the status of their evaluation and – if needed – remind committee members or other stakeholders to review/approve their form. If a student misses the formal deadline, the University Graduate School may place an enrollment hold on the student’s account. If unresolved on time, such a hold may lead to an auto-dismissal from the program! To avoid this, the program can file a petition on behalf of the student. To initiate that process, the program will ask the student to submit an essay that explains the delay and outlines an improvement strategy by a given deadline. The program director will file such a petition no more than once for the same student.

Applying for Graduation

In order to graduate in a given term, students need to be formally enrolled in dissertation credits, to defend their dissertation, and submit an online application for graduation via their MyFIU portal under the “academics tab” by the prescribed deadline. Please stay up to date with important dates and deadlines each semester by reviewing FIU’s academic calendar at <https://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/>. Please also visit <https://commencement.fiu.edu/> for updates regarding the commencement ceremony.

A student who is denied graduation must complete the requirements for graduation and reapply for graduation. To receive a graduate degree from the University, students must meet the minimum requirements set forth by the Board of Governors and the University and the specific requirements established by the degree program.

All work applied toward degree requirements must be completed within the time limit for degree completion (please see the “Time Limits for Graduate Degree Completion” section below). The program director, the chair of the department, and the dean of the appropriate School or College must certify that the student has satisfied the minimum conditions required to receive the graduate degree. UGS will certify that the student has completed the dissertation requirement.

The Ph.D. in Public Affairs degree will be awarded upon a positive recommendation of the Committee and compliance with all University required policies and procedures.

Award of Master’s Degree en route to Ph.D. Candidates

Under certain circumstances, students directly admitted into the Ph.D. program following completion of their bachelor’s degree, may be awarded a master’s degree in public administration. To be eligible, a student must complete five out of the nine core courses in the master’s program. Upon certification by the student’s advisor that this requirement has been met, the MPA Director will approve the award of the

master's degree. The en route Master's degree is awarded after the student has passed the comprehensive examination and advanced to candidacy.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Ph.D. Colloquium

The Ph.D. Colloquium exposes doctoral students to recent research in the field and allows them to interact with prominent Public Administration scholars. We invite leading scholars from various universities to present their research and interact with the Ph.D. students. The colloquium is a good opportunity for students to socialize amongst themselves and with other scholars and foster collaboration. All Ph.D. students on funding through Teaching Assistantships and Fellowships are *required* to attend the colloquium. We strongly encourage part-time students to attend as well (they are required to attend at least some of the colloquium presentations).

External speakers are asked to informally meet with Ph.D. students in order to give guidance about advancing in careers, how to publish, and other important aspects of Ph.D. life that are typically not covered in classroom settings.

Public Administration Conferences

Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to attend public administration and other conferences in their areas of research interest. These are venues for students to interact with leading scholars working in similar research areas, building up the community of scholars. To maximize the conference experience, students should have a written (typically empirical) paper to present. Most academic conferences require submission of an abstract of the paper (four to six months prior to the conference). The conferences could be international, national, regional, and local.

The usual conferences of interest to public administration students are: American Society of Public Administration (ASPA); Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM); Public Management Research Conference (PMRC), Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SeCOPA) annual meetings. There are also various special interest conferences (e.g., Association for Budgeting and Financial Management, ABFM conferences). Students should seek the advice of their dissertation chairs/advisors in order to select the right venues. Many of the conferences also have special awards for well written student papers. Several of our students have successfully obtained such awards. These awards are excellent stepping stones for a successful career.

Professional Development Workshop (PDW) Series

The program offers a PDW series for all new students during the fall of their first year as a zero-credit course. Its purpose is to cover topics that cut across areas and courses and for students to get to know the department's faculty members and be exposed to areas in which the faculty do research. Workshops will be offered via Zoom during lunch hours. All new students are expected to attend the PDWs, and

issues related to attendance may be discussed during the student's annual evaluation meeting.

Financial Support for Conference Travel

Financial support for conference travel is available through the [FIU Graduate and Professional Student Committee \(GPSC\)](#), SIPA, and the Department. GPSC applications are possible once a year. However, post proposal defense, and while being in their last year of study, students can receive GPSC funds twice in the same fiscal year. To apply for travel funds, please follow the program's guidelines. They can be [found here](#) or requested from the program director.

