PhD in Public Policy

Program Description
and Admissions Information

Schar School of Policy and Government
George Mason University
Graduate Admissions
3351 Fairfax Drive, MS 3B1
Arlington, VA 22201

Telephone: 703-993-8099
Email: schar@gmu.edu
Web: schar.gmu.edu
# PHD IN PUBLIC POLICY – PROGRAM GUIDE

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This guide incorporates most of the requirements and rules pertaining to the Public Policy PhD Program in the Schar School of Policy and Government. In addition, the University catalog and associated requirements and rules, along with other pertinent University policies apply to, and in the case of inconsistency, take precedence over this guide.

Revised: September 18, 2017
SCHAR SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GOVERNMENT
OVERVIEW

The Schar School of Policy and Government (Schar School) is at the heart of George Mason University's commitment to government and policy studies and research. Located in both Arlington and Fairfax, Virginia, the Schar School takes advantage of its location in the National Capital Region, offering students and faculty unique opportunities to study federal executive and legislative governance and policy-making, as well as international organizations and government agencies.

The Schar School of Policy and Government conducts policy research in a number of fields, including governance and public management; regional economic development; terrorism and international security, transportation policy; politics and Islam; science and technology policy; economic policy; and Russian, Central Asian, and East Asian politics.

The school is home to three doctoral programs – Biodefense, Political Science, and Public Policy. The structure of the school and its dedication to interdisciplinary education and research allow it to reach across Mason to bring together the knowledge and skills needed to address a wide variety of policy concerns. While most of the core faculty holds full-time, tenured positions, other members of the Schar School faculty are from other university departments and schools. In addition, faculty and students in the Schar School are published widely in primary academic and professional journals on topics including American politics and policy, comparative politics, legislative and executive branch operations, federalism, weapons of mass destruction, international security, environmental policy, Latin American politics, and foreign affairs. In addition to the academic faculty and graduate students, the Schar School hosts a substantial number of senior fellows, visiting faculty, post-doctoral associates, and other researchers from around the world, all of whom makes essential contributions to research, teaching, and outreach activities.

The Schar School emphasizes alternative approaches to policy decision-making. These approaches result from a view that social and economic changes caused by continuing innovations in modern technology require modifications in the substance of public policy, as well as in the way in which public decisions are made. The Schar School contributes to new concepts in policy formation, while building on the fundamental, pluralistic, democratic characteristics of policy making in the United States. The school is committed to working closely with the University’s initiatives in computational science, information technology, bioinformatics, environmental science, conflict analysis and management, health, and other policy related fields.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This doctoral program prepares its graduates to assume positions of significant responsibility in academia, government, and the private and public sectors. With a focus on analytical and research-based approaches to public policy, our students seek to understand the underlying determinants of public policy choices, analyze and improve the implementation of policy, and identify and assess new opportunities to address emerging issues.

The degree requires a minimum of 82 credit hours of course work and supervised research beyond the bachelor’s degree. The specific set of courses a student takes will depend on his or her preparation and substantive interests. However, all students are required to take a set of core courses or to present compelling evidence that they have achieved equivalency. A maximum of 30 transfer credits of relevant prior graduate work may be accepted toward the total of 82. The Doctoral Program Director will determine the amount of transfer credit awarded after an offer of admission has been made.

Students in the program study both full-time and part-time, and may change their status at any time. A full-time course load is three classes (nine credits). We recommend that a student not take more than 4 classes (12 credits) per semester. If a student holds a full-time assistantship (20 hours a week), two classes (six credits) is considered full-time. Graduate students who are enrolled in dissertation credits (either 998 or 999) are considered full-time, if they are enrolled in at least 6 credits per semester, regardless of whether they hold an assistantship.
PHD PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS*

STAGE ONE – CORE SKILLS:

Prerequisites: Methodological and Substantive Foundations (if deemed necessary)

A. PUBP 511 Statistical Methods in Policy Analysis
B. PUBP 720 Managerial Economics and Policy Analysis
C. PUBP 730 National Policy Systems and Theory

Core Courses: Completion of all core courses with a grade of B or better is required unless exempted.

