

# The University of Memphis

Ph.D. in Urban Affairs  
Student Handbook

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# Introduction

The Ph.D. in Urban Affairs focuses on urban problem-solving with an interdisciplinary framework and a community-engaged approach. It is designed to prepare graduates with the necessary research, evaluation, and policy design skills to address the socioeconomic challenges facing Memphis and other cities like it. The combination of theory development and application training will prepare graduates for careers in public, nonprofit, private, and educational sector positions as advanced policy analysts, researchers, administrators, and academics. The program draws from a wide range of Social Science disciplines, including Anthropology, City and Regional Planning, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Political Science, Public and Nonprofit Administration, Social Work, and Sociology.

This handbook describes the program requirements, policies, and procedures of the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs program. The document is updated regularly to reflect changes to program policies and procedures. Hyperlinks to other resources are used throughout this document. If you find broken links, please notify the Ph.D. program Director or a relevant Administrative Associate.

The policies and procedures in the handbook supplement those of the Graduate School as published in the Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.memphis.edu>). This handbook is intended as a guide to help students move through program benchmarks and toward degree completion as efficiently and effectively as possible. In parts of the handbook, the language is addressed specifically to the student; however, the handbook also serves as a valuable resource for faculty affiliated with the program to ensure that processes regarding advising, comprehensive exams, and dissertations are consistent.

**Chapter 2**, “Structure and Leadership,” describes the context of the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program within the University and explains the roles of various institutional organizations and individuals associated with the program. **Chapter 3**, “Ph.D. Program Requirements,” summarizes the program’s curricular elements and student obligations for degree completion. **Chapter 4**, “Program Dynamics and Benchmarks,” describes how students will move through the program to accomplish the requirements in Chapter 3. **Chapter 5**, “Professional Development and Student Resources,” describes a variety of formal and informal extracurricular opportunities for professional development training.

## Chapter 2: Structure and Leadership

The Ph.D. in Urban Affairs is an interdisciplinary program that connects faculty from multiple departments. As such, it does not have a single departmental home but is coordinated by a Ph.D. Program Director within the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP). This chapter aims to provide a “who’s who” in the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program.

### Ph.D. Program Leadership

**Dr. Davia Downey** ([dcdowney@memphis.edu](mailto:dcdowney@memphis.edu)), Program Director, PhD Program in Urban Affairs.

The Program Director serves as the primary administrative leader of the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program. The Director is responsible for admissions review, coordinating affiliated faculty and advisors, curricular development and curricular review, representing the program within and outside the University, and supporting and developing community partnerships.

### School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP)

The School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP) is an innovative national leader in building academic and community collaborations that address urban challenges. The mission of the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy is to assist in identifying and implementing policies and programs that enhance the quality of life, well-being, and prosperity in metropolitan settings. As a hub for collaboration, SUAPP creates a diverse range of resources and disciplinary perspectives necessary for effective, comprehensive metropolitan action

For information about SUAPP’s academic units, degree programs, research centers, community connections, and faculty, visit [www.memphis.edu/suapp/](http://www.memphis.edu/suapp/)

SUAPP provides infrastructure and administrative support to the Ph.D. Program Director. A SUAPP Director and an Associate Director lead the school. SUAPP has four full-time support staff members and a Business Officer who oversees budgeting and processes grants and contracts. In addition, SUAPP has a Pre-Award Officer who assists faculty teams in identifying and pursuing externally funded grant opportunities. Information about current SUAPP leadership and staff is available here:

[www.memphis.edu/suapp/people/index.php](http://www.memphis.edu/suapp/people/index.php)

### School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy Leadership

**Dr. Katherine Lambert-Pennington** ([k.lambert-pennington@memphis.edu](mailto:k.lambert-pennington@memphis.edu))  
Director, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

**Dr. Charles Santo** ([casanto@memphis.edu](mailto:casanto@memphis.edu))  
Assistant Director, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

**Elizabeth Wilson** ([elizabeth.wilson@memphis.edu](mailto:elizabeth.wilson@memphis.edu))  
Pre-Award Coordinator, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

Nicole Hoyle ([nhoyle@memphis.edu](mailto:nhoyle@memphis.edu))  
Business Officer II, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

## Faculty

The Ph.D. in Urban Affairs is supported by nationally recognized faculty actively engaged with students and deeply committed to public service and urban affairs scholarships. They bring real-world experience into the classroom and offer connections to experiential learning locally and globally. Faculty and research centers associated with the following academic disciplines contribute to the program's core: Anthropology, City and Regional Planning, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Political Science, Public and Nonprofit Administration, Social Work, and Sociology.

## Urban Affairs Ph.D. Committee

The Ph.D. The committee, chaired by the Program Director, serves as the primary consultative body for the program. The interdisciplinary Committee includes faculty representation from all affiliated departments. This committee may act as a due process body to hear and rule on matters involving any exception to policy or misconduct within the graduate program. The committee comprises one faculty member from all affiliated units with a three-year term limit.

## Faculty Advisors and Committees

Urban Affairs Ph.D. students are supported throughout the program by advisors and committees who guide course selection, comprehensive exams, and dissertation development. More details are provided in the following chapters, especially Chapter 4, “Program Dynamics and Benchmarks.”

Please note that Clinical Assistants or Associate Professors can serve as academic advisors; only tenure-track faculty can chair comprehensive exams or dissertation committees. For more information about faculty status, see the University of Memphis Graduate [Faculty Status Guidelines](#).

## Other Administrative Structures

All graduate programs and graduate students are subject to the standards and regulations of the University’s Graduate School. Students and their advisors will interact with the Graduate School Dean and the Graduation Analyst for various approvals as described in **Chapter 4**, “Program Dynamics and Benchmarks.”

SUAPP, the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs, and affiliated faculty are part of the College of Arts and Sciences. The College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Council and the University Council for Graduate Studies must approve any changes to the program curriculum. The Urban Affairs Faculty Committee and Core Faculty members are responsible for updates to the program curriculum.

## Chapter 3. Ph.D. Program Requirements and Regulations

This chapter summarizes curricular elements, obligations required to complete the degree program and program regulations. The requirements and procedures described here supplement the University of Memphis Graduate Catalog. When departmental minimum requirements are more stringent than those stated in the Graduate Catalog, the departmental requirements take precedence. Students should carefully review the “Minimum Degree Requirements” section of the graduate catalog (<https://catalog.memphis.edu>) for important University policies regarding:

- Credit hour requirements for Doctoral Degrees
- Time limitations
- Residency requirements
- Admission to candidacy
- Continuous enrollment
- Graduation

### General Curriculum Requirements

The Urban Affairs Ph.D. curriculum requires students who enter with a master's degree to earn a minimum of 48 credit hours. To meet University requirements for earning a Ph.D., all students must have at least 72 credit hours of post-baccalaureate coursework.

#### Degree Requirements for students admitted in Fall 2021:

1. **Four** Core Courses: UAPP 8010, 8011, 8012, 8013 **(12 Hours)**
2. **Six** Focus Area Courses: 18 hours of courses within SUAPP. **Two classes** must come from a subject **outside** the student's master's studies. (i.e., a Public Administration student needs to have two courses from ANTH, CJUS, PLAN, POLS, SOCI, SWRK) to meet this requirement. (18 hours)
3. **Two** Methods Courses: See the pre-approved list below. **(6 Hours)**
4. **Comprehensive Exams:** Students must form interdisciplinary committees with faculty members of SUAPP subject areas. Students must pass oral and written exams. Committees must have a minimum of three members to a maximum of five. Regardless of size, most faculty members on a student's comprehensive exam committee must come from SUAPP subjects (at least 50% of committee membership).
5. **Dissertation Credits: 12 hours**

#### Degree Requirements for students admitted in Fall 2022 and 2023:

1. **Four** Core Courses: UAPP 8010, 8011, 8012, 8013 **(12 Hours)**
2. **Six** Focus Area Courses: **Two courses** must come from **outside** a student's master's study. **Two courses** must come from the pre-approved theory course list. See below. **(18 Hours)**
3. **Two** Methods Courses: See the pre-approved list below. **(6 Hours)**
4. **Comprehensive Exams:** Students must form interdisciplinary committees with faculty members of SUAPP subject areas. Students must pass oral and written exams. Committees must have a minimum of three members to a maximum of five. Regardless of size, the majority of



faculty members on a student's comprehensive exam committee must come from SUAPP subjects (at least 50% of committee membership).

5. **Dissertation Credits: 12 hours**

**Degree Requirements for students admitted in Fall 2024:**

1. **Five Core Courses:** UAPP 8009, 8010, 8011, 8012, 8013 **(15 Hours)**
2. **Three Methods Courses:** Inclusive of **one** Qualitative Methods Course (ANTH, SOCI, and SWRK offer these on a rotating basis), UAPP 8014: Survey of Quantitative Methods, and **one** GIS course from the pre-approved list provided below. **(9 Hours)**
3. **Five Specialization/Focus Area Courses:** Students must select **one** focus area
  - a. Urban Cultures and Societies (mix of ANTH and SOCI)
  - b. Urban Governance and Planning (mix of PADM and PLAN)
  - c. Urban Policy and Services (mix of SWRK, CJUS)
  - d. Urban Political Development and Economies (mix of PLAN, PADM, POLS)
  - e. **Note:** All students must take **two** theory courses within their specialization/focus area and should select their remaining courses within the specialization area focus. **(15 Hours)**
4. **Comprehensive Exams:** Students must form interdisciplinary committees with faculty members of SUAPP subject areas. Students must pass oral and written exams. Committees must have a minimum of three members to a maximum of five. Regardless of size, the majority of faculty members on a student's comprehensive exam committee must come from SUAPP subjects (at least 50%).
5. **Dissertation Credits: (11 Hours, inclusive of UAPP 9000 and 9001)**

*Note: Any deviations from a student's program of study should be discussed with the program director and faculty advisor before registering for classes. A course substitution form must accompany any substitutions.*

