

UNO SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
DOCTORAL STUDENT HANDBOOK Updated
UPDATED JUNE, 2025

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Program Objectives.....	2
Admissions	3
Governance of the Doctoral Program and Student's Supervisory Committee	4
The Doctoral Program Committee (DPC)	4
The Doctoral Program Committee Chair	4
The Supervisory Committee Chair	5
The Supervisory Committee	5
Progress toward the Degree	6
Pre-Requisites	7
Residency Requirement	7
Program of Study	8
Coursework	8
Field Examination	9
Candidacy.....	10
Dissertation Proposal.....	10
Dissertation.....	10
Reasonable Progress.....	11
Annual Review	11
Completion Deadline	11
Quality of Work Standards	11
Graduate Assistantship Procedures and Expectations.....	12
Travel Policy and Funding.....	13
Waldo Society	14

Introduction

This Doctoral Program Handbook presents the policies of the School of Public Administration (SPA) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) regarding the Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration degree program. The policies presented here are in addition to [general policies](#) set forth by the [Graduate School](#) at UNO. Students and prospective students should consult Graduate School policies as well as this Handbook.

Provisions of the Handbook may change as a function of modifications of policies, procedures or requirements made by either the public administration faculty or the University Graduate Council. As such changes occur, new editions of the Handbook will be posted on the SPA web page. Handbook curriculum policies in effect in a student's first semester of doctoral work following admission, relating to the courses and credit hours required for the core, specializations, and research portions of the program, continue to apply to the student through graduation. In some circumstances, students may be allowed to switch from an older curriculum model to one recently adopted. All other current Handbook policies apply equally to all students in the program regardless of date of entry into the program.

Program Objectives

The PhD program in Public Administration at UNO creates a supportive, collaborative, and rigorous environment for students to develop their intellectual identities and a comprehensive understanding of the field and a range of research traditions. Our students and alumni make significant contributions to theory, policy, research, and practice towards enhancing a democratic society. We value intellectual openness, collaboration, diversity, and excellence.

The PhD program in Public Administration is a research degree with a focus on public and nonprofit administration and management in a democratic and diverse society. It is the terminal degree for research and theory development. While this definition of the doctoral degree does not preclude people who wish to further their education while remaining in professional public or nonprofit management careers, it should communicate that the PhD in public administration focuses upon developing a student's ability to conduct research and engage in theoretical and scholarly reflection.

Because the PhD program seeks to provide students with the competencies necessary to achieve distinction in higher education or leadership positions in public administration, the faculty expect students to exhibit a serious and well thought out commitment to the profession of public service in a democratic and diverse society. The PhD program assists students in their individual development toward a professional sense of personal responsibility and public accountability, providing a foundation for a successful career in academia and/or in public or nonprofit administration.

Program learning outcomes include:

1. Students will understand epistemologies, discourses, and theories in the field of public administration.

2. Students will understand research designs and methodologies applicable to the field of public administration.
3. Students will design, carry out, and defend an independent research project related to the field of public administration.

Admissions

Admission to the Ph.D. program in Public Administration is the decision of the Dean of Graduate Studies based on the recommendations of the SPA Doctoral Program Committee (DPC). The primary application deadline is **January 15** (required for applicants seeking financial assistance). Applications may also be submitted by **March 15** for the cohort starting the following fall. There are several elements in the application portfolio (listed below), and all application materials must be received by the deadline for the application to be reviewed by the DPC. Applicants should apply online [here](#); materials to submit include:

1. All official transcripts from post-secondary educational institutions, sent to: Office of Graduate Studies and Research, Eppley Administration Building 203, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182.¹
2. \$50.00 application fee.
3. Completed graduate application.
4. For most international applicants, a minimum TOEFL score of 557 (or 233 on computer-based test or 90 on Internet based test), minimum IELTS score of 6.5, or minimum Pearson score of 61.²
5. A five-page statement of intent describing the applicant's goals in pursuing a PhD and plans after completion of the PhD., research interests and desired area of specialization offered in the PhD program, discussion of faculty with whom the applicant would like to work related to research interests, and an explanation of academic and professional backgrounds preparing the applicant to pursue a PhD.
6. Résumé or curriculum vitae of professional work experience.
7. An academic or professional writing sample (such as a term paper, thesis, conference paper, evaluation report, or published work).
8. A 1-page abstract that summarizes the contents of the writing sample. If applicable, please include an explanation of your contribution if the work submitted is multi-authored.
9. Three email addresses for your writers of letters of recommendation (at least two must be from academics). The Graduate Studies Office will contact each via email to obtain the letters.