A. PUBP 800 Culture and Public Policy
B. PUBP 801* Research Design for Public Policy
C. PUBP 804 Multivariate Statistical Analysis
D. PUBP 805 Foundations of Social Science for Public Policy

Qualifying Exam taken upon completion of all core courses.

* Students whose final paper in PUBP 801 is not deemed acceptable must take a remedial writing course the following semester.

STAGE TWO – POLICY FIELDS AND SKILLS:

A. Elective courses (3 courses)
B. Advanced Methods (1 course)
C. PUBP 850 Graduate Seminar in Policy Research (offered in the spring; should be taken second semester)

STAGE THREE – RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS:

Field of Study (3 courses)
A. Advanced Methods (1 course)
B. Field Statement
C. Field Exam

Field of Study Requirements:
1. By end of their third semester, full-time students (fourth semester for part-time) must choose a chair for their Field Committee.
2. By the start of their fourth semester (fifth semester for part-time), full-time students must submit to the chair of their field committee a plan for their Field of Study. The Field of Study Plan is an outline of the student’s proposed research areas. Drawing upon relevant coursework, scholarship, and faculty expertise, the Plan both clarifies research goals and provides a structure for reaching those goals.
3. The Field of Study Plan should be no more than 1000 words. The Plan should identify areas of interest and potential questions the student intends to explore. For each area, the student should include a bibliography of significant scholarship and describe the literature most relevant to current research. If the student has begun to consider research design, notes on this may be included.
4. The Plan should list four courses that serve as the foundation for the student’s field of study. Three of these are substantive: one 800-level Schar School course (excluding core and advanced methods courses), one Schar School course at the 700-level or above (excluding those courses not eligible for PhD credit), and one substantive graduate course which may be from Schar School or may be an approved graduate-level course from another department. The fourth is the advanced methods course covering methodology the student intends to apply to the research.
5. Where appropriate courses are not available from the Schar School, students may petition the Director of the PhD program for substitute courses to count for their Field of Study Plan.
6. Courses in the Field of Study Plan are intended to be taken concurrently with work on the Field Statement and Field Exam. Students may not present a dissertation proposal for approval until they have passed the Field Exam.

*Field examination must be completed before advancement to candidacy for the degree (see page 9 for more information).

STAGE FOUR – DISSERTATION:

A. Dissertation Proposal (PUBP 998)
B. Proposal Oral Defense
C. Dissertation (PUBP 999, 12 credits 998+999)
D. Dissertation Oral Defense

*Official program requirements are published in the annual PhD Student/Faculty Handbook issued to new students during orientation.
The current issue is located at: https://schar.gmu.edu/current-students/phd-student-services/phd-handbook-forms.
**Examinations:**

**Comprehensive Qualifying Examination:**
The Comprehensive Qualifying Examination assesses the ability of a student to understand a complex policy problem, to analyze the problem and its underlying data, and to prepare a written report on that problem. Additionally, the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination assesses core knowledge and methodological/substantive foundations. This examination is offered in late May/early June and in January of each year. **Full-time students are required to take the examination at the end of their first year of study, while part-time students are required to take the examination no later than the completion of their second year. All students must take the examination as soon as they have completed the core courses.** Prior written approval to postpone the examination must be obtained from the Doctoral Program Director. This will be granted only once and, if granted, the student must take the examination at the next offering.

Students will have two opportunities to earn a passing grade on this examination. In the case of an unsuccessful first attempt, evaluators will provide students with written comments for improvement/further study. Students who sit the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination twice will be evaluated by at least five anonymous faculty examiners. Failure to pass the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination on the second attempt will result in automatic dismissal from the program. With the exception of PUBP850, the prerequisite and core courses listed above must be taken within the required time frame prior to the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination.