**Focus Area/Research Specializations (Effective Fall 2024)**

<b>Urban Cultures and Societies Track:</b> <b>ANTH 8200</b> Roots of Anthropology Theory <b>SOCI 8210</b> Sociology Theory Seminar or <b>SOCI 7631</b> Urban Sociology Theory And <b>three</b> courses from ANTH and SOCI	<b>Urban Governance and Planning Track:</b> <b>PADM 8600</b> Administrative Theory and Ethics or <b>PADM</b> Theory and Practice for Nonprofits <b>PLAN 7002</b> Planning Theory and Perspectives or <b>PLAN 6206</b> Housing Policy and Planning And <b>three</b> courses from PADM and PLAN
<b>Urban Policy and Services Track:</b> <b>CJUS 8541</b> Criminology Theory <b>SWRK 8040</b> Advanced SW Theory or <b>SWRK 7030</b> Social Welfare Policy and Services And <b>three</b> courses from CJUS and SWRK	<b>Urban Political Development and Urban Economics Track:</b> <b>POLS 8100</b> Scope and Methods in Political Science or <b>POLS 7222/8222</b> Seminar in Urban Politics <b>PADM 7224</b> Seminar in Urban Problems And <b>three</b> courses from PADM, POLS, or PLAN

For all specialization tracks, at least six hours must be interdisciplinary (i.e., outside the students' master's degree area). Reminder: only six hours can be taken at the 6000 level. Substitutions within Specializations are

allowable with prior approval. All substitutions must be accompanied by a [Course Substitution](#) form and submitted to the Ph.D. director for final approval.

## Pre-Approved SUAPP Theory Courses by Discipline:

**Effective June 1, 2023**, all admitted doctoral students must enroll in two theory-based courses in the Focus Area. This ensures a theoretical grounding in the student's "home" field and at least one other field in our school. Approved theory courses are listed below and are subject to change; please refer to the posted schedule when making enrollment decisions. Wherever possible, doctoral students should enroll in the 8000-level of courses listed if available:

ANTH 7200/8200 Engaged Anthropology Theory (offered Fall)  
CJUS 7541/8541 Criminological Theory (offered Fall)  
CJUS 6533 Juvenile Delinquency Theory and Process (offered Spring)  
PADM 7600/8600 Seminar in Administrative Theory and Ethics (offered Fall)  
PADM 7641 Theory and Practice for Nonprofit Administration (offered Fall)  
PLAN 6206 Housing Policy and Planning (offered Fall)  
PLAN 7002/8002 Planning Theory and Perspectives (offered Fall)  
POLS 7401/8104 Seminar in Political Theory and Philosophy (offered Fall)  
POLS 7100/8100 Scope and Methods in Political Science (offered Fall)  
SOCI 7201/8201 Sociology Theory Seminar (offered Fall)  
SOCI 7631/8631 Urban Sociology Theory (offered Fall)  
SOCI 7511/8511 Theories of Deviance (offered Spring)  
SWRK 7030 Social Welfare Policy and Services (offered Spring)  
SWRK 8040 Advanced Social Work Theory (offered Fall)

*Please note that these courses are subject to change in availability semester-to-semester; students are encouraged to discuss courses that make sense for their theoretical focus and methodological needs with their advisor or the Ph.D. director first.*

## UAPP Course Class Descriptions

**Course Title: UAPP 8009 Exploration of Policy Theory and Frameworks (3 credits; seminar).**

**Offered Fall Semester.**

**Catalog Description:** This course is broadly concerned with public policy theory and research on policy processes in the United States, including democratic theory, multiple streams, and punctuated equilibrium. This course will focus on major policy process theories, explore how policy changes, and examine important empirical contributions to the policy field. The course will examine micro-foundations of policy dynamics through models of individual to organizational decision-making and explore policy agendas, formation of public policies, and the factors influencing change to agendas and policies over time. It will emphasize process approaches to examine policy change rather than substantive issues. However, a focus on policies that impact the urban core, such as housing, education, criminal justice, healthcare, and other social policies, will also be reviewed. This course focuses primarily on American politics but will include select works on comparative policy process perspectives. This is a required core course in the Urban Affairs Ph.D. curriculum.

**Course Title: UAPP 8010 Exploration of Urban Research Theory (3 credits; seminar).**

**Offered Spring Semesters, on demand.**

**Catalog Description** This survey course provides a critical examination of the theories and theoretical frameworks of the multiple social science disciplines central to the Urban Affairs PhD curriculum.

Explores theories relevant to urbanism and urban environments, their structures, the processes of urbanization, urban power and economics, industrial and post-industrial cities, and other urban forces. Covers urban theories ranging from classical to contemporary theoretical perspectives.

PREREQUISITE(S): Permission of instructor.

**Course Title: UAPP 8011 Epistemology and Philosophy of Social Science Research (3 credits; seminar)**

**Offered Fall Semester.**

**Catalog Description:** This course focuses on research design and epistemology in qualitative and quantitative research. It introduces different types of studies, such as theoretical, explorative, empirical, and experimental research. Emphasis will be placed on ‘ways of knowing’ in social science, including a detailed discussion of ontology and epistemology in urban affairs research.

This course also discusses how theories can be developed and how theories lead to testable hypotheses. After theories and hypotheses are derived, the focus shifts to data collection (e.g. surveys, case studies, experiments, interviews, and the selection and use of secondary data). Sampling is crucial to avoid sample and selection biases will be discussed. Finally, students will discuss the construction of variables, including latent variables (e.g., social constructs), the selection of proxy variables, and the use of control variables in social science research.

PREREQUISITE(S): Permission of instructor.

**Course Title: UAPP 8012 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving I (3 credits, seminar)**

**Offered Fall Semester.**

**Catalog Description:** Collaborative Urban Problem Solving I is a required course for PhD in Urban Affairs. It is the first course in a two-course sequence that is generally completed in the student’s second year of study. This course serves as the synthesis mechanism for the PhD program, which is 1) interdisciplinary, 2) geared at preparing researchers to address urban or metropolitan issues, and 3) designed to give students the opportunity to learn through engaging in local research that benefits the greater Memphis community. PREREQUISITE(S): Permission of instructor.

**Course Title: UAPP 8013 Collaborative Urban Problem Solving II (3 credits, seminar)**

**Offered Spring Semester.**

**Catalog Description:** Second course in a two-course sequence that is generally completed in the student’s second year of study. This course serves as the synthesis mechanism for the Urban Affairs and Public Policy PhD program, which is 1) interdisciplinary, 2) geared at preparing researchers to address urban or metropolitan issues, and 3) designed to give students the opportunity to learn through engaging in local research that benefits the greater Memphis community. Students will work collaboratively (internally and externally) to address a complex community challenge. PREREQUISITE(S): Permission of instructor.

**Course Title: UAPP 8014 Seminar in Advanced Quantitative Methods (3 credits; seminar)**

**Offered Spring Semester.**

**Catalog Description:** This course shows how to do high-quality data analysis in social science. Students will gain a deep intuition behind the theories of inference underlying most statistical methods. This course will cover statistical methods beyond ordinary least squares, including but not limited to binary logistic regression, multinomial logistic regression, hierarchical linear modeling, structural equation modeling, and Cox-Proportional Hazards modeling dependent on the expertise of the instructor. Students will utilize statistical software (STATA, R, SPSS) to analyze different datasets throughout the course. This is a required core course in the Urban Affairs Ph.D. curriculum. PREREQUISITE(S): Permission of Instructor.

**Course Title: UAPP 8200 Directed Readings (1-3 credits, independent study, repeatable)**

**Offered On Demand.**

**Catalog Description:** Individually directed readings which culminate in the synthesis of a student's ideas. May be repeated with change in topic for 9 credits. PREREQUISITE(S): Permission of instructor. PREREQUISITE(S) or COREQUISITE(S): Must be enrolled in the PhD program in Urban Affairs.

**Course Title: UAPP 9000 Dissertation (1-11 credits)**

**Offered On Demand.**

**Catalog Description:** Academic credit for a dissertation may be taken for a maximum of 11 hours and a minimum of 1 hour credit. Only 11 credits may be applied toward degree requirements for the PhD degree. Grades of S, U, or IP will be given. PREREQUISITE(S): Doctoral students must complete all coursework in the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs and have passed Comprehensive Exams before enrolling in UAPP 9000.

**Course Title: UAPP 9001 Dissertation Proposal Development (1 credit workshop)**

**Offered Spring Semester.**

**Catalog Description:** This course is a dissertation research and design workshop for students who have completed their comprehensive exams. It will take students through the process of developing a dissertation proposal. It will focus on writing a cohesive literature review, defining and refining theory for testing, developing testable hypotheses, understanding the internal and external validity issues of a student's selected research design, and identifying data or datasets for doctoral students. This is a required course in the UAPP curriculum.