¹ International applicants who have completed any undergraduate or graduate coursework at international higher education institution(s), for the purpose of having your application reviewed by the School of Public Administration, you may submit a copy of your unofficial transcripts, in addition to all other application materials. Should the department wish to make a recommendation for admission, you will be required to have a course-by-course transcript evaluation completed by WES, ECE, or Educational Perspectives prior to your admission being formally reviewed and processed by the Office of Graduate Studies.

² Required if applicant's native language is not English and master's degree is not from a university in a country where the official language is English.

Governance of the Doctoral Program and Student's Supervisory Committee

The DPC and the student's Supervisory Committee play important roles in administering the doctoral program and in monitoring and supporting a student's progress throughout the program.

The Doctoral Program Committee (DPC)

The DPC administers the Ph.D. degree program. The Committee takes primary responsibility for supervision of the program, including admissions, interpretation of policy and socialization of doctoral students into a community of scholars, and maintaining the quality standards of the program. The Committee conducts an annual review of the academic progress of each doctoral student. The full-time tenure-track or tenured faculty members of the SPA nominate members of the Committee to the Director of the SPA, who makes appointments. Committee members recommend one member to the SPA Director to serve as Chair of the DPC for a three-year term, with a possible three-year reappointment.

The Doctoral Program Committee Chair

The DPC Chair takes primary responsibility for facilitating the doctoral program and liaising between the DPC and students and between the DPC and rest of the SPA faculty and Graduate Studies. The DPC Chair:

- Facilitates and administers all policies articulated in this Handbook, by the DPC, and/or the SPA Director, and suggests policy updates to the DPC.
- Serves as liaison between the DPC and Graduate Studies.
- Approves travel and travel funding requests, supervisory committee appointments, and program of study plans before forwarding to the SPA Director and/or to Graduate Studies.
- In consultation with the DPC and other faculty members, makes graduate assistantship (GA) appointments and GA contracts.
- Schedules Ph.D. courses and in consultation with supervisory committee chairs and the SPA Director, assigns PhD students to teach undergraduate courses.
- Manages the student annual review process.
- Organizes and facilitates new student orientation; all-PhD student meetings; the Teaching and Research Professional Skills Workshops; conference practice presentations; and mock job interview sessions.
- Keeps current Ph.D. students informed of funding, conference, professional development, and other opportunities.
- With a Supervisory Committee Chair, advises new students on their program of study.
- Attends all dissertation proposal and dissertation defenses.
- Recruits and discusses with potential students their application to the Ph.D. program, and manages the application review process.
- Provides support to Supervisory Committee chairs.
- Provides support to the Waldo Society student association.

All questions or concerns students or faculty have regarding the doctoral program, program of study, etc. should be directed initially to the DPC Chair. If needed, concerns can also be brought to the SPA Director.

The Supervisory Committee Chair

The Chair of the Supervisory Committee is the student's primary advisor throughout the doctoral program. The student should contact an appropriate (in terms of research and professional interests) faculty member in the SPA to request to serve as Supervisory Committee Chair. Students should meet regularly with the Supervisory Committee Chair to confer on course load, research plans, conference attendance, and so on. The Supervisory Committee Chair's role includes:

- With the Chair of the DPC, recommends to the Dean of Graduate Studies approval of the student's Program of Study (by the end of their second semester).
- Reviews and provides mentoring and feedback on the student's annual review of academic progress and plans.
- Reviews and must approve conference submissions and travel and travel funding requests.
- Provides mentoring and feedback on student teaching assignments, as applicable (see [checklist for Ph.D. students teaching classes](#)).
- Coordinates the design and evaluation of field exam questions.
- Supervises development of the dissertation proposal.
- Approves the dissertation proposal and dissertation before it is sent to the rest of the Supervisory Committee.
- Presides at the oral defense of the dissertation proposal and dissertation.
- Provides advice and support related to going on the job market, as applicable.

The Supervisory Committee

The student's Supervisory Committee must be formed before the student takes field exams. To form a Committee, the student should work with their Supervisory Committee Chair to form the rest of the committee, which should include two additional SPA faculty members and one faculty member outside of the SPA. This "outside" member should be within the University of Nebraska (NU) system. An additional person outside of the NU system can also be added to a committee. If outside of the NU system, approval will need to be obtained from the DPC Chair, School Director, Dean of the College, and Dean of Graduate Studies by completing the [Appointment of Courtesy Committee Member](#) form (and attaching a copy of the outside member's CV).