**Field Examination:**
Students are also required to write a field statement and pass a field examination in their specific field of proposed doctoral research. The field examination must be completed for the student to advance to candidacy for the doctoral degree. It is scheduled at a time that is mutually agreed upon by the committee chair and the student.

**Full-Time/Part-Time Status:**
**Full-time students** are required to take a minimum of three courses of at least three credits each semester. This does not include the summer term. **Part-time students** are required to take a minimum of two courses of at least three credits each semester. Reduction of this load can be offset by a course in the summer. However, keep in mind that required courses are generally not available in the summer.

Every effort is made to schedule public policy courses to accommodate the needs of part-time students. Students who seek to pursue their doctoral training on a part-time basis must recognize that flexibility on the part of their employers is essential for successful participation in the doctoral program. Required academic functions – colloquia, workshops, and general student-faculty meetings – occur during daytime hours and part-time students are expected to attend, when appropriate.

**Schar School Graduate Research and Teaching Assistantships:**
Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) are available only for full-time PhD students, and are offered in the fall term for the academic year. GRAs are awarded at the time of admittance to the program.
DOCTORAL PROGRAM – EMPHASIS AREAS

Owing to the interdisciplinary nature of the doctoral program in public policy, Schar School of Policy and Government structures the core areas of faculty and student research interest around areas of emphasis. Below is a listing of the Schar School’s established public policy emphasis areas. The Field of Study Plan will describe a proposed research area. It will also include the student’s plan for building the Field’s foundation by identifying three substantive courses and at least one advanced methods course which the student intends to take. The three substantive courses must include at least one 800-level course offered in Schar School (excluding core and advanced methods courses). These courses are described below.

Regional Development and Transportation
Public policy is influenced by location and mobility. This emphasis area focuses on two policy areas. It looks at the changes in economic structure of sub-national regions, and how policies affect these changes and direct these dynamics. It also considers how movement of goods and people can influence the ways regions and cities develop, and how transportation policy has evolved, not only to afford greater economic efficiency in its own right, but also as part of the spatial development process. While policy-makers less commonly discuss the development of sub-national regions than national macroeconomic policy, this development affects where people live, train, look for work, and raise families. Transportation and modern communications allow people and institutions within a region to interact and provide the basis of everyday life and, as a result, develop in an internally coherent and externally unique way. The history of regions’ and transport’s legal, economic, industrial, and cultural development leaves a legacy that evolves, but is seldom broken. Hence, the development of social and cultural expressions and values needs to be recognized in the design and execution of regional policy. In addition, there is increasing awareness that regional economies contain the basis for national economic well-being.

Technology, Science, and Innovation (TSI)
New technologies present extraordinary opportunities for achieving major public policy objectives such as economic growth, environmental sustainability, public health, military security, and the advancement of knowledge. Yet they may also place the very same objectives in jeopardy. Whether the public benefits from technological change depends on how well the processes of innovation and diffusion are governed. The TSI concentration focuses on understanding and improving the institutions that are engaged in governing these processes.

TSI embraces a broad vision of institutions and governance, and of understanding and improvement. The institutions of interest to scholars within the concentration include formal organizations—public, private, and non-profit—and informal patterns of belief and practice. Governance encompasses not simply the exercise of public authority, but also patterns of private decision-making and behavior that influence the types of new technologies that are created, how quickly they are taken up by potential users, and the distribution of their benefits and costs in practice. Faculty and students in TSI seek to develop new and deeper understanding of the processes of scientific discovery and of technological innovation and change to improve the foundation for analysis of related governance challenges.

Entrepreneurship, Growth, and Public Policy
Entrepreneurship is the process of uncovering an opportunity to create value through innovation, and entrepreneurs are rewarded for transforming knowledge into new products and bringing them to the market. This multidisciplinary program examines entrepreneurship policy from the perspective of the agent, business, economy, and society. Relying less on the state for wealth creation, distribution, and ownership, an entrepreneurial society looks to individual initiative to propel the economy and the society. Increasingly, the concept of entrepreneurship is being adjusted and applied to the public and nonprofit sectors. Building on and expanding existing strengths in the Schar School in regional economic development and in science and technology policy, the concentration in entrepreneurship policy prepares students to understand the role of entrepreneurship in society and help create entrepreneurial economies.