## **Pre-Approved Methods Courses**

(2021-2023 admits only)

ANTH 8075 Methods in Anthropology

CJUS 7129/8129 Advanced Statistics Methods in Criminal Justice

ECON 7120/8120 Advanced Quantitative Economic Analysis

ECON 7810/8810\* Econometrics I

ECON 8811\* Applied Micro-Econometrics

ECON 8812\* Time Series Econometrics

EDPR 7542/8542\* Statistical Methods Applied to Education II  
 EDPR 7554/8554\* Nonparametric Statistical Applications in Education  
 EDPR 7565/8565 Qualitative Methods and Analysis  
 ESCI 7312/8312 Spatial Statistics  
 MATH 7660 Applied Times Series Analysis  
 MATH 7670/8670 Applied Stochastic Models  
 MATH 7680/8680 Bayesian Inference  
 MATH 7657/8657 Multivariate Statistical Methods  
 POLS 7101 Political Statistics  
 PSYC 7302/8302 Advanced Statistics in Psychology I  
 PSYC 7303/8303\* Advanced Statistics in Psychology II  
 PSYC 7306/8306\* Linear Structural Modeling  
 PSYC 7309/8309 Focus Group Research  
 PSYC 7310/8310\* Mixed-Model Regression Analysis  
 PSYC 7311/8311 Applied Categorical Data Analysis  
 PSYC 7312/8312\* Qualitative Research in Psychology  
 PUBH 7104/8104 Large Data Sets in Public Health Research  
 PUBH 7152/8152 Biostatistical Methods II  
 PUBH 7153/8153 Biostatistical in Bioinformatics  
 PUBH 7306/8306\* Linear Structural Modeling  
 PUBH 7307/8307 Applied Structural Equation Modeling in Public Health  
 PUBH 7308/8308\* Applied Multivariate Statistics  
 PUBH 7309/8309 Applied Survival Analysis in Public Health  
 PUBH 7310/8310 Mixed Model Regression Analysis (same as PSYC 7310/8310)  
 PUBH 7311/8311 Applied Categorical Data Analysis (same as PSYC 7311/8311)  
 SOCI 7322/8322\* Seminar in Quantitative Data Analysis  
 SOCI 7325/8325 Seminar in Qualitative Research  
 SWRK 7030/8030 Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research  
 SWRK 7020/8020 Quantitative Social Work Research

\* Denotes courses with prerequisites that **would not count** toward the Ph.D. SUAP 7100/8100 cannot be used as an advanced methods course but is recommended as a pre-requisite for students with no quantitative methods training.

## Pre-Approved GIS Courses

(2024 and beyond)

ESCI 6430 Social and Economic Geography with GIS  
 PLAN 6515 Geographic Information Science  
 PLAN 7207 GIS for City Planning  
 ESCI 7613/8613 GIS for Public Health and Climate Change  
 PLAN 7504/8504 Seminar in GIS  
 PUBH 7300/8300 Spatial Analysis and Simulation for Urban Health  
 ESCI 7623/8623 Spatial Health Inequalities

**NOTE:** Some students may enroll in more than 48 credit hours of coursework while pursuing a Ph.D. in Urban Affairs. **Chapter 4** of the Handbook, “Program Dynamic and Benchmarks,” provides additional insights into navigating the curriculum and preparing for a successful comprehensive exam and dissertation. Chapter 4 also describes the preferred sequencing of courses.

## Other Coursework Regulations

**Directed Research and Independent Study** courses are designed to support the independent study of specific research topics and can be used to meet Focus/Specialization Area course requirements.

Students can also use Directed Research (UAPP 8200) credits as preparation time for Comprehensive Exams or Dissertation Proposal preparation. Still, no more than three such credits will count toward the Focus Area course requirement. **Before registering**, all Directed Research or Independent Study courses used within a student’s curriculum should be discussed with the student’s advisor and the Ph.D. director.

**At most, only 6 hours of 6000-level courses may be applied to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. degree.**

Students should also review the “Minimum Degree Requirements” section of the graduate catalog for important University policies regarding credit hour requirements for a Doctoral Degree.

**Effective 2024 onward:** Students starting the urban affairs program beginning Fall 2024 will be expected to take qualifying/comprehensive exams **after** the following courses have been completed: **UAPP 8009, 8010, 8011, 8014**, one **qualitative**, and one **GIS** course. Faculty teaching these courses will furnish comprehensive exam questions and review answers if selected. Students may also opt to include members who will provide questions that are topical or based on the student’s area of expertise. A minimum of 3 core curriculum questions are expected to be answered. Students will move on to specialization and theory courses in the second year of the curriculum and will be expected to form dissertation committees based on their chosen specialization area.

## Transferring Credits Earned Before Admission to the Urban Affairs PhD Program

Graduate credits earned before admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program will not automatically transfer. Students can complete a petition process to have a maximum of 12 such credits applied to the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs degree. Only courses related to the purpose and curriculum of the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program will be considered. Credit can only be granted for courses taken with the time limitations set in the Graduate Catalog (10 years). Evaluation of [transfer credits](#) is subject to all other University regulations described in the Graduate Catalog.

Transferred credits can count toward the Urban Affairs curriculum's "Focus Area" or "Advanced Methods" requirements.

## Categories of eligible transfer coursework:

- Relevant graduate classes taken at the U of M as a non-degree-seeking student.
- Relevant graduate courses were taken while pursuing a different Ph.D. degree (at the UofM or another institution) related to the urban affairs curriculum.
- Relevant graduate courses taken after the completion of a master's degree.
- Relevant 8000-level courses taken during the completion of a master's degree.

The petition for transfer credits must be completed after admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program and before the second semester of enrollment ends. See **Appendix A** for instructions on petitioning to transfer credits earned before admission.

## Full-Time Student Course Sequence (Fall 2024 and beyond)

Fall semester year 1: UAPP 8009, UAPP 8011, and one GIS or qualitative methods course (9 hours)

Spring semester year 1: UAPP 8010, UAPP 8014, and one GIS or qualitative methods course (9 hours)

Fall semester year 2: UAPP 8012, two specialization or theory courses (9 hours)

Spring semester year 2: UAPP 8013, two specialization or theory courses (9 hours)

Fall semester year 3: One specialization course or theory course, dissertation workshop (UAPP 9001) (1-3 credit hours if needed), and dissertation hours (1-3 credits) (7-9 credits)

Spring semester, year 3 and beyond: Continued dissertation credits (UAPP 9000)

## Part-Time Student Suggested Course Sequence

Fall semester year 1: UAPP 8009

Spring semester year 1: UAPP 8011

Fall semester year 2: UAPP 8014

Spring semester year 2: UAPP 8012, Comprehensive Exams (on core curriculum)

Summer semester year 2: UAPP 8013

Fall semester year 3: Begin Specialization/Focus Area coursework

## Comprehensive Exams

All doctoral students must pass a comprehensive exam before enrolling in dissertation credit hours. The exam should be taken when a student in good standing has completed all required coursework for the comprehensive exam or is enrolled in the last semester of coursework, including the methods coursework.

**Chapter 4**, “Program Dynamics and Benchmarks,” describes the exam's structure, composition, and role of the exam committee. These will differ for students admitted before 2024. Comprehensive exams are typically scheduled in the Fall and Spring semesters only.

**NOTE:** After completing the oral and written exams, students should plan to finalize their dissertation prospectus, set their dissertation committee, and apply for any Human Subjects review needed for their dissertation project.

## Dissertation Formats

It is up to the committee and the student to determine the best format for a student's dissertation. Some fields emphasize an **article format** (typically three articles) for their dissertation. An **article-focused** format requires that the articles represent a cohesive body of work that supports the theme or theoretical framework developed by the student. The dissertation will still include an introduction chapter and a concluding chapter synthesizing findings across the articles. Students who use an **article-focused** format should ensure that these articles are not minor tweaks to works already in print but are new and novel.

The *introduction* chapter of an **article-focused** dissertation should include the following: a definition of the problem, the importance of the problem (i.e., why it matters to the field and why it is worth researching), the theoretical foundations supporting the problem or issue to be analyzed, an overview of relevant literature, a discussion of research questions, and the methodology used to answer the questions posed. The *concluding* chapter of an article-focused dissertation will synthesize the study's significant findings and limitations discovered during the research, discuss new avenues of inquiry, and provide policy recommendations.

Suppose a student chooses a traditional, **thesis-style** dissertation. In that case, the dissertation should be written as one cohesive narrative that could be published as a book or reformatted for articles post-graduation. The *introductory* chapter of a **manuscript-style** thesis will give the reader an idea of the problem being addressed, the literature around the problem, the need for the research, and the research questions. The second chapter of a **manuscript-style** dissertation often constitutes the literature review and theory development. The third chapter details the methods used to explore the research questions, the fourth (and sometimes fifth) chapters present the findings and results, and the final chapter concludes with a discussion of policy implications, new avenues for inquiry, and limitations.

## Dissertation Credit Hours

The Ph.D. in Urban Affairs requires completing 11 hours of Dissertation credit, including UAPP 9000 and 9001 (12 hours of UAPP 9000 for all students admitted before Fall 2023). After completing the dissertation, the candidate will defend it in a presentation that includes a final oral examination dealing with the dissertation and its relation to the candidate's area of research.

## Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships

Graduate assistantships and fellowships are highly competitive, and admitted students are not guaranteed funding upon admission. Students wishing to be considered for an assistantship or fellowship should apply on the Urban Affairs website **after** they have submitted their application to the program. All students are encouraged to seek extra-departmental funding inside or outside the University. If students receive a graduate assistantship, they should expect their funding to last through the coursework portion of their degree **only** (approximately two years for full-time students). After completing a student's coursework and moving on to the late-stage candidacy stage after passing their comprehensive exams, the graduate assistantship ends.



Other fellowship and grant information is continuously made available to students via messages sent to their U of M email accounts. Students are encouraged to review this information and discuss potential applications with the Director of the Ph.D. Program or other faculty members.

When graduate students with departmental funding commitments receive external funding, the departmental funding that had been reserved for them may become available for other graduate students during the period of external funding. Thus, graduate students who receive external funding help themselves and their fellow graduate students in the program. If a student receives external funding (i.e., through a scholarship, grant, or fellowship), please notify the program director immediately as this frees up funding for other students.

Graduate students who have exhausted their funding will be contacted about their progress in the Ph.D. program, financial needs, and desire for funding for the following year. Students will receive priority for funding if they develop exceptionally good records in the department. Still, such funding can occur only when temporary or unexpected funds become available to the Department. This can occur, for example, if other graduate students who are funded receive an external award, a faculty member goes on leave, etc. Such funding is generally granted only when the Department has teaching needs that available faculty cannot fill.