Publications

All Ph.D. students are expected to have at least one publication before they graduate. The motto in academia is Publish or Perish. The earlier you are in the publishing game, the more successful you will be in future academic life. Even if you do not plan on pursuing an academic career, publication is crucial to maintaining intellectual credibility. You should aim to publish a dissertation chapter. Peer-reviewed articles in ranked public administration journals are the most competitive, and most sought after for academic placement. Book chapters and other monographs contribute to the experience of writing successfully. Conferences are good testing grounds for publications.

Other FIU Resources

There are many FIU resources that Ph.D. students should take advantage of during their study period. UGS routinely offers different types of professional development opportunities by coordinating with other units to assist students in their career development. Please visit UGS' [Professional Development Program](#) website to learn more about these resources and upcoming workshops.

The [FIU Center for Excellence in Writing](#) offers assistance with writing class papers. It is an excellent resource for those students for whom English is a second language. Consultants spend two hours per session with each student. The center also conducts workshops, such as writing the literature review, planning academic career, etc. that may not be carried out in a typical classroom setting.

The [FIU Center for the Advancement of Teaching](#) (CAT) seeks to recognize and cultivate learner-centered teaching throughout the university. It provides support to faculty and teaching assistants. FIU CAT provides a space for intellectual exchange about teaching and learning, encouraging instructors at all levels to devote their energy to student learning and assisting them to find new ways of facilitating our community project, education.

FIU's [Division of Academic & Student Affairs](#) (DASA) has extensive support services available to students, including [academic](#) and career services as well as broader health and [wellness](#) resources. Please take some time to review DASA's

searchable [resource guide](#) to familiarize yourself with the array of supports available to you as FIU students.

Students with Disabilities. The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. [The Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities with the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE

Students can participate in the governance of the program via several committees and roles. While the student representatives and program council members will be determined based on a student election, the program director will appoint members to all other committees (including ad-hoc committees), based on nominations and considerations such as student body representation and the involvement of as many students as possible.

Student Representative

Representatives will advocate student needs and interests. They will keep in touch with other students in the program to identify issues that need to be addressed. At least one representative (rotation is recommended) should attend each month's Ph.D. committee meeting, which is usually scheduled between 10a-12p on a weekday (a Zoom option will be available). Representatives will serve for one year (two to three students needed). Representatives shall self-nominate. Based on the results of a program-wide election, the candidates with the three most votes will serve as student representatives.

Program Council

The council organizes one (Zoom-)meeting in the fall or spring of the academic year. During the meeting, council members will strategize jointly with the student representatives about needs and priorities, and student representatives report back to the council about ongoing program business. The council functions as the intermediary between student body and representatives. The council meeting is open to all PhD students. Council members will serve for one year. All candidates, who self-nominated for the student representative role but were not elected, will automatically serve on the council.

Onboarding Committee

The committee shall help with the onboarding of future and incoming cohorts. Members will be the go-to contacts for new students. The committee will host an orientation for the 1st-year cohort in the fall as well as an informational Zoom call for students who were just accepted into the program (usually at end of May). Students serve for two years; the first year as incoming, the second year as outgoing members. Incoming members should be in their second program year or beyond.

ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

Time Limits for Graduate Degree Completion

Doctoral students must complete their degree requirements within nine (9) years. All work used to meet degree requirements, including coursework, transfer credits, and the successful defense of a dissertation, must be completed within the nine years prior to degree conferral. An approved leave of absence does not affect the time limits for degree completion. Please review the [Time Limits to Graduation](#) policy.

Dismissal from FIU

Graduate students are subject to dismissal if they meet any of the following conditions:

- Failure to register a course for three consecutive semesters or failure to remain enrolled each semester after advancing to candidacy,
- Having a GPA that falls below 3.0 and remains below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters,
- Failure to receive satisfactory performance in the annual evaluation for two consecutive semesters,
- Violate the FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code and are found responsible for academic misconduct.

Readmission

The earliest a dismissed student can be readmitted is one year after the date of dismissal. In applications for re-admission, admission criteria shall include consideration of previous performance at the graduate level in addition to the normal admission requirements. Students will be required to submit a memo explaining past performance and outlining a timeline for completion of all program and dissertation milestones that includes a written agreement of support from the faculty member who will serve as the student's dissertation chair. Re-admission of all doctoral students will also require approval by the Dean of the University Graduate School. Please review UGS' policy regarding [Academic Dismissal and Readmission](#).