This emphasis area encompasses a number of considerations, including the role of occupational choice in the exploitation of opportunity; the process by which new ventures are created in a variety of spheres (economic, governmental, associational) and the direct and indirect economic and social consequences of these ventures; the intersection of theories of entrepreneurship and theories of innovation; the evaluation of public policies that encourage entrepreneurship and economic development; the role of entrepreneurship in economic growth; the role of entrepreneurship in the design of new organizations; the factors that influence the levels of entrepreneurship in a region, nation, and the global economy; the forms and effects of social entrepreneurship within public institutions; the use of an entrepreneurship lens to find and implement novel solutions to public problems; and the role of human and financial resource assembly in entrepreneurship.
US Governance
This emphasis area is concerned with the nature of governance in the United States, and with appropriate comparisons with non-US and international systems. Governance includes the theoretical and practical approaches that societies take to organizing themselves for making decisions about public policy issues. Emphasis is placed upon the values that underpin institutional and policy choices, including the ethical and accountability aspects of policy-making. Particular attention is devoted to policy-making institutions such as Congress, the Presidency, executive branch agencies, and state and local governments as well as to the theories and processes of public policy, including agenda building, the media, instruments of implementation, regulation, interest group activity, intergovernmental relations, budgeting, and tax policy.

Culture and Society
The Culture and Society emphasis area emphasizes the role that social institutions, social processes, and culture play in the development and implementation of public policy. Study in this emphasis area is grounded in the understanding that public policy decisions are not made in a vacuum; they are the result of cultural and social forces, from both contemporary and historical perspectives. In order to analyze public policy, the student will be exposed to a wide range of theoretical and methodological frameworks that offer insight into the policy process both in the U.S. and internationally. Through exposure to these frameworks and the development of others, the student will be able to analyze how public policy is made and implemented, determine why specific policies are formulated, and evaluate their relative merit and effectiveness. Students in this emphasis area are expected to focus on both functional areas of public policy as well as attend to their contextual frameworks. These include attention to specific issues and areas in public policy such as education, race and ethnicity, crime, gender, health, family, corruption, immigration, and the media, among others.

Organizational and Information Technology
The Organizational and Information Technology concentration makes use of emerging theories and philosophies to examine the roles and impact of information technology on both public policy and organizational change management. The intention is to give particular emphasis to the interconnections between policy, organizational structures, cross-functional process integration, and knowledge management-based initiatives. For example, IT is used to “connect” public organizations, to make them more efficient or more responsive. As another example, enterprise integration tools change the way organizations function (they enable outsourcing for example), but they have an impact in the public sphere through issues such as job creation, security, and privacy.

A doctoral thesis in this area is expected to focus on one or more of the following areas: enterprise integration, leadership challenges, e-commerce and e-government, and reframing public policy. It will be informed by the nexus of policy, organization, process, and information technology issues. It is expected to have a professional orientation, meaning it should contribute to the understanding and development of practices.

Global and International Systems
Students in the Global and International Systems emphasis area can pursue a wide range of international and comparative policy issues, including those related to economics, development, conflict and security, democracy and governance, and international relations. The consideration of organizational and global processes, technological change, and the economic, political, and cultural aspects of international policy are an integral part of this area. Also, given the nature of international policy issues, informal or formal links to the other emphasis areas within the Schar School are appropriate. The first course surveys the field of Global and International Public Policy with a focus on relevant theoretical and methodological approaches and debates, and provides students with tools for analyzing various world problems and policies. Alternately, students may study international trade policy, addressing international trade theory, trade policy analysis, regional economic integration, and the institutional arrangements governing world trade.
### PUBLIC POLICY PHD COURSE DESCRIPTIONS* (PUBP)

The most updated Schedule of Courses is available through the GMU website at:  
https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/pls/prod/bwckschd.p_disp_dyn_sched  
You may review prior course syllabi through the program website:  
http://schar.gmu.edu/current-students/course-syllabi-and-schedule/

Public Policy students may be interested in courses in BIOD, ITRN, GOVT, and PUAD. Please see the Schar School website for more information.