Graduate assistants must be registered for courses each semester in which they hold assistantships. Graduate Assistant and Fellowship contracts generally require GAs to work 20 hours per week for the department or unit generating the contract. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA to continue as a graduate student. If you are an international student receiving a fellowship or graduate assistantship:

- You must apply for a Social Security number as soon as possible.
- You must give Human Resources a copy of your Social Security number.
- After obtaining your Social Security number, you must see Ms. Senese Duhart, Administration Building 276, to complete a Form W-4 for tax purposes. **International Students** should contact the [ISS office](#) to process Social Security number requests.
- **All GAs** must complete an I-9 before beginning any work.
- **All GAs** advisors must submit an annual evaluation to the Ph.D. director annually (see Appendix for the form).

## Chapter 4. Program Dynamics and Benchmarks

This chapter describes how the program works, the steps students will follow in moving through the program, and the benchmarks that will be reached along the way. Two important appendices provide “at a glance” summaries:

**Appendix B** includes sample degree paths and timelines.

**Appendix C** offers a summary of the program benchmarks described in this chapter.

**Appendix D** includes copies of the program advising forms.

### Admission and Registration

Once a student has been admitted to the program, they should *initialize their account* to register for classes. Students should be able to log in to the [Graduate Application Status](#) portal and click on the Next Steps to Enroll button to see information about initializing their UofM account.

Graduate Assistants and Fellows should register for classes and indicate whether or not they would like to enroll in the [UM Student Health Plan](#) once they have initiated their accounts. If Gas and Fellows are not registered for at least one course and have selected their health plan option (opt-in or waiving), they run the risk of being dropped from classes and having their contracts canceled.

Regardless of GA or Fellowship funding, all students are expected to initiate their accounts and register for classes according to the [registrar’s office](#) calendar.

### Advising and Mentorship

The Program Director will serve as an interim Faculty Advisor for entering students. After the first semester, and no later than completing 18 credit hours in the program, you will choose a Faculty Advisor whose expertise is relevant to your course of study.

The Faculty Advisor plays multiple roles, including assisting you with registration, helping you develop a course path that supports your research interests and meets the degree requirements, connecting you with other faculty mentors, and reviewing your academic progress. Your Faculty Advisor will typically serve as a member of your Comprehensive Exam Committee and will likely lead your Dissertation Committee.

**You should meet with your Faculty Advisor annually.** Your Faculty Advisor will help you identify relevant courses for the Advanced Methods and Focus/Specialization Area requirements. Please see [the University of Memphis Graduate Faculty Status Guidelines](#) for information on affiliate or clinical professors' ability to serve as advisors or as chairs of dissertation and comprehensive exam committees.

### Cohorts and Coursework Sequencing

While the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program allows flexibility during study, you will be taking a common set of core courses with the students who enter the program with you (i.e., your

“cohort”). The cohort approach to education provides structure and creates an environment where students can support, motivate, and learn from one another. Proper sequencing is essential in supporting the cohort model.

In the first year of study, all full-time students, regardless of full-time or part-time status, should enroll in UAPP 8009, UAPP 8010, UAPP 8011, and UAPP 8014. Part-time students must enroll in either UAPP 8009 or UAPP 8011 in the fall semester and UAPP 8014 or UAPP 8010 in the spring semester.

All students should enroll in the two-course Collaborative Urban Problem-Solving sequence, UAPP 8012 and UAPP 8013, in the second year of study.

Methods courses should be selected with a student’s Faculty Advisor or Ph.D. program director (**admits in 2021-2023 only**).

**Beginning in Fall 2024**, all students will be **required** to take UAPP 8014: Survey of Advanced Quantitative Methods, one Qualitative Methods course (satisfied by ANTH 8075, SWRK 8030, or SOCI 8025), and one GIS course (satisfied by PLAN 7207, ESCI 6430, PLAN/ESCI 6515, ESCI 6525, ESCI 6535, ESCI 8504, or ESCI 8613).

The Specialization/Focus Area requirement should be met by content-area courses that contribute to developing the comprehensive exam and dissertation. While useful and encouraged, courses focusing on professional development (e.g., writing or grantsmanship) will not count toward the Focus Area requirement. Students must have at least two theory courses as part of their program of study and specialization. To ensure interdisciplinarity, six or more credits must come from a discipline outside the student’s master’s degree field.

## Directed Research and Readings Courses

Directed Research courses support the independent study of specific research topics and can be used to meet Specialization/Focus Area course requirements.

Students can also use Directed Research/Readings credits to prepare for Comprehensive Exams, but no more than three such credits will count toward the Focus Area course requirement. If all courses in their program of study are complete, students can register for UAPP 8200 for at least one credit hour in the semester they intend to take comprehensive exams.

Students doing directed reading courses in SUAPP subject areas for the Specialization/Focus Area requirement should register under that department’s Directed Research, Directed Study, or Independent Readings prefix (i.e., CJUS 8110). Before enrolling, students should discuss directed readings or independent study courses with the faculty member who best aligns with the interest area for the reading or independent study course.

## Deviations from the Program of Study

**2021-2023 Cohorts Only:** Suppose a student does not want or need to enroll in UAPP 8200 to prepare for comprehensive exams. In that case, they can take comprehensive exams as an unenrolled student. Once the exam is completed and the student passes their comprehensive exams, they can immediately enroll in UAPP 9000 Dissertation Credits after their comprehensive exam semester to prepare and defend their dissertation proposal.

Suppose a student takes more than a semester break between comps and the dissertation prospectus preparation stage. In that case, they must complete a **Graduate Readmission Form** to re-enroll in the program and begin the dissertation prospectus process (i.e., registering for UAPP 9000: Dissertation hours). Students should select the “former student seeking readmission” option on this form. The form should only be submitted after passing the comprehensive exams.

The relevant part of the university policies regarding enrollment can be found here: The relevant part of the Graduate Catalog can be found here:

<https://catalog.memphis.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1557#minimum-requirements-for-doctoral-degrees>

**2024 Cohort and Beyond:** Students should register for UAPP 9001: Dissertation Proposal Workshop in the semester **after** successfully passing their comprehensive exams **and after** completing their specialization coursework. Students can concurrently enroll in UAPP 9000 and 9001 in the same semester.

## Expected Time to Completion

Because of the flexibility of the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program and the independent nature of doctoral studies, no two students will follow the same path to degree completion. Completing the 48-hour degree program in three years is possible if enrolled full-time, and a student enters the program with a clearly defined dissertation project in mind. However, it is more likely to take at least four years for a full-time student to complete coursework, pass the comprehensive exam, and successfully write and defend the dissertation. Remember that many factors can increase or decrease the time to degree completion. Review Appendix B for some example degree paths with various timelines.

## Comprehensive Exam Committee and Procedures

Students must pass a Comprehensive Exam before being considered “late-stage” doctoral students and proceeding to the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation phase. The Comprehensive Exam is taken after completing all required coursework or during the final semester.

Students will form a Comprehensive Exam Committee of **three to five** faculty members, of which **only one** can come from outside programs affiliated with SUAPP or the University of Memphis. The committee should be formed after the student has completed most of the urban affairs doctoral program curriculum or at least **27 hours** of coursework. Students should indicate their intent to sit for the

comprehensive exams by supplying the [Comprehensive Exam Committee Declaration Form](#) to the program director. The program director makes a call for students who wish to sit for their exams each semester (**2021-2023 cohorts only**).

The committee should consist of faculty members whom the student anticipates serving on the Dissertation Committee. The Ph.D. director must be notified when students are ready to take their comprehensive exams, which are scheduled in the Fall or Spring semesters only.

## Comprehensive Exam Process

The Comprehensive Exam is a two-part process, including a written three-to-five-question exam followed by an oral exam. The oral exam should be scheduled no more than two weeks after the written exam and will clarify or expand on responses in the written portion. It is another opportunity to demonstrate the breadth and depth with which the student understands the field in general and the student's specialty.

The comprehensive exam is **a timed exam**, and students have 72 hours to complete it. Fall (written and oral) exams should *ideally* be scheduled for completion by October 30th (FALL) and March 31st (SPRING) to ensure that both parts of the comprehensive exams are completed in time to submit forms to the Graduate School. This is a suggested time limit, however. Students can schedule comprehensive exams up to the end of the semester, so long as both the written and oral exams are completed before the term ends.

The **written portion** of the exam will be organized as follows:

Students will be required to answer at least three questions regardless of the number of members on the exam committee. Each student's exam committee will set word limits for answers, but students should plan on answers being at least ten pages double-spaced. Comprehensive exams submitted that answer less than the required minimum will fail. **Students should use a 12-point font, and answers should be double-spaced.**

Students can use notes, but all sources (journals, books, reports, policy documents, etc.) must be cited and included in a bibliography.

Students should transmit their finished exams to the Ph.D. director rather than **their committee**. **To prevent tampering, the document should be saved in Word and PDF. Both files should be sent to the Ph.D. director before the 72-hour time limit.** The director will use the university's Turnitin software to check each comprehensive exam for plagiarism. Students should not recycle work from previous coursework unless given explicit permission. Students should rely on their study materials (i.e., class notes and annotated bibliography) to develop and write their exam answers. Students should not attempt to pass off answers that are not their own or plagiarize.

The director will check students' answers for plagiarism and transmit the Turnitin plagiarism report and student answers to the committee for review. Any cheating or rampant plagiarism will result in an automatic failure and will be reported to the Office of Student Accountability for further investigation.

**Oral examinations** should be scheduled for two weeks after the committee receives the written exam. Students will receive feedback from their committee (via the Ph.D. director) to prepare for the oral examination.

The **oral exam** will not exceed two hours. The Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee will arrange the time and location in consultation with the student and the other committee members. The student must determine when committee members are available for the examination, which can be held virtually or in person. Before the oral exam, the faculty reviewers will provide comments and questions on the written answers for the student to respond to. During the meeting, the committee will hear from the students regarding clarifications or questions about things that might have been left out or glossed over during the exam's writing portion. After the student has had a chance to provide more context, the committee dismisses the student, decides on the written and oral exam performance, and determines whether the student passes. Only one dissenting vote is allowed on either portion of the exam.