Once the committee has been formed, and with the approval of the Supervisory Committee Chair, the student should submit an [Appointment of Supervisory Committee for the Doctoral Degree](#) form to the Chair of the DPC, who may approve and then forward it to the Dean of Graduate Studies for final approval. After the Dean signs the form, a copy is sent to each committee member, the Director of the SPA, the Chair of the DPC, and the student. The original is kept in the student's file.

A student may change their Supervisory Committee Chair but should consult with the DPC Chair before seeking a change. A student may also change committee members in consultation with their Chair. In some instances, a faculty member may also ask a student to find a new chair if research interests or some other issue makes a change appropriate. Faculty members are asked to consult with the DPC Chair if a change is being considered. If any Committee change is made, a new Appointment of Supervisory Committee form must be submitted to the Chair of the DPC. Students should note that if they are not able to form a full committee, they may not be able to continue in the program.

The Supervisory Committee advises students on the Program of Study, designs and evaluates the field exam, evaluates and hears the defense of the dissertation proposal, evaluates the dissertation, hears final oral defense of the dissertation, and recommends approval of the dissertation to the Dean for Graduate Studies. Committee members and students need to be aware of their mutual responsibilities to consult with one another at each stage of the process.

Progress toward the Degree

The curriculum and course schedule are designed to enable full-time students to complete their degree within about four years. Part-time students may take longer.

Years
One & Two

Students typically begin their first semester (fall) by taking two core seminars ([PA 9000](#), [PA 9300](#)) and a research design course ([PA 9800](#)). They also work with a Supervisory Committee Chair and the Doctoral Program Committee Chair to submit a [Doctoral Program Committee and Course Plan](#) by the end of the first semester. See the [PhD Course Checklist](#) for help with mapping out classes.

Over the next three semesters, students typically complete the remaining core seminars ([PA 9200](#), [PA 9400](#), [PA 9500](#), [PA 9600](#), [PA 9700](#)), research methods courses ([PA 9950](#), [PA 9960](#)), a 1-credit hour Teaching & Professional Skills Workshop ([PA 9920](#)) and, Research and Professional Skills Workshop or Design ([PA 9930](#)), and two specialization courses.

Field Exams are typically taken in the summer at the end of year 2 (or can also be done by the end of year 3). Before taking Field Exams, students work with their Supervisory Committee Chair to form a Dissertation committee (submit [Appointment of Dissertation Committee form](#)) who writes exam questions.

Upon successful completion of field exams, students apply for [Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree](#).

	Students work with their Supervisory Committee Chair to develop a Dissertation Proposal (while enrolled in PA 9970, Directed Research). Once the Supervisory Committee Chair has approved the Dissertation Proposal, it is sent to the Supervisory Committee. Defense of the proposal will occur before a majority of the members of the Supervisory Committee, and the Chair of the Doctoral Program, no earlier than three weeks after the proposal has been distributed. Upon completion of the proposal defense, students should submit the Proposal Defense Form.
Years Three & Four	Once the Dissertation Proposal has been successfully defended, students proceed with submitting their Institutional Review Board (IRB) paperwork (if necessary), and then begin the data collection and analysis phase of the dissertation. As doctoral candidates are writing their dissertation, they should work closely with their Supervisory Committee Chair. The defense of the dissertation will be scheduled only when the Chair of the Supervisory Committee and Readers indicate that it is ready for defense. Students must submit the Application Form for Final Oral Examination. The oral presentation and defense will be conducted by the Supervisory Committee and Doctoral Program Chair and will be open to the public. Refer to the Dissertation format here.
Application for Graduation	Once the dissertation has been successfully defended, the doctoral candidate works with the Supervisory Committee Chair to complete the necessary steps for graduation, as well as to file the Report on Completion of Degree Form. Doctoral Candidates should be mindful of the degree deadlines if interested in participating in Graduation Ceremonies.

Pre-Requisites

Applicants who enter the program with a master's degree in a field other than PA may need to complete pre-requisite courses or readings as determined by DPC when applications are reviewed. This will be communicated to the student upon acceptance to the program. Applicants may take master's-level courses before acceptance by applying to the SPA Graduate Certificate in [Public Management](#). Please consult with the DPC Chair for guidance.