**Note:** All courses listed below are PUBP courses.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>511</td>
<td>Statistical Methods in Policy Analysis: A graduate-level introduction to the statistical methods and techniques used in the policy sciences. Topics include descriptive statistics, sampling and probability theory, graphical data display, estimation and significance testing, contingency tables, bivariate regression and correlation, and multiple regression, with an introduction to computer-based statistical analysis. (3 credits)</td>
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<td>720</td>
<td>Managerial Economics and Policy Analysis: Introduces microeconomics theory and its application in analyzing public policy issues. The course is intended to provide the student with the capability to understand economic literature and theories. (3 credits)</td>
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<td>730</td>
<td>National Policy Systems and Theory: Provides an inquiry into the policy-making environment, organized around the U.S. federal system. The seminar examines the nation's policy systems and its key components: the actors, institutions of governance, outside groups and other influential interests. Special emphasis is placed on the dynamic character of policy making. In addition, different policy theories are discussed in the context of current political realities. (3 credits)</td>
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<td>791</td>
<td>Advanced Field Research for Policy - Theory and Method: Teaches students to analyze the framing of policy questions and to examine culture and organization at group, organizational (and inter-organizational), and societal levels. Case study research, open-ended interviewing, participant-observation, social network analysis, historical and archival research covered. (3 credits)</td>
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<td>792</td>
<td>Advanced Economic Analysis for Policy Research: (Prerequisite: PUBP 720 or equivalent) Builds analytical skills in economic analysis for policy research. Designed for graduate students in policy with competence in elementary calculus. Reviews mathematical techniques and then covers: consumer theory, demand estimation/forecasting, production theory, cost-benefit analysis, technological change/productivity analysis, growth theory, market structure/competition, game theory, capital budgeting, and the role of the public sector in the economy. (4 credits)</td>
<td>(Prerequisite: PUBP 720 or equivalent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>793</td>
<td>Large-Scale Database Construction and Management for Policy Research: Familiarizes students with data resources for macro-comparative policy research and how to use these resources to inform decision making and evaluate policy performance. Emphasis on how social science data is generated, coded, and managed; and on the methods for successful presentation of evidence in support of policy recommendations. (4 credits)</td>
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<td>796</td>
<td>Directed Readings and Research: Independent reading and research at the masters or doctoral level on a specific topic related to public policy as agreed to by a student and a faculty member. (1-3 credits)</td>
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<td>800</td>
<td>Culture and Public Policy: Provides a comparative overview of institutions and culture, focusing on the ways that the United States is exceptional when compared with other mature industrial societies. It presents culture and social structure as explanatory variables in accounting for these differences. It is also intended to give an overview of the analytical methods used in comparative public policy research, and to provide background on the political environment in which international trade and investment decisions are made. (4 credits)</td>
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<td>801</td>
<td>Research Design for Public Policy: Demonstrates how macroeconomic, technological, demographic and social forces affect the supply and demand for governmental services. Counterpart analysis of the impact of shifts in the patterns of international trade, the demographic composition of the population, and trends in the social structure are also examined. The course is intended to build an awareness of the need to factor alternative assumptions about the macro environment into policy planning; to show how macro events can affect both social welfare and policy performance indicators; and to suggest how national income accounting analysis and simple macroeconomic models can help to pinpoint impending trouble spots for public policy. (4 credits)</td>
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<td>804</td>
<td>Multivariate Statistical Analysis: (Prerequisite: PUBP 511 or equivalent) Explores the multivariate techniques of contingency table analysis, reliability and validity assessment, factor analysis and scaling, multivariate regression and path analysis, the analysis</td>
<td>(Prerequisite: PUBP 511 or equivalent)</td>
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of variance and covariance and other selected multivariate techniques. Emphasis is on applying these techniques to real policy data using sophisticated statistical packages. (4 credits)