If a student fails to **pass** their comprehensive exam, a second exam must be scheduled in the following Fall or Spring semester. Students can only register for Directed Readings until exams are passed.

Students are responsible for collecting the necessary signatures and submitting their Comprehensive Exam Results Form to the Graduate School and the program director after completing their exam's written and oral portions.

As a reminder, students can use Directed Research credits as preparation time for Comprehensive Exams. However, no more than three credits can count toward the Focus Area course requirement.

**Effective April 2024:** If a student feels they cannot complete an exam on the first attempt, they should email the Ph.D. director **immediately** to reschedule a second attempt. Students will not receive a third attempt at comprehensive exams, so if they fail on a requested retake after abandoning a first attempt, they will be dismissed from the program.

**Effective April 2024:** Students who need additional accommodations due to learning disabilities are directed to contact the [Disability Resources Center](#) before sitting for comprehensive exams. Any time or format modifications must be accompanied by a letter from that office.

## **Comprehensive Exam Process (Fall 2024 admits and beyond)**

All incoming **full-time** students must sit for comprehensive exams in the Spring semester. The core faculty in the Urban Affairs PhD program will set the dates and times for comprehensive exams and notify students at the start of the spring semester. The comprehensive exam committee comprises faculty who teach those courses, and exams will be unique to each student. Exams always consist of two parts: written and oral examinations, regardless of the year a student entered the program.

**Part-time** students are instructed to take comprehensive exams after completing the following courses: UAPP 8009, 8010, 8011, 8014, qualitative methods, and a GIS course. They can take their exams in the fall or spring but cannot register for Focus Area/Specialization courses until they have completed them.

Part-time students should email the program director at the start of the semester when they intend to sit for the comprehensive exams so that the committee can prepare the written and oral exams.

All students are responsible for creating their annotated bibliography, which they must submit to their committee (via the program director) **at least two weeks** prior to the start of their comprehensive exams. Comprehensive exam committees for students admitted in 2024 or beyond will be comprised of faculty who teach the program core, GIS, and qualitative methods courses.

## Annotated Bibliography Preparation

The student will work with committee members to develop an annotated bibliography of works that best represent their knowledge of the Focus/Specialization Area and the program core courses (UAPP 8009, 8010, 8011, 8014, GIS, and qualitative methods). The annotated bibliography should be comprehensive (i.e., at least 75 primary sources) and utilize resources from UAPP-related coursework—students are encouraged to include a subject-specific literature review as well.

The student's Comprehensive Exam Committee will then review this information and develop a set of three to five exam questions for each student. Students should furnish an annotated bibliography to the committee for review, and the committee should ensure that exam questions are related to the student's specific research area and dissertation topic. The committee, wherever possible, will connect the dissertation topic to the broader context of the student's coursework and questions on the comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam demonstrates that the student has gained mastery over substantive bodies of literature appropriate to their research interest and the general topic to be addressed in the dissertation.

## Passing Comprehensive Exams

Performance must be acceptable to the Comprehensive Exam Committee (no more than **one** dissenting vote is allowed). The result of the exam (positive or negative) will be communicated to the Graduate School on the [Comprehensive Exam Results Form](#) within the same semester the exam was taken or by the specified deadline listed on the Graduate School's [website](#).

Students who fail to pass may take the exam a second time. A **second failure results in termination** from the program, which can be appealed. The retention appeals process is formalized and must be followed in all cases. See the section on Retention Appeals in the Graduate Catalog or find the appeals form on the Center for Academic Retention and Enrichment Services' [website](#).

Students who **pass** the Comprehensive Exams are considered late-stage doctoral students at the UofM. Per university policy, one credit hour is regarded as full-time enrollment for late-stage doctoral students, regardless of a student's domestic or international student status. While students are considered late-stage according to Graduate School policy, they must take all specialization coursework in their second before forming their dissertation committee and starting to write their dissertation prospectus. Only after the proposal is approved will students be able to enroll in UAPP 9000 credits.



**Effective April 2024:** Students entering the program in fall 2024 should take comprehensive exams in the Spring of their first year enrolled full-time. They should expect to take their substantive and theory courses in the second year, along with UAPP 8012 and 8013. (See Advising Forms in the appendix for details.) In the student's second year of the program, it is recommended that students identify faculty members to serve on the dissertation committee.

## Dissertation Proposal and Advancement to Late-Stage Candidacy

After completing the Comprehensive Exam, the student will select a dissertation committee of at least four faculty members. This committee will often have the same composition as the Comprehensive Exam Committee. The chair of the Dissertation Committee must hold full graduate faculty status. Only one external graduate faculty member may serve as a voting member of a dissertation committee. A completed [Dissertation Committee Appointment Form](#) must be submitted to the Graduate School before beginning work on the prospectus.

Once a student has finalized their dissertation committee, they should begin work on their dissertation prospectus and submit any documents needed for human subjects (i.e., IRB approval) and other work necessary for their dissertation project.

**Students cannot register** for Dissertation Credits (UAPP 9000) until the comprehensive exam (and all theory/specialization courses, if applicable) have been completed. Additionally, all forms, including the **Comprehensive Exam Results Form** and **Dissertation Committee Appointment Form**, should be submitted to the Graduate School before enrolling in any dissertation credits. Once the dissertation proposal is complete, students should defend the proposal and submit a **Dissertation Proposal Defense Form** to the Graduate School before initiating dissertation research. All copies of these forms should be copied to the Ph.D. director and retained in the student's academic file. All forms can be found on the [Graduate School's](#) website.

The dissertation is individual research that reflects the student's ability to delineate, investigate, and analyze an appropriate topic of inquiry professionally. Before writing the dissertation itself, the student must complete an approved Dissertation Proposal. The dissertation proposal establishes the student's credibility, demonstrates an appropriate knowledge of the dissertation topic, and provides a work plan for the dissertation research and analysis. This proposal must describe a clear research question, identify a clear scope, give a complete background/literature review, and describe an appropriate research design.

The student may enroll in Dissertation Credits (UAPP 9000) while developing the proposal, so long as comprehensive exams have been completed. UAPP 9001 (offered in the Spring semester, on-demand) is a one-credit workshop that students can enroll in to help them with proposal development, which is outlined below in the **Dissertation Prospectus Requirements** section.

Students should review the [university's guidelines on dissertation formatting](#) and draft prospectus materials using those guidelines. This will help to ensure that your final product needs fewer changes once you are ready to defend the final product.



The student will work with their Dissertation Committee Chair to set a timeline and plan for completing the proposal. In most cases, the Chair will review the first draft of the proposal and suggest any needed revisions. After revision, the next draft version will be circulated among the other committee members. The student and Chair will schedule committee review meetings as required. The student may work individually with committee members to obtain feedback and advice.

The student must present the Dissertation Proposal for review and approval by the Committee. The Chair of the Committee, in consultation with the student and the other committee members, will arrange the time and location for the Dissertation Proposal Defense. It is the student's responsibility to determine when committee members are available for the examination. The committee may approve the proposal or request further revision and a subsequent review.

Once the proposal is approved, a [Dissertation Proposal Defense Form](#) will be submitted to the Graduate School.

If the research proposal includes any research or scholarly activity involving the use of human subjects, approval must be obtained from the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) before the research begins. The Dissertation Proposal phase is the appropriate time to initiate IRB review. In most cases, an expedited review is appropriate. However, students should plan appropriately as the review process takes several weeks, and revisions are often requested before approval.

**Thesis/Dissertation Grading:** The use of S, U, IP grading for theses and dissertations is different from its use for other courses. The grade of "S" is ONLY awarded when the student successfully defends the thesis or dissertation; the grade of "U" is awarded ONLY when the student fails to defend successfully. Otherwise, the grade of "IP" is awarded to indicate that the student is progressing in a timely manner. Students must enroll for at least one thesis or dissertation hour each semester (except for summer sessions) when working on the thesis or dissertation.

## Dissertation Prospectus Requirements

This section presents guidelines for what is minimally acceptable for a prospectus that is ready to defend. You can present a prospectus that goes beyond these guidelines in consultation with your dissertation supervisor.

Please plan to present your prospectus to your full committee **at least two weeks before** the date of your agreed-upon defense. Before this, your chair should have received your prospectus in draft form to provide feedback before the rest of the committee receives your full prospectus.

Your dissertation should be based on an analysis **you conduct yourself**. You should follow traditional social science conventions for the format (i.e., using Strunk and White's Elements of Style Guidelines, citations in APA format, and use Headings and Subheadings throughout where appropriate). This means that your prospectus should include the following sections highlighted in bold. Your prospectus should be between 25 and 30 pages, but may be longer if needed.

**Introduction:** The introduction should include a clear statement of the research problem and a project summary. This introduction should provide a rationale for your study and explain why your study is important to the literature. This section “sets the stage” for your research questions, and you should incorporate your research questions within the Introduction. (**2 pages max**).

**Literature Review:** The purpose of the literature review is to provide the reader with an explanation of past relevant research that situates your project within the context of that canon. The literature review shows why your study is essential and should give your readers enough background knowledge to understand your dissertation. It should also explain why your research is necessary. The literature review is best understood as an *extension* of your argument for your dissertation. Where possible, the literature review should discuss the foundational and seminal research on your theory and topic, as well as synthesize the current research most similar to your research. It should **not** be a summary. Instead, a literature review should synthesize old and new literature relevant to your research. Peer-reviewed research should be used in the literature review. (**10-12 pages max**)

**Data and Methodology:** In this section, you will discuss how you will conduct your study. Sub-sections in this section will vary depending on the complexity of your project. In general, this section should include information about participants, research design (including any treatment groups), all data collection instruments (and process in creating them), and secondary data your project will use, what method will be used to analyze the data (i.e., some literature might be needed to support why you have chosen a particular method here as well), and what IRB needs your project requires. You may find adding an appendix to your prospectus helpful if you intend to create a survey instrument, interview protocol, or other data collection process for your dissertation. Questions to ask while writing this section:

1. Why is your data adequate to answer your research question(s)?
2. How will you collect your data, and why are you collecting it that way?
3. What possible arguments can be made against the validity of your data?
4. What are the limitations of your chosen data?
5. How will you analyze your data? What statistical method (if applicable) will you use? Why is that method appropriate?