Residency Requirement

All doctoral students, whether full-time or part-time, must complete 24 credit hours within the first 24 months of the program in order to meet the residency requirement of

UNO. The residency requirement ensures that progress toward the degree occurs within a reasonably compact timeframe. Once doctoral students begin their program, and before they become a Candidate (after successfully completing field exams), they may not stop out for one or more semesters without an approved leave of absence from the DPC. A student must be continuously enrolled once they become a Candidate.

Program of Study

The [Program of Study](#) serves to guide the student through their doctoral education. Students typically begin their first semester (fall) by taking two core seminars ([PA 9000](#), [PA 9300](#)) and a research design course ([PA 9800](#)). After that, students may take two to three courses each semester. Students with graduate assistantships must take a minimum of two courses a semester. International students who are in the US on F-1 or J-1 status are required by law to pursue a full course of study every semester of the academic year. “Full-time student status” is defined as 9 credit hours for graduate students. However, students may request a reduced course load for various reasons noted in the [Reduced Course Load Recommendation Letter](#).

Following approval of the Program of Study by the Dean of Graduate Studies, a student wishing to change any courses on the Program of Study must submit a request to the DPC Chair with the approval of the Supervisory Committee Chair.

Coursework

There are seven required core seminars in the doctoral program of study:

- PA 9000 | Foundations of Public Administration
- PA 9200 | Theories of the Policy Process
- PA 9300 | Knowledge Development & Use
- PA 9400 | Environment of Public Administration
- PA 9500 | Theories of Nonprofit Organizations and Civil Society
- PA 9600 | Management Theory
- PA 9700 | Public Budgeting and Financial Theory

There are three required research seminars:

- PA 9800 | Research Design
- PA 9950 | Quantitative Methods
- PA 9960 | Qualitative Methods

There are also two required 1-credit hour workshops (PA 9920, PA 9930) doctoral students typically take in year two and three of the program. A team of faculty facilitate discussions on topics related to teaching, publishing, and professional skills.

The faculty offer five areas of specialization. Doctoral students choose two courses in one area. The specialization areas are:

Public and Nonprofit:

- Policy
- Theory
- Management
- Budgeting & Finance
- Technology & Data Analytics

Field Examination

Following completion of core and specialization courses, doctoral students take the field examination, which includes two questions: one comprehensive question and one question related to the student's specialization.

The field exam is a take-home exam, given in open-book format over two days. Students will have eight hours each day to complete the exam. Students have the option to request use of office space on campus to complete the exam. It is expected that students will not discuss the exam content with peers/colleagues during the week of the exam period.

The field exam testing period is in August during the Monday through Friday before the fall semester starts each year. Normally, the exam is taken after all core courses are completed; however, a student may request to take the exam (see below) with all but one core course completed; however, students may need to conduct independent research to prepare for the exam. Students should consult with their Supervisory Committee Chair before making such a request. All students are expected to complete the exam no later than August of the beginning of their fourth year.

Students must seek permission from the Chair of their Supervisory Committee to take the exam. The request must be made in writing to the Supervisory Committee Chair with a copy to the Chair(s) of the DPC by April 15 of the year they plan to take the exam. Included in the request should be the days and times the student would like to complete the first and second question, order of questions (comprehensive question first or specialization question first), and if they request the use of office space.

A bank of comprehensive questions is created by the DPC (with core course instructors) and is updated each year. The student's Supervisory Committee chooses from among these questions and revises to apply the comprehensive question to the student's research focus area. The Supervisory Committee creates the specialization question. The student should consult with their Supervisory Committee Chair regarding the question focus areas by the end of the spring semester before they take their exam.

The Chair of the student's Supervisory Committee will work with Supervisory Committee members to assess the field exam answers, based on an exam rubric provided by the DPC (see Appendix A). Exam questions are assessed as high pass, pass, or fail. The Committee will return the exam results to the student within approximately three weeks. Results will include overall assessment - categorized as high pass, pass or fail - based on the rubric for each question, and other written feedback from the Committee. If a student fails a question, the Committee will provide feedback on areas that need to be addressed in the oral exam.

Students who fail all or part of the field exam will complete an oral exam related to the question(s), to be scheduled with a majority of the Supervisory Committee. This is an opportunity to clarify areas not addressed in the written exam. Each Committee member may ask questions. The oral exam should be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time between the student and the Committee but must take place before the date of Commencement the following December. The Committee should deliberate and decide on whether to pass or fail immediately after the oral exam takes place.