805 Foundations of Social Science for Public Policy: (Prerequisite: PUBP 730 or equivalent) Theories of public policy making, emphasizing discipline’s historical, intellectual and international development. Focus on policy systems’ political and social dimensions, including agenda-setting, policy design, rationality, incrementalism, systems theory, scientific methods, and public choice theory. (4 credits)

810 Regional Development and Transportation Policy: Introduces and critiques the theory and methods used in regional and transportation policy analysis. Students learn about central place theory, growth pole theory, and economic base theory, as well as other theoretical constructs used in regional policy analysis. Further, methodological tools such as regional econometric modeling, multi-objective programming, shift-share analysis, economic base analysis, location quotient analysis, and input-output analysis are also introduced and examined. Finally, selected current regional and transportation public issues are examined using the theoretical and methodological constructs introduced in the first part of this course. (4 credits)

811 Applied Methods in Regional Development and Transportation Policy: Students develop research papers that investigate some element or aspect of regional and transportation policy, with the goal of producing publishable papers. The students develop the focus of their papers based on work carried out in the first semester, and are expected to prepare a two-page proposal, followed by a detailed proposal and finally, the completed paper. Each of these is critiqued in the seminar, which is organized to conform to this process of review and critique. The instructor works with each of the students individually, as well as in the seminar sessions. (4 credits)

820 Technology, Science, and Innovation - Institutions and Governance: Explores how political and economic institutions and cultural values shape the pace, direction, and costs and benefits of technological innovation and scientific research. Special emphasis is placed on the interaction between national institutions and values and processes of globalization. (4 credits)

821 Analytic Methods for Technology, Science, and Innovation Policy: Covers major methodological approaches to the study of technology, science, innovation, and public policy. Focuses on the analytical inputs to policy-making and assesses their practical consequences in such areas as security, energy, environment, health, and others. (4 credits)

833 Topics in Public Policy: Focuses on selected topics in public policy not covered in fixed-content public policy courses. (1-4 credits)

840 U.S. Policy Making Institutions: Examination of major institutions that formulate and implement policy at the national level in the United States. Emphasis on the Presidency, Congress, and executive branch bureaucracies that carry out policy. Also considered are agenda building institutions such as various media, interest groups, political parties, and elections. (4 credits)

841 U.S. Policy Making Processes: Analysis of the major U.S. public policy processes. Attention to the major instruments for implementing policy, including regulation, grants, tax policy, and market based mechanisms; and how different methodologies are appropriate for understanding aspects of policy inquiry. Ethical and accountability aspects of policy covered; federalism, intergovernmental relations, and state and local governance may be covered. (4 credits)

850 Seminar in Public Policy: A weekly colloquium series required of public policy PhD students. Features a variety of speakers from universities, government and nonprofit sectors. Topics include policy formulation and analysis, as well as theoretical and methodological foundation. (1 credit)

860 Social Theory, Culture, and Public Policy: Major social and cultural theories that underlay public policies. Selections from classical and contemporary social theorists relevant to the study of social change, social capital, and social organization. Focus on the interplay among culture, social institutions, social processes, and policy. (4 credits)

861 Culture and Social Policy Analysis: Application of social and cultural theories to policy topics, including methodological approaches and empirical studies. Emphasizes linkage between theory and empirical research and the methods appropriate for social policy study. Policy topics may include poverty and inequality, the family, education, crime and corruption, immigration, and health. (4 credits)

880 Global and International Public Policy I: Explores the multiple dimensions of globalization and internationalization relative to public policy processes and consequences. Its aim is to offer substantive insight into contemporary public policy dynamics from a
global and comparative perspective. Accordingly, it examines a broad range of international cultural, political, technological, and economic policy issues, and their interactions and implications at all levels of analysis. Engages relevant theoretical and methodological approaches and debates in order to provide students with tools for analyzing various world problems and policies. (4 credits)