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

Any student can report Student Conduct violations and Honor Code violations (Academic Misconduct), whether these behaviors occur inside or outside of the classroom setting. For more information about the Student Conduct and Honor Code, please visit <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/>.

To report alleged violations of the [Student Conduct and Honor Code](#), such as academic, behavioral, and/or organization misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI) for review, visit <https://report.fiu.edu/>. If you have any questions about reporting or the Student Conduct and Honor Code, please call 305-348-3939.

Students' work needs to be in compliance with the program's statements on plagiarism and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as outlined below.

The Department of Public Policy and Administration's Statement on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the representation of another person's words, ideas, and creative work in general as one's own. This misrepresentation is a breach of ethics that seriously compromises a person's reputation. Professional careers have been ruined by revelations of plagiarism. To avoid plagiarism, researchers and professionals in public, private, or nonprofit organizations must scrupulously give credit whenever they use another person's idea, opinion, theory, written or spoken words, as well as any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings- any pieces of information- that are not common knowledge. The following rules should be observed to make sure that the distinction between one's own words, ideas or work, and those of others is justly maintained.

1. Put in quotations everything that comes directly from the text of another's work, especially when taking notes.
2. Alternatively, you can paraphrase another person's work, but be sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words. A good strategy is to (1) read over what you want to paraphrase carefully, (2) cover up the text with your hand, (3) write out the idea in your own words without peeking, and (4) check your paraphrase against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and that the information is accurate.
3. Whether you quote, paraphrase or otherwise borrow another's work, always cite or indicate the source of the information, and provide references following one of the many accepted styles or formats.
4. Common knowledge such as George Washington's date of birth or meaning of OLS regression need not be quoted, cited, or referenced. However, borrowing another's original or creative presentation of common knowledge should follow the above mentioned rules. When in doubt, follow the rules.

Of course, submitting a paper that is completely the work of another person is plagiarism in its most extreme form. A student who plagiarizes all or part of an assignment can expect severe cumulative penalties, ranging from failure in the course to expulsion from the university, with an annotation of the sanction received on the student's transcript.

It should be kept in mind that, although it is not as egregious an offense as copying someone else's work, the extensive copying of a paper that one has prepared for one course for subsequent use and submission in another course is totally inappropriate. Especially at the graduate level, students may wish to prepare more than one paper in the same area. However, these must be substantially different papers which, while they may be in the same general area, represent a substantively different focus and do not significantly overlap in written text.

AI Policy for Dissertations

A. No Use of Generative AI for Writing

Assignments in the Ph.D. program serve the purpose of demonstrating students' ability to synthesize literature, develop arguments, explain methods, critique research etc. When students use generative artificial intelligence (AI) programs, they fail to show their mastery of skills and abilities needed to create research independently and succeed in academia.

Students must **refrain** from using generative AI algorithms (e.g., ChatGPT) to **create text** on their behalf. Students can use programs for grammar or spell checking (e.g., MS Word, Grammarly) but **cannot** use program components that **rewrite text** using AI algorithms (e.g., Grammarly AI or AI-based rewriting tools available in the free version of Grammarly).

Generative AI as well as AI-based rewriting tools will be flagged in Turnitin's AI screening. Students should always keep a copy of their original draft prior to using Grammarly or other programs as a record of their writing process. Overall, students need to be mindful of the programs they use and *how* they use them.

We do recommend that students work on improving their research and writing, and they may consult [FIU's Writing Center](#) or [FIU's Statistical Consulting Services](#).

We use programs such as Turnitin to detect plagiarism and AI-abuse problems. If significant problems are identified, faculty will report students ([using this form](#)) to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI), which will launch an investigation under the [Student Conduct and Honor Code](#). Such an investigation can span multiple semesters, require participation that is time-intensive on the part of the student, and it may result in severe sanctions.

B. Other Uses of AI Need Approval

Other uses of AI must be approved by the major professor using this form. Prior to using AI, the major professor and the student need to sign the form below, and the form needs to be submitted to the Ph.D. program director.

Upon approval by the dissertation chair, the student shall also make sure that none of the committee members oppose the use of AI. AI use shall be documented and discussed in the dissertation manuscript, and AI prompts need to

be preserved and reported. The student shall discuss the findings resulting from using AI with the dissertation chair.