A student who fails the oral examination will be immediately dropped from the program.

Candidacy

Upon passing field exams, students may apply for [Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree](#). Per Graduate Studies' doctoral degree requirements, once they become a Candidate, a student must be continuously enrolled until they graduate. Per Graduate Studies policy, if the term of Candidacy is extended beyond three years (excluding summer terms), the candidate must pass another examination.

Dissertation Proposal

Once field exams are successfully completed, students will complete and defend a dissertation proposal before their Supervisory Committee. Students are encouraged to submit the dissertation proposal within 9 months of completing field exams. Students enroll in PA 9970 for at least one semester while working on the proposal.

The proposal should consist at minimum of a statement of the topic to be addressed, an explanation of why the topic is important, a review of the relevant literature, and an appropriate research design. The Supervisory Committee Chair will assist the student in the development of the proposal. Oral defense of the proposal will be before a majority of the members of the Supervisory Committee and the Chair of the DPC *no earlier than three weeks* after they have received the proposal.

After the oral proposal defense, the [Proposal Defense Form](#) should be submitted to the Chair of the DPC.

Dissertation

The dissertation is the culmination of a student's formal academic education. The faculty expects the dissertation to be an original contribution to knowledge in the field of public administration. Students must work closely with their Supervisory Committee Chair in the selection of a topic for research, the choice of appropriate research methods and techniques, and a timeline for completion. Please see the Graduate Studies [website](#) for information on the dissertation format.

The dissertation defense will be scheduled only when the Chair of the Supervisory

Committee indicates that it is ready for the defense. The oral examination will be conducted by the Supervisory Committee and attended by the Chair of the DPC. The defense will also be open to the public. Supervisory Committee members must sign off on the [Application for Final Examination](#), which should be submitted at least 3 weeks before the defense. Members of the Supervisory Committee will have *at least one month* to read and evaluate the dissertation prior to the oral examination. Upon successful defense of the dissertation, the [Report on Completion of Degree](#) form should be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Doctoral Candidates should be mindful of the degree deadlines (see [Academic Calendar](#)).

Reasonable Progress

Students are expected to maintain reasonable progress toward the degree, as measured by timely completion of their Program of Study and meeting benchmarks outlined in the [PhD Student Activity Goals](#) matrix.

Prior to Candidacy, students may “stop the clock” by petitioning the DPC for a leave of absence for a stated period of time, not to exceed one year. A leave of absence must be approved in advance by the Dean of Graduate Studies upon the recommendation of the DPC. To request a leave of absence, a student should submit in writing to the DPC Chair the reason for leaving and the expected date of return to the University as well as a plan for how their program of study might need to be modified. The student should work with their Supervisory Committee Chair to draft their request.

Please note: The Graduate College requires that a student be continuously enrolled once they are admitted into Candidacy.

Annual Review

The DPC will conduct a review of student progress each year and make recommendations as may be appropriate to Supervisory Committee Chairs. All students are required to submit a summary of their annual progress by **March 1** of each year to the Chair of the DPC, reviewed and approved first by their Supervisory Committee Chair. The DPC Chair will provide detailed instructions on what to include in the annual review.

Completion Deadline

The time limit to complete the degree is eight years from the date of the filing of the Program of Study. On rare occasion this deadline may be extended for one or more semesters at the discretion of the Dean for Graduate Studies upon the recommendation of the DPC.

Quality of Work Standards

Doctoral students are expected to do work of high caliber and be actively and consistently present in courses and other intellectual and professional development activities associated with the School.

Failure to maintain quality of work standards will result in probation or dismissal from the program. Reasons for probation or dismissal may include:

- Failure to maintain a 3.33 average for all course work
- A grade of C+ or below in one course
- Failure to maintain continuous enrollment (unless approval is obtained otherwise)
- Failure to pass field exams
- Failure to form a supervisory committee
- Violating [Student Code of Conduct](#) standards

A student who has been dismissed for failure to meet one or more of the Quality of Work standards may petition the DPC for probation or full reinstatement. The petition should include the issues or circumstances the student thinks need to be addressed to enable them to meet quality of work standards and what they will do to improve so as to be in compliance by the end of the following semester. The DPC will forward its recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The DPC may recommend one of the following options:

1. Full reinstatement
2. Conditional reinstatement or probation
3. Immediate dismissal from the program

Graduate Studies' Graduate Assistantship (GA) [Academic Standards](#) stipulate that students must be in good standing in a program to maintain their GA position and may only be eligible for an assistantship once they are fully reinstated into the program and the program decides to re-award the assistantship. Re-awarding of an assistantship depends on funding availability.