The point of the methods section is to allow your committee to fully understand your data and method so that they can verify that your method is acceptable. If you need IRB clearance for your project, you should begin drafting those materials and be prepared to share them with your committee when supplying your prospectus. (**7-10 pages max**)

**Chapter Outline and Project Timeline:** Include a chapter outline at the end of your prospectus with a brief description of what will be included in each chapter. If you are writing a **three-paper/article** dissertation, each “chapter” should describe the research questions/hypotheses to be answered in each article/chapter. **Three-paper/article** dissertations should have a concluding chapter tying together observations drawn from each paper. **Traditional** dissertation chapters typically follow this format: Introduction, Literature Review and Theory, Methods and Data, Data Analysis Chapter(s), and a Concluding chapter. (**2-3 pages max**)

**Reference List:** All prospectuses should include a Works Cited section listing any bibliographic sources you used in your study.

## Dissertation Completion and Defense

The Ph.D. in Urban Affairs requires completing 11 (or 12) hours of Dissertation credits. Doctoral candidates must register for at least 1 hour of dissertation credit each academic semester (fall and spring) until the dissertation is completed. Students should enroll in UAPP 9000 in the summer semester **only** if they plan to complete and defend their dissertation. See the Graduate Catalog for information on exceptions to the [continuous enrollment](#) policy.

After completing the dissertation, the candidate will defend it in a presentation that includes a final oral examination dealing with the dissertation and its relation to the candidate's area of research. All members of the Dissertation Committee must be present at the Defense. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee will arrange the time and location for the Dissertation Defense in consultation with the student and the other committee members. It is the student's responsibility to determine when committee members are available for the examination.

**All students must defend their dissertation research in a public forum.** The dissertation defense will be open to the public, and the candidate must complete the [Dissertation Defense Announcement Form](#) **three weeks** before the defense date. The defense presents an opportunity for intellectual exchange among the wider Urban Affairs community and to learn about graduate student research. As such, students should plan for approximately one hour of the defense, including an oral presentation (not to exceed 30-40 minutes) and questions from the audience, which will be scheduled as a public seminar. The candidate's dissertation committee will conduct the final oral examination. The oral examination of the dissertation will also be open to the public; the audience may remain in the room but not ask questions. The executive session will follow the oral examination. During that time, the student's advisory committee will discuss the presentation and examination performance and vote on approval of the dissertation defense. The executive session is closed to the public and the candidate.

University regulations require a **unanimous favorable vote** for a successful dissertation defense. Suppose the student fails the final oral examination or presents an unacceptable dissertation. In that case, the student's committee will advise the Urban Affairs Program Director whether the student must submit a revised dissertation or should be dropped from the Ph.D. program. Unsuccessful students will usually be given a second chance to defend their dissertation after making adjustments from committee feedback.

After the successful defense, the committee approval form must be submitted to the Graduate School for review by the Graduation Analyst. After the Graduation Analyst has reviewed and approved the dissertation, it will be delivered to the ProQuest electronic dissertation repository. After successfully defending their dissertation project, the student should complete the [Doctoral Candidacy Form](#).

Students should familiarize themselves with the Graduate School's [Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Guide](#) before writing their dissertation. This guide contains important information about university policies, specific formatting requirements, paperwork requirements, and steps for submitting the final dissertation to the repository.

## Applying for Graduation

Students must submit a graduation application (“[Apply to Graduate](#)”) in the term in which the dissertation will be completed and submitted to the Graduate School for final approval. This application is available in the student’s MyMemphis account under the MyDegree tab. A student must have a 3.00 grade point average in all graduate work before applying. An audit of all classes to be applied to the Ph.D. program will be reviewed by the Graduate School and the Ph.D. Director.

## Annual Progress Review and Basis for Termination

Advisors will review individual student success and movement through the program annually. The results will be made available to the student in writing. The review aims to ensure that the student makes adequate progress toward the degree, document outstanding achievements by the student, and identify any potential problems related to their performance. The review is meant to be an opportunity for the student and the advisor to discuss the student’s experiences to facilitate the successful completion of the degree requirements.

For students with Graduate Assistantships, the review provides a basis for the student’s request for reappointment. The annual reviews will also offer the opportunity to collect information on students’ achievements to support the assessment of the Ph.D. program. This will include the number of grants or fellowships received, reports written, presentations made, publications, etc.

Near the end of the spring semester, the Ph.D. The Program Director will initiate the Annual Review workflow. Students will complete a self-assessment and meet with their Faculty Advisor to review the assessment and overall progress. The Advisor will add written comments and forward the assessment to the Program Director.

The annual self-assessment should consider

- Progress towards completion of coursework,
- Classroom performance, and experiences.
- Preliminary plan for comprehensive exams (for students in the coursework phase);
- Preliminary plan for dissertation proposal;
- Academic or Professional conference presentations.
- Provide a list of articles and other publications under review or in press.

In addition to the self-assessment, the Advisor’s review will consider the pace of the student’s progress toward reaching the program benchmarks described in this chapter and summarized in Appendix C. Advisors are responsible for providing the signed self-assessment form along with any additional comments on student progress to the director of the Ph.D. program by the end of the Spring Semester.

## Basis for Termination: GPA and Other Policies

Students whose cumulative GPA drops **below 3.00** will be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation for a second consecutive semester may be terminated from the program. Students may also be terminated from the program for failing a second comprehensive examination attempt, unsuccessfully defending a dissertation, or failing to complete the degree within 12 years. Students may also be dismissed from the program for violating the University's [Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Students may also be terminated from a program by an action of a program retention committee or other program committee authorized to act based on a student's failure to meet the program's published retention standards. All actions should be taken to assist the student to improve their performance before termination procedures are initiated. In the spirit of helping improve performance, the Advisor should inform the student of concerns about the student's performance before initiating the internal review process.

Example: Suppose an annual review indicates that a student is not progressing satisfactorily toward program benchmarks and degree completion. In that case, the Advisor and the Program Director will be consulted to recommend whether the student's financial support for the academic program will be terminated.

Any graduate student has the right to appeal retention decisions made by the program. The Graduate Catalog outlines specific steps for the termination process and student retention appeals in the [Academic Regulations](#) section of the catalog.

## Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism

All graduate students at the University of Memphis are expected to follow the regulations and policies that govern students' behavior as members of our academic community. The Student Handbook has a list of these policies. Generally, student misconduct, as defined by the University of Memphis Code of Student Conduct, includes all acts of cheating, plagiarism, forgery, or falsification. See the [Office of Student Accountability](#) for additional details.

The term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- Using unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes or tests.
- Using sources beyond those authorized by instructors in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out any other assignments.
- Tests or other academic materials should be used before materials are revealed or distributed by instructors.
- Failing to abide by test-taking instructions provided by instructors or proctors of exams.
- Influencing or attempting to influence University employees to affect a student's grade or evaluation
- Any forgery, alteration, unauthorized possession, or misuse of university documents.
- The term "plagiarism" includes but is not limited to paraphrasing or direct quotation of another person's published or unpublished work without full or clear acknowledgment.

Plagiarism can also include the unacknowledged use of materials from another person, AI software, or agency, such as selling term papers or other academic materials. Self-plagiarism or knowingly presenting previously written work for multiple assignments or classes, unless explicitly authorized by the instructor, also counts as plagiarism. See the [Academic Misconduct Section](#) of the Office of Student Accountability for more information. More information on AI use on exams or in coursework can be found on PolicyTech ([AA3037](#)).

Academic misconduct can also include furnishing false information to university officials, faculty members, and university offices and the forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University documents.

## Sexual Harassment Policy

The University of Memphis is committed to providing an equitable environment for all students that is free from discrimination based on sex. In compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, sexual misconduct is strictly prohibited by the University. Sexual misconduct is defined as

- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Dating violence
- Domestic violence
- Stalking

As such, any reports of sexual misconduct will be investigated by the Office for Institutional Equity. Actions that result in a violation of this policy will be subject to university disciplinary action. These actions may also subject a student, faculty member, or staff member to criminal and/or civil liability under state law. For more information, please refer to:

[www.memphis.edu/oie/title9/sexualmisconduct.php](http://www.memphis.edu/oie/title9/sexualmisconduct.php)

## Confidentiality of Student Conduct Issues

Student records encompass all records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to the student and are maintained by the school or school employee (34 CFR § 99.3; National Forum on Education Statistics, 2006). Documents that would be included in the student record and protected by FERPA include but are not limited to the following: individualized education plans, immunization records, school nurse records, assessment results, social security numbers, attendance records, disciplinary records, and transcripts (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2006). For more information on FERPA compliance, please refer to [UM Policy AA3002](#).

Files related to academic and disciplinary matters *are kept separately from student records*. While committees may discuss discipline or academic issues, *these issues should be shared only by the committee members, relevant administrative officers* (i.e., the Urban Affairs Faculty Committee, the Ph.D. Director, or the SUAPP Director), and the *student* involved in the infraction. After disciplinary hearings, the Office of Student Accountability and the Graduate School will be sent a summary of any

decisions regarding program termination or discipline germane to the student issue at the time for record-keeping purposes.

## Chapter 5. Student Resources and Professional Development

### Student Identification

All students must obtain a [University Identification Card](#) to use campus services. To obtain a university ID, visit 115 Wilder Tower and bring official photo identification (e.g., a driver's license or passport).

### Email/Internet

All students should establish and use university email accounts when communicating with professors and staff. Visit <https://iam.memphis.edu/idmaint.jsf> to get your unique UM email address.