881 International Trade Policy: Addresses international trade theory, trade policy analysis, regional economic integration, and the institutional arrangements governing world trade. It covers the World Trade Organization (including its constituent agreements in the areas of goods, services, intellectual property and trade-related investment measures), regional trade agreements such as NAFTA, dispute settlement regimes, and the relations between trade and the environment. (4 credits)

998 Research/Proposal for Dissertation: Requires work on a research proposal that forms the basis for a doctoral dissertation. May be repeated, although no more than 12 credits of PUBP 998 and 999 may be applied to doctoral degree requirements. (1-9 credits)

999 Dissertation: Requires research on an approved dissertation topic under the direction of a dissertation committee. May be repeated, although no more than 12 credits of PUBP 998 and 999 may be applied to doctoral degree requirements. (1-9 credits)

*Official program requirements are published in the annual PhD Student/Faculty Handbook issued to new students during orientation. The current issue is located on the program web site:

https://schar.gmu.edu/current-students/phd-student-services/phd-handbook-forms

George Mason University Libraries

The University Libraries serve as both a repository of and digital portal to the wider universe of knowledge. The Libraries foster innovation, originality, and imagination by qualitatively managing access to scholarship and information, providing expert consultation in the research process, actively teaching the effective and critical use of information, and disseminating research and scholarship through publishing endeavors. Digital resources are accessible by students both on- and off-campus. Among many other resources, Fenwick Library in Fairfax is home to Mason’s print federal government documents collection; and Arlington Campus Library is designated as a European Union Document Depository, providing in-house access to non-circulating European Union documents for faculty, students and members of the public. As part of the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC), Mason students have use of major academic libraries in the Washington Metropolitan area, including The George Washington University, American University and Georgetown University. More information is available at http://library.gmu.edu
PHD IN PUBLIC POLICY
ADMISSIONS AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Doctoral applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for admission in the fall semester, for both full-time and part-time study. There is no spring admission cycle available for our PhD program. Please note that Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) are only awarded to students who are attending school full-time. If interested, please indicate on the application your interest in a GRA.

The ideal doctoral applicant has demonstrated capabilities in research and writing, basic mathematical skills approximately equal to the first semester of calculus and a competence in statistics, some background in economics, and a theoretical and working knowledge of public policy processes. Applicants with strong academic records who are deficient in one or more of these areas may possibly be admitted to the program and will receive assistance in making up any deficiencies. All PhD applicants must have earned a master’s degree or equivalent from an accredited university or college prior to matriculation.

The GMU graduate application process requires the applicant to submit a complete set of documents with the application. All application credentials must be received before the application will be reviewed.

1. Graduate application and the online $75 application fee. There are no fee waivers. Please note that when completing the online application, you will be required to submit this fee by credit card payment. The graduate application can be completed at: http://admissions.gmu.edu/ApplyNow. Applications will not be reviewed without payment.
2. A 750-1000 word written statement of your academic goals – include your research area of interest for advanced study in public policy and your post-degree goals.
3. A current resume or vitae.
4. Submission of transcripts.
   Domestic Applicants – upload unofficial copies of transcripts from ALL U.S. accredited institutions attended. A master’s degree from an accredited institution with a GPA of 3.00 or better is required.
   International Applicants - Students presenting international credentials must upload unofficial transcripts, degree certificates/diplomas, AND certified translations of the documents in English (if applicable). A master’s degree with a GPA of 3.00 or better is required. More information can be found on the International Applicant Requirements page: https://schar.gmu.edu/prospective-students/admissions/international-applicant-requirements.
5. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or General Management Aptitude Test (GMAT) official score results are required. GRE/GMAT scores must have been earned within the past 5 years. There is no waiver for this requirement. George Mason code is 5827. There is no department code.
6. Two letters of recommendation from faculty at the prospective student’s previous institutions or from persons acquainted with policy-relevant work. At least one recommendation should be from an individual who is qualified to attest to the candidate’s academic potential.
7. A writing sample (approximately 10-25 pages in length) such as a technical report, professional publication, or term or seminar paper.
8. English Language Proficiency exam scores (required for international applicants) – TOEFL: minimum score of 600 (paper-based), 250 (computer-based), or 100 (internet-based). **Please note that students submitting internet-based exam results must earn a minimum score of 23 on each individual exam section. IELTS: minimum total score of 6.5. An official score report is required. In addition, students may be required to be tested by the GMU English Language Institute.