Using AI to create transcripts from interviews (e.g., via Otter.ai) is common practice and does not need to be approved using this form. Nonetheless, students need to double-check such AI transcripts because errors are common.

The following sections need to be completed:

Student name:

...

Dissertation title:

...

Purpose of AI use

Explain in one paragraph why the use of AI will add value to the project.

...

Method

Explain in one paragraph how exactly AI will be used.

...

Integrity

Explain in one paragraph how you will be able to ensure that the use of AI will yield accurate results.

...

Name of Major Professor

Signature

Date

Name of Student

Signature

Date

Reporting Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

FIU is committed to ensuring our University community is free from all forms of discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, disability, national origin, marital status, and veteran status.

All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others and is consistent with FIU-105 and FIU-106. The Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility (CRCA) reviews and investigates reports of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct in accordance with University Regulation, procedure, and applicable laws, including Title VI, VII, and IX.

Visit <https://report.fiu.edu/> to report any possible violations of FIU-105: *[Sexual Harassment \(Title IX\) and Sexual Misconduct Regulation](#)*, including non-consensual sexual activity and unwelcome sexual conduct. The University's Title IX Coordinator and Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility can be reached at 305-348-2785 if you have questions prior to submitting a report.

Visit <https://report.fiu.edu/> to report any possible violations of FIU-106: *[Nondiscrimination, Harassment and Retaliation](#)* including discrimination or harassment based on race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, disability, national origin, marital status, and veteran status. The University's Title IX Coordinator and Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility can be reached at 305-348-2785 if you have questions prior to submitting a report.

In addition, anyone can file a report, even anonymously, by using the Ethical Panther Hotline at or by calling 1-888-520-0570 (24 hours a day, 365 days a year). Please be advised that the Hotline service is not to be used in case of emergencies or as a substitute for contacting law enforcement. If you are facing an emergency, a crime or threat to property is in progress, or you believe someone is facing a threat of imminent danger or bodily harm, please contact the police or emergency responders immediately.

Please note that conduct prohibited by FIU-105 and 106 may also implicate other state or federal laws. Making a complaint to CRCA does not replace the complainant's right to pursue other options or remedies under the law, nor does it satisfy any timeliness requirements for asserting a claim under state or federal law.

Academic Grievance

Charges of Academic Grievance may be brought against a faculty member, committee, or department chair by a student. For more information, visit <https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/academic-grievances/index.html>

The student must first meet with the faculty member, chair, or dean to settle the grievance informally via open and transparent communication processes. After all means of informal resolution have been exhausted, the student can proceed to file a Formal Academic Grievance. Please find academic grievance policy and procedure at <https://policies.fiu.edu/files/739.pdf>.

The academic grievance policy and procedure do not address sexual harassment issues or discrimination based on age, sex, sexual orientation, religion, race, marital status, national origin, or disability. The Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP) Office is responsible for handling such issues in accordance with procedures developed to comply with the Florida Equity Act.

ONLINE DISSERTATION MILESTONES

The following [Online Dissertation Milestones](#) need to be submitted to University Graduate School as you progress through the program:

Appointment of Dissertation Committee: Complete this online process after selecting your Dissertation Chair and Committee. Must be completed before Comprehensive Examinations.

Form D-1r (Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee): Submit this form if there is any change in your committee after completing the dissertation committee process.

Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy: Complete this online process after successful completion of comprehensive examination. This form lists all courses applied toward Ph.D. degree. Please note that at this stage, international students may be required to submit an “advancement to candidacy” document to ISSS. Please make sure you are in contact with ISSS each semester to ensure compliance with their policies and requirements.

Doctoral Dissertation Proposal: Complete this online process after the proposal defense. Need to submit Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, if applicable, as part of this process.

Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense: Complete this online along with the full draft of the dissertation before defending the dissertation.

Final Electronic Dissertation Approval (ETD): Complete this online process after successfully defending your dissertation.

Please review UGS’ [Dissertation Deadlines](#) by expected graduation term.