### University Counseling Center

The [Counseling Center](#) supports students' emotional well-being, offering free counseling, wellness, and psychiatric services.

### University Student Health Center

The Student Health Center offers immunizations, health checks, and assistance with short-term, acute illnesses and injuries. Visit the [Student Health Center](#) website for a description of services.

### Student Tiger Pantry

The [Tiger Pantry](#) was created to help feed all students on campus. We believe that every student in the Memphis Tiger community deserves access to a balanced meal to fuel their body and their mind. College is full of struggles, and food insecurity shouldn't be one of them. The Tiger Pantry is open to currently enrolled University of Memphis students. The pantry carries food items (perishable and non-perishable), basic household items, basic toiletries, and feminine products.

### The University of Memphis Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The GSA represents the interests of all graduate students on campus. It is the official liaison for graduate students to communicate with the University and Graduate School administrators. The GSA advocates for the support of graduate student research and teaching experiences. All graduate students are automatically members of the GSA. The GSA also provides students access to formal and informal professional development training through various extracurricular opportunities.

## Writing, Research, and Dissertation Resources

The University's [Center for Writing and Communication](#) will be available to students needing additional help refining their writing skills.

The University's [McWerter Library](#) and the Center for Writing and Communication offer a two-week Dissertation Writers' Retreat each winter break.

The [Library](#), with the Graduate School and the Center for Writing and Communication, maintains a [Dissertation Writers Resources](#) portal. This thorough set of online resources, which builds on the workshops and materials developed for the retreats, guides students through the dissertation research and writing process. The resource also includes tips on maintaining mental health and advice on navigating the academic and non-academic job markets.

The University's [Division of Research and Innovation](#) (DRI) offers a variety of training and networking opportunities as well as access to services in English language editing, scientific editing, and external reviewers of grant proposals.

SUAPP's Pre-Award Coordinator can support doctoral students pursuing externally funded research endeavors. The Pre-Award Coordinator prepares a quarterly Grants Bulletin and coordinates interdisciplinary research teams to pursue external funding. The director will also send email communications for scholarships, fellowships, and funding opportunities to student's UM email on a regular basis.

## Graduate Teaching

The University's Graduate School offers teacher training workshops for Graduate Assistants who will be instructing undergraduate courses. **Doctoral students wishing to teach classes within SUAPP must have a master's in the teaching discipline or have acquired 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline.**

Example: A student with a master's degree in Sociology can only teach courses in Sociology unless or until they have acquired 18 hours in a related SUAPP discipline in the program.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) should expect direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, seek regular in-service training, and plan for periodic evaluations of their teaching.

Students can only teach **after** their first year of doctoral studies and should seek permission from the department chair in the subject area where they would like to teach. Students should expect the assignment of a faculty mentor (typically someone who has taught the class before) to guide them in developing a syllabus, using Canvas, creating and grading assignments, and conducting lectures. Students who are scheduled to teach an undergraduate or master's level course should meet the following expectations:



## The Supervisory Relationship

When a student graduate instructor and faculty mentor work together, the supervision should involve the following activities:

1. When a student is assigned responsibility for teaching a course, he/she should meet with the faculty mentor (or designated representative) to discuss matters such as text selection, course structure, syllabus design, examination design, grading practices, and pedagogical approach (e.g., lectures vs. discussions, etc.). This should be done before books are ordered and a syllabus is prepared for the course in question. The intent is to utilize the faculty member's teaching experience so that the graduate instructor can avoid various pitfalls in teaching and course design.
2. At some point in the semester, the faculty mentor should attend at least one class session taught by the graduate instructor. For a new instructor, this should be done early in the semester, and it may be helpful to visit again later in the semester. For an experienced instructor, a single visit late in the semester may be sufficient.
3. Following the class visit, the faculty mentor should meet with the graduate instructor to discuss any issues involving presentational style and technique that may be appropriate.
4. The graduate instructor should feel free to consult the faculty mentor for advice or assistance regarding any course-related issues that may arise.

For new graduate instructors, faculty mentors should exercise relatively close supervision. For experienced graduate instructors, relatively infrequent contact may be acceptable.

## The End-of-Semester Evaluation

Whether the graduate instructor is new or experienced, the faculty mentor has some evaluation responsibilities:

1. At the end of the semester, the graduate instructor shall have the students in his/her class fill out online SETE forms. The faculty mentor shall then review these forms. If it would serve a useful educational purpose, the faculty mentor may wish to meet with the instructor to consider issues raised by students in the SIRS forms.
2. After visiting the class and reviewing the SETE forms at the end of the semester, the faculty mentor should fill out an evaluation form (obtained from the Ph.D. Director), give a copy to the graduate instructor, and place a copy in the graduate instructor's file.

More information on the qualifications to teach as Graduate Teaching Assistants can be found [here](#).

Students who wish to teach in one of the constituent units must notify the Ph.D. Director and the Chair/Director of the program they wish to teach and have an agreement for compensation before being assigned to a graduate or undergraduate course. Again, it should be stressed that students seeking to teach for a constituent unit in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy must have a master's degree or have amassed 18 graduate credit hours in the subject they wish to teach.

All GTA's should expect to submit their academic transcripts to Faculty Services before being assigned to teach a course.

## English Proficiency Requirement for International Students

International students must fulfill the English language proficiency requirement to be assigned as teaching assistants in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy. They can satisfy this requirement by attaining a passing score on the [SPEAK test](#). The school can terminate the financial assistance of any student who fails to meet the English language proficiency requirements if they are scheduled to teach a course or are assisting with training as part of their graduate assistantship assignment. The school does not pay for the extra credits to enroll in this course.

## Community Engagement Opportunities

Students can gain additional exposure to community-engaged research methods or assistance in identifying and cultivating community research partnerships through the University's Engaged Scholarship Faculty Network, which is a peer-to-peer mentoring and support network. The University's [Center for Service Learning and Volunteerism](#) provides infrastructure support for engaged learning and research.

## Conferences and Travel

Advisors and committee members will assist students in identifying appropriate conference presentation opportunities and local speaking opportunities so that they may gain additional experience and exposure to networking opportunities. Please notify the program director if a research project is accepted for presentation at a conference, and note these on your annual self-assessment form.

Students should apply for [Graduate Student Association Travel Funding](#) to offset conference costs. The College of Arts and Sciences also has travel funds, and students are encouraged to apply. See the [CAS Travel Enrichment Funds](#) website for Fall/Spring/Summer application deadlines.

## General Presentation Skills and Job Preparedness

SUAPP hosts a regular "works-in-progress" discussion series in which faculty members share early-stage research ideas and outcomes, receive feedback, and identify potential collaborators. Urban Affairs Ph.D. students in the research phase of their curriculum are invited to participate in the series to receive guidance from a broad audience of faculty members and colleagues. Students presenting at academic conferences are expected to present their work at the **SUAPP Works in Progress** or the **SUAPP Graduate Research Poster Showcase**. Suppose a student intends to present a poster or paper presentation at a conference. In that case, they should notify the Ph.D. director in advance to be added to the **SUAPP Works in Progress** agenda or submit their proposal to the **SUAPP Graduate Research Forum** when the call goes out to students.

The program occasionally offers a “Practitioners’ Brown Bag Discussion Series” that invites local practitioners in various urban affairs disciplines to share their work, discuss programs and interventions, and express research needs. This allows students additional exposure to translating research for a lay audience.

The Ph.D. program may also offer a brief “Job Talk 101” learning module for late-stage candidates interested in pursuing academic jobs. The program hosts a **Student Professionalization Series** on Fridays at noon throughout the academic year. Students should expect to **attend at least four** of these scheduled meetings each academic year.

## SUAPP Office Policies

### Main Office

The SUAPP and Ph.D. in Urban Affairs Office are on the 2nd floor of Browning Hall (200 Browning Hall). Please restrict visits to business matters (mail, picking up forms, reserving rooms/equipment, meeting with faculty) and treat staff courteously and respectfully. The office is open during regular business hours (8:30-4:30 p.m., M-F).

### Photocopies

While the school has a copier located in room 213 Browning, only authorized use is allowed, and it requires a personal access code. Student use is authorized for Graduate or Teaching Assistants preparing materials for class or research assignments, students with a code number assigned to their own grant, and one-time requests approved by the program director. No personal use of the copier is permitted. Students are encouraged to print at home or use the McWherter Library using their printing allowance for printing needs.

### Mail

Mail is delivered daily to the SUAPP offices. Graduate students share a mailbox in the copier room on the second floor. Students can use the main office address for any first-class mail. Use of department stationary or university bulk stamping is prohibited.

### Fax Services

If students need to receive a fax, they can route it to the 2nd floor copier using the number: 901-678-2981.

### Office Space

All doctoral students have access to office space to study. This office is located on the first floor of Browning Hall (Room 103). Please respect others who share this room by keeping spaces tidy and professional in appearance. There is a community kitchen and a bathroom for convenience in this space.

SUAPP is not liable for personal property brought to campus and stored in offices or classroom spaces. The building is locked overnight and unavailable for weekend use without prior authorization. If you need to use the office after hours, please contact Campus Security for assistance.

If you are GA and need after-hours access, please contact Nicole Hoyle to obtain a key. At the start of the academic year, Graduate Assistants will be furnished with shared offices.

## Appendices

### Appendix A. Petition to Transfer Credits

Graduate credits earned before admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program will not automatically transfer. Students can complete a petition process to have a maximum of 12 such credits applied to the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs degree. Only courses that relate to the purpose and curriculum of the Urban Affairs PhD program will be considered. Credit can only be granted for courses taken with the time limitations set in the Graduate Catalog (10 years). Evaluation of transfer credits is subject to all other University regulations described in the Graduate Catalog.