Application Deadlines:

Fall (August matriculation) Deadline: December 1 (November 1 for International Applicants)

Please upload application materials (including all unofficial transcripts, writing samples, resume, and goals statement) to your Self Service Center. If admitted, official hard-copy transcripts can be mailed to:

GMU-Office of Graduate Admissions
4400 University Drive, MS 4C8
Fairfax, VA 22030

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GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
FINANCIAL AID AND COST INFORMATION

Graduate Tuition and Fees for 2017-2018:
- In-state graduate tuition and fees: $795.00 /per credit hour
- Out-of-state graduate tuition and fees: $1,516.00 /per credit hour

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) Funding

Only full-time PhD applicants will be considered for GRA awards. Assistantship packages include:
- $22,500 stipend
- tuition for 3 courses per semester and education resource fee
- subsidized student health insurance

As long as a student remains in good academic standing, the assistantship will be renewed annually for four years.

Financial Aid - George Mason University Federal Title IV School Code: 003749

To determine if you are eligible for financial aid and to establish eligibility for alternative financial aid resources, you must apply each year. For more information visit the Mason Financial Aid website: http://financialaid.gmu.edu

1. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Renewal FAFSA Application as soon as possible after January 1. You do not have to be admitted to a degree program to complete the FAFSA application.

You may also use the electronic FAFSA Express software to submit your application electronically. Applications received by the processing center after March 1st for the next academic year are considered late and cannot be given priority consideration. The federal processor must receive financial aid applications by March 1 to be considered on-time.

You may complete the FAFSA using ESTIMATED income and tax figures. If necessary, do this rather than missing the priority filing date. Be prepared to provide complete copies of your Federal tax returns, tax schedules, and W-2 forms if requested.

2. Approximately 4-6 weeks after you mail the application you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). You must review it, make appropriate corrections, sign it and send Part 2 back to the federal processor.

3. If additional information is required to process your file, you will receive a Missing Information Letter from the Office of Student Financial Aid. You should respond to this request as quickly as possible. Failure to respond in a timely manner can drastically affect the amount of aid that you are offered.

4. After all information is received by the Financial Aid Office you will receive an award offer notification by email. This will include the types and amounts of aid you are offered.
School Graduate Enrollment Profile – Fall 2017

Total Enrollment: 1,021
- Ph.D. Enrollment: 153
- Master’s and Certificate Enrollment: 835
- Non-Degree Enrollment: 33

Gender:
- 53% Male
- 47% Female

Enrollment Status:
- 32% Full-time
- 68% Part-time

Domicile*:
- 76% In-State
- 24% Out-of-State

Ethnicity:
- 29% Minority**
- 7% Non-Resident Alien

Graduate Application/Student Profile – Fall 2017

**PH.D.’S IN BIODEFENSE, POLITICAL SCIENCE, AND PUBLIC POLICY**

Newly Enrolled Students: 14
Applications Received: 127
Admitted Students Mean GPA – Master’s Degree: 3.70
Admitted Students Mean GPA – Undergraduate Degree: 3.51
Admitted Students GRE – Mean Percentiles:
- Quantitative: 63%
- Verbal: 82%
- Analytical Writing: 76%

*Domicile reflects tuition rate designation, not necessarily state of residency.

**Includes those students who identify themselves as African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American or Pacific Islander.