Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Public Administration (Urbanism)

The PhD in public administration and policy is a theoretically grounded research degree program designed to prepare students for an academic career. The program is also appropriate for individuals who want to conduct high-level research and policy development in public and nonprofit agencies, foundations and research institutes. It is designed for students who seek full-time study.

The goal is to develop well-rounded, independent scholars who are grounded in the classic and current literatures of public administration and public policy, skilled in research methods, and ready to make a positive and important contribution to the field through teaching and research.

The doctoral program in public administration and policy with an urbanism concentration permits students to draw upon the extensive resources in urban affairs at ASU. As a result, these students are poised for success as productive and active scholars, researchers and teachers upon graduation.

The concentration in urbanism is a mechanism for organizing varied perspectives on urbanism into a collective body of scholarship. The study of public administration is enriched by grounding it in a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of urban context and the dynamic forces that shape them. The concentration in urbanism leverages the varied interests in urbanism and helps emerging scholars as they attempt to compare, contrast and take stock of urbanism. Working with faculty from across a range of departments and programs at ASU, doctoral students will be able to capture the creative tensions that scholarship on urbanism has inspired in order to stimulate a provocative, constructive kind of inquiry.

At a Glance

• College/School: College of Public Service and Community Solutions
• Location: Downtown Phoenix campus
Degree Requirements

90 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, an oral comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation

The doctoral program is designed to promote the mastery of the core knowledge of public administration and public policy and to develop more specialized expertise in chosen areas of study and research. Accordingly, in the first year doctoral students take four core courses as a cohort. These courses focus on the foundations of the field, the philosophy of science, and theories and issues in governance, public policy, systems, organizations and human behavior. Additionally, first-year students enroll in at least two elective courses. In the second year, students hone their skills in quantitative and qualitative research, enroll in additional electives, and develop a program of study for their areas of specialization. In the third year, students take an advanced seminar in research and teaching, complete their work in their selected areas of specialization and move forward to a proposal for completing their dissertation.

The program consists of a minimum of 60 credit hours of graduate work beyond the master’s degree. Of the 60 credit hours, at least 24 must be research and dissertation credit (of which no more than 12 hours may be dissertation credit). A minimum of 30 credit hours of approved coursework, exclusive of dissertation and research, must be taken at ASU after admission to the program. In addition to the core courses above, doctoral students are required to complete coursework in two areas of specialization. Specializations are developed in consultation with the student’s program of study committee and can focus on a variety of topics related to public administration and public policy. Doctoral students may work with faculty from other departments, if appropriate, to complete their specializations. As an alternative, students may opt for the urbanism concentration.

In addition to the required doctoral core courses, students take a required concentration core course (GCU 516 Principles of Urbanism) and 12 credit hours selected from an approved list of applicable courses related to the four areas below.

- built form: includes architecture, urban design, urban morphology, urban planning, and transportation and infrastructure
- culture and society: includes historical, cultural and sociological aspects of urbanism
- institutions and governance: includes public policy, politics, and other governmental, economic, legal and political institutions
- natural environment: includes global, ecological, biological, and other environmental and natural systems and resources

Admission Requirements
Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the College of Public Service and Community Solutions.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a master's degree, in a related field, from a regionally accredited institution.

All applicants are expected to have completed graduate level statistics and research methods classes before admission. Applicants also are expected to have sufficient formal coursework in public administration to pursue doctoral study in the field. Admitted students are required to take PAF 501, PAF 502, PAF 503, PAF 504, PAF 508 (or their equivalents) and statistics prior to beginning the doctoral core courses. Applicants who are not pursuing an MPA should not take these courses until they consult with the doctoral program director.

Applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of a student's first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate coursework
3. completed checklist
4. written statement
5. current resume or curriculum vitae
6. three letters of recommendation
7. samples of research reports or papers
8. scores on the GRE (verbal, quantitative, analytical)
9. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must submit TOEFL scores to be considered for admission (institution code: 4007). This is true even for those who have a master's degree from a United States university. To be considered for admission to the PhD program in public administration and policy, the applicant's minimum score on a traditional TOEFL test must be 600; the minimum score for a TOEFL iBT must be 100. Applicants with scores below the minimum will not be considered. More on the English proficiency requirement is available at https://students.asu.edu/graduate/proficiency.

The written statement of educational and career goals must include a discussion of research interests.
The letters of recommendation should be primarily from faculty members. All letters should address the candidate's capacity to successfully complete the doctoral program. They should assess the student's capacity for critical and analytic thought, their ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, and their commitment to completion of the program.

Only GRE test scores from within the past five years will be accepted, and analytical scores will be considered in admission decisions.

Applicants are admitted for fall only. Admission is competitive; a limited number of well-qualified applicants will be admitted each year. Students should see the program website for application deadlines.

Contact Information

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