**Transferred credits can only be counted toward "Specialization/Focus Area" or "Advanced Methods" requirements in the Urban Affairs curriculum.**

Categories of eligible transfer coursework:

- Relevant graduate classes taken at the U of M as a non-degree-seeking student.
- Relevant graduate courses were taken while pursuing a different Ph.D. degree (at the UofM or another institution) related to the urban affairs curriculum.
- Relevant graduate courses taken after the completion of a master's degree.
- Relevant 8000-level courses taken during the completion of a master's degree.

**Instructions:** The petition for transfer credits must be completed after admission to the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program and before the end of the second semester of enrollment. Please use the [Transfer Credit Form](#) located on the Graduate School's website.

### Appendix B. Expected Time to Graduate

Because of the flexibility of the Urban Affairs Ph.D. program and the independent nature of doctoral studies, no two students will follow the same path to degree completion. If enrolled full-time, completing the 48-hour degree program in three and a half years is possible. However, it is more likely to take at least four years for a full-time student to complete coursework, pass the comprehensive exam, and successfully research and defend the dissertation. Remember that many factors can increase or decrease the time to degree completion.

Some students will likely enroll in more than 48 credit hours of coursework while pursuing the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs. In some cases, students must complete prerequisite coursework before enrolling in

courses that meet the Advanced Methods requirement. These prerequisite courses would not count toward the Ph.D.

Students might enroll in more than nine credits of methods courses or more than 15 hours of focus area courses to develop a course profile that suits their interests and career objectives.

Students might enroll in professional development courses that will not be applied toward the Focus Area course requirement.

Students might enroll in multiple sections of Directed Research to prepare for the Comprehensive Exam or to focus on specific literature or theories related to their research area.

Students might be able to shorten their time to degree completion by enrolling in courses during the summer semester or by using the summer to prepare for Comprehensive Exams or develop dissertation proposals instead of using Fall or Spring Directed Research courses to do so. Some students can transfer in credits, as **Chapter 3** of this Handbook describes.

## Appendix C. Program Benchmarks

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Form</b>
Identify Faculty Advisor	Before enrolling beyond 18 hours	Provide the name of the advisor to the Ph.D. program director.
Complete Coursework	36-39 credit hours	
Schedule Comprehensive Exams	During last semester of coursework ( <b>2021-2023 only</b> ) <u>or</u> when core curriculum is completed ( <b>2024 and beyond</b> )	Comprehensive Exam Committee Declaration Form (see UA website)
Pass Comprehensive Exams		<a href="#">Comprehensive Exam Result Form</a>
Form Dissertation Committee	After passing comprehensive exams and nearing completion of specialization coursework	<a href="#">Dissertation Committee Form</a>
Dissertation Proposal Defense	After comprehensive exams, before conducting dissertation research	<a href="#">Dissertation Proposal Defense Form</a>
Complete IRB Human Subjects Review (if needed)	Before conducting Dissertation Research	<a href="#">UM IRB Human Subjects Form</a>
Set Dissertation Defense Date	After approved final dissertation has been	<a href="#">Dissertation Announcement Form</a>

	reviewed by chair and committee members	
Defend Dissertation	After Defending Dissertation	<a href="#">Dissertation Final Defense Results Form</a>  <a href="#">Thesis Dissertation Formatting Guide</a>
Submit Doctoral Candidacy Form	After Final Dissertation Defense is approved	<a href="#">Doctoral Candidacy Form</a>
Apply for Graduation	During term of Dissertation Defense.	<a href="#">Apply for Graduation</a>

# Annual Graduate Self-Assessment Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ UMID \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Entry \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** (Copy this form and submit annually to the Ph.D. Program Director at the end of Spring semester).

This annual evaluation aims to provide some time for self-reflection and promote a dialogue with your advisor concerning your strengths and weaknesses. After completing this questionnaire, you should give a copy to your advisor and schedule a meeting to discuss your answers and overall progress in the program. All graduate students should fill out this form as honestly as possible. You are welcome to skip any questions you feel are inappropriate or intrusive. After the meeting, a signed copy of this questionnaire should be provided to the director of the Ph.D. program by the student's advisor.

Rate yourself in the following categories on a scale of 1 to 5. Include any comments you feel are important.

(PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER) 1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = average 4 = good 5 = outstanding

Methodological Skills 1 2 3 4 5

(Comprehension of descriptive statistics, understanding of univariate and bivariate statistics, understanding of linear regression, survey development, data cleaning, hypothesis testing, etc.)

Presentation Skills 1 2 3 4 5

(Ability to effectively communicate your research results in an oral presentation, ability to communicate your research results in writing effectively)

Depth of Technical Knowledge 1 2 3 4 5

(Knowledge of your specific project and area, familiarity with relevant literature)

Breadth of Technical Knowledge 1 2 3 4 5

(Knowledge of areas outside your project, familiarity with general literature)

Creativity 1 2 3 4 5

(Developing new ways to solve specific problems in the lab, developing new project ideas, combining your research with other cohort members in a collaborative way, pushing social science forward)

Work Ethic 1 2 3 4 5

(Hours spent working on projects, hours thinking about data or the academic literature, priority of graduate school)

Efficiency/Productivity 1 2 3 4 5

(Efficient use of time, ability to multi-task, time management)

Independence 1 2 3 4 5  
(Thinking critically for yourself and solving problems on your own; knowing when to ask for help)

Leadership 1 2 3 4 5  
(Helping other group members; taking charge of things that need to be done without being asked; setting a good example for undergraduate researchers)

Teamwork 1 2 3 4 5  
(Good group citizen, helping and supporting others)

Record Keeping 1 2 3 4 5  
(Keeping good records, handling course workload, use of citation program, service of Google Drive/Dropbox/OneDrive for data and articles, etc.)

**Describe** how you have produced complete, accurate records of your research activities during the previous year or how you have worked to improve your record-keeping during the year.

**Describe** one or more specific instances during the previous year in which you worked to help improve the environment in the cohort by helping someone else with their research or classwork, assisting with uncovering critical literature, preparing a presentation, etc.

**Describe** one or more ways in which you took charge in the group, without being asked to do so, to accomplish a task that needed to be done, or to set a good example for other researchers.



Describe one or more specific instances in a course during the previous year in which you independently solved a research-related challenge or problem.

What are your strengths?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are your weaknesses?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Specific target areas for improvement in the next 12 months:

Goals for the next 12 months (specific project-based and personal development goals). If you plan to graduate this year, state your graduation plan:

What are your long-term career goals?

Are there any broader issues you wish to discuss?

The graduate student and the major advisor reviewed and discussed the above evaluation.

**Advisor Name** (Print and Sign)

**Student Name** (Print and Sign)

# SUAPP Graduate Assistant Evaluation Form

**Instructions: Please submit a copy to Dr. Davia Downey (dcdowney@memphis.edu) by the end of the Spring semester (or at the end of the GA's contract).**

Graduate Assistant Name:

Semester/Year:

Supervisor Name:

Supervisor Email:

Number of Hours (per week) assigned:

Nature of Responsibilities and General Comments on Performance:

## 2025 Ph.D. in Urban Affairs Advising Form

Student Name:  
Student Advisor:  
Student Email:

Student ID:  
Year Entered Program:

### CORE COURSES (15 Hours)

Course Prefix and Name	Semester Planned	Grade
UAPP 8009: Exploration of Policy Theory and Policy Frameworks		
UAPP 8010: Explorations of Urban Research Theories		
UAPP 8011: UAPP 8011: Methodological Approaches in Urban Affairs Research		
UAPP 8012: Collaborative Urban Problem-Solving Studio I		
UAPP 8013: Collaborative Urban Problem-Solving Studio II		

### SPECIALIZATION (15 Hours):

☐ **Urban Cultures and Societies Track (Required:** ANTH 8200 Roots of Anthropology Theory, SOCI 8210 Sociology Theory Seminar, and three courses from ANTH and SOCI)

☐ **Urban Policy and Services Track (Required:** CJUS 8541 Criminology Theory, SWRK 8040 Advanced SW Theory, and three courses from CJUS and SWRK)

☐ **Urban Governance and Planning Track (Required:** PADM 8600 Administrative Theory and Ethics, PLAN 7002 Planning Theory and Perspectives, and three courses from PADM and PLAN)

☐ **Urban Political Development and Urban Economics Track (Required:** POLS 8100 Scope and Methods in Political Science **or** POLS 7222/8222 Seminar in Urban Politics, PADM 7224 Seminar in Urban Problems, and three courses from PADM, POLS, or PLAN)

**Policies:** Six hours must come from a discipline outside the student's master's degree. Two courses must be theory-based in SUAPP from the pre-approved list.

Course Prefix and Name	Semester Planned	Grade	Substitution?

### METHODS COURSES (9 hours)

**Policies:** Qualitative and GIS courses will be selected under advisement based on the student's research interests.

UAPP 8014 is required for all students unless a substitution has been granted.

Course Prefix and Name	Semester Planned	Grade	Substitution?
UAPP 8014: Survey of Advanced Quantitative Methods			

**DISSERTATION CREDITS (variable)**

Course Prefix and Name	Semester Planned	Grade
UAPP 9000: Dissertation		
UAPP 9001: Dissertation Proposal Workshop		

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS**

**Policies: Students** should submit the comprehensive exam committee form to the Ph.D. director in the semester before they intend to sit for their comprehensive exams.

Committee Members	Semester Planned	Passed

☐ Passed ☐ Retake Required

**SUBSTITUTIONS or COURSES TAKEN OUTSIDE THE PROGRAM OF STUDY**

☐ Substitution Form(s) are on file with the Ph.D. Director and submitted to the Graduate School.

**Policies:** Substitutions for core courses are not allowed. Methods or Focus Area course substitutions are allowed with the prior approval of the advisor or Ph.D. director. Up to **nine** hours of credits can be substituted for the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs. **All** substitutions for courses previously taken at other institutions or the U of M must be accompanied by a substitution form and placed in the student's file folder.

Course Prefix and Name	Semester Planned	Grade	Notes

Student Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_