PROGRAM PLAN

Plan for Full-Time Students

Full-time students typically take 9 credit hours during the Fall and Spring semesters and 6 credit hours in the Summer. A student with Fall admission would typically have the following course program (actual program might differ based on the student's requirements and transfer courses). Please take courses that contribute to your long-term career goals. You should also hone in on your research focus as you move forward, especially with the specialization courses. Attend an academic conference annually from 2nd year onwards. Generally, you should be able to defend your dissertation by the beginning of the 4th or latest the 5th year.

<i>First year:</i>	
Fall semester:	PAD 7055; PAD 7703c; Flexible Core or Specialization; PAD 6915 (PDW, zero credits)
Spring semester:	PAD 7277; PAD 7705; Flexible Core or Specialization
Summer:	URS 7926; One Specialization course
<i>Second year:</i>	
Fall semester:	PAD 7707; PAD 7155; Flexible Core or Specialization
Spring semester:	Three Flexible Core or Specialization courses
Summer:	URS 7156; One specialization course
<i>Third year:</i>	
Fall semester:	PAD 7960 (Comprehensive exam); One specialization course
Spring semester:	PAD 7980 (Dissertation credits); Defend dissertation proposal
Summer:	PAD 7980 (Dissertation credits)
<i>Fourth year onwards (until Dissertation Defense):</i> PAD 7980 (Dissertation credits)	

Plan for Part-Time Students

Part-time students typically take fewer classes, but the course load is usually 6 credit hours per semester. A student with Fall admission would typically have the following course program (actual program might differ based on the student's requirements and transfer courses). Please take courses that contribute to your long-term career goals. You should also hone in on your research focus as you move forward, especially with the specialization courses. Attend an academic conference annually from 3rd year onwards. Generally, you should be able to defend your dissertation by the beginning of the 5th or latest the 6th year.

<i>First year:</i>	
Fall semester:	PAD 7703c; PAD 7055; PAD 6915 (PDW, zero credits)
Spring semester:	PAD 7705 and PAD 7277
Summer:	URS 7926; One specialization course
<i>Second year:</i>	
Fall semester:	PAD 7707 and PAD 7155
Spring semester:	Two Flexible Core or Specialization courses
Summer:	URS 7156; One specialization course
<i>Third year:</i>	
Fall semester:	Two Flexible Core or Specialization Courses
Spring semester:	Specialization course(s) or PAD 7960 (Comprehensive exam)
Summer:	Specialization course(s) or PAD 7980 (Dissertation credits);
<i>Fourth year:</i>	
Fall semester:	PAD 7960 (Comprehensive exam) or PAD 7980 (Dissertation credits)
Spring semester:	PAD 7980 (Dissertation credits)
Summer:	PAD 7980 (Dissertation credits)
<i>Fifth year onwards (until Dissertation Defense):</i> PAD 7980 (Dissertation credits)	

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

FIU Department of Public Policy and Administration (PCA 257)

Website: <http://pa.fiu.edu>

Phone: (305) 348-8409

Chair: Shaoming Cheng

Ph.D. Director: Alexander Kroll

Program Manager: Dirk Hart

Office Manager: Stephanie Miller

Green School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA 530)

Website: <http://sipa.fiu.edu/>

Phone: (305) 348-7266, Email: sipagrad@fiu.edu

Dean: Shlomi Dinar

Graduate Fellow: Kevin Evans

University Graduate School

Website: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu>

Phone: (305) 348-2455, Email: ugs@fiu.edu

Dean: Andrés Gil

International Students and Scholar Services (SASC 230)

Website: <https://global.fiu.edu/for-students/iss/index.html>

Phone: (305) 348-2421; Email: iss@fiu.edu

Senior Director: Alejandra Parra

Center for Excellence in Writing

Website: <https://writingcenter.fiu.edu/>

Phone: (305) 348-6634

Interim Director: Glenn Hutchinson Jr.

Statistical Consulting

Website: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/statistical-consulting/>

Phone: (305) 305-348-7914, Email: sjagarci@fiu.edu

Contact: Stephanie Garcia

GIS Center

Website: <https://gis.fiu.edu/>

Phone: (305) 348-7949

GIS Center Head: Zhaohui (Jennifer) Fu

Center for the Advancement of Teaching

Website: <https://cat.fiu.edu/>

Phone: (305) 348-4214; Email: teach@fiu.edu

Director: Leanne Wells

Institutional Review Board

Website: <http://research.fiu.edu/irb/>

Phone: (305) 348-8311

IRB Coordinator: Maria Melendez-Vargas