Graduate Assistantship Procedures and Expectations

GAs are intended as awards to students who have demonstrated high academic performance and potential at the graduate level. The DPC determines to whom GAs are awarded, based on available resources provided by the SPA and Graduate Studies, or through other grant or contract funding obtained by faculty and staff. The faculty expect GAs to perform high quality, ethical, dependable, and professional work.

GAs are typically awarded to applicants who apply by January 15, and for up to four years as long as adequate progress in the program and meeting Quality of Work Standards (see below) are met and funding is available. A student may be removed from a GA position if they do not adequately meet Quality of Work standards or do not meet expectations articulated in the student's GA contract.

The DPC Chair, in consultation with faculty and Supervisory Committee Chairs, assigns GA positions. The first two years of a GA position usually entail research and/or program-related support to faculty members. The third and fourth years usually entail responsibilities for teaching undergraduate courses. The DPC chair consults Supervisory Committee Chairs and students in assigning appropriate teaching

responsibilities. GA funding past year four is typically not available and will only be considered in unique situations that coincide with the availability of funds.

The terms of a GA contract are typically 9 months, with payments made over 10 months. GAs include a tuition waiver, a stipend of \$18,000 for approximately 20 hours of work per week, and subsidized health care benefits. GAs are typically expected to work each semester starting the week before the semester starts and ending the week after it ends. Students should discuss their work schedule with their GA advisor before the start of the semester. GAs are expected to be physically present in the Omaha region and regularly available on campus to meet with advisors and other students and to attend School-related events. In extraordinary circumstances, the DPC may consider exceptions to this policy.

Per the requirements of Graduate Studies, GAs must be registered for at least six (6) credit hours of coursework per semester. GAs may request an exception to this if they are nearly done completing their dissertation.

At the end of each semester, the GA advisor will evaluate the performance of the GA under their direction. The nature of the student's role and responsibilities are to be articulated by the faculty advisor and should be commensurate with the student's skill level and experience. In compliance with policies articulated by Graduate Studies, GA work should not be primarily clerical in nature.

While faculty needs for GAs with particular skills must be considered, in rare instances a GA may petition the DPC for a change in GA assignment and advisor. This petition should be submitted in writing to the DPC Chair, outlining the reason for the request. The DPC Chair and Committee may consult with relevant faculty and the SPA Director in making decisions to change advisors. The desire to change GA assignments should first be discussed with the DPC Chair.

Travel Policy and Funding

Students are encouraged to present high quality work at academic conferences to enable them to strategically network and engage with the scholarly community. Graduate Studies (see information [here](#)) and the SPA (see [application information](#)) typically have a small amount of funds available to support students who apply for conference travel funding. Students may apply for these funds if a conference proposal is accepted for presentation, and with the approval of their Supervisory Committee Chair. Students should coordinate with their Supervisory Committee Chair to prepare for and practice conference presentations.

Students who receive funding (or are employees of the university) must submit a travel authorization request before traveling (submitted via [Firefly](#)). If funding from the university is received, an authorization request must be submitted before purchasing plane tickets through the university's approved travel agent (or getting permission to purchase elsewhere), or making other travel-related purchases. If this is not done,

students **will not receive reimbursement** for their purchases. Please review the policy [here](#).

Waldo Society

The purpose of the Waldo Society is to provide a forum in which doctoral students can discuss research ideas, exchange academic and professional skills, and collaborate. The DPC also confers regularly with the Waldo Society representatives on program and policy matters. The Waldo Society strives to create a community for doctoral students in the SPA that helps meet both their social and professional development needs. Officers from among current PhD students are elected annually, with the aim to represent students from across cohorts.

Appendix A - PA PhD Written Exam Rubric

Instructions: Committee members, please complete the rubric for each question. Please submit the completed form, with your feedback, to the Supervisory Committee Chair within three weeks of the exam being completed.

Date:

Question: Comprehensive or Specialization (circle one)

Student's Name:

Committee Member Name:

Criteria Area	High Pass	Pass	Fail
Focus/ Scope of Inquiry	Explicitly articulated focus that addresses question(s), that is systematically and comprehensively addressed, with a cohesive approach to inquiry.	Explicitly articulated focus that is well formed and addresses question(s); could be more cohesive, systematic, or comprehensive.	Focus is too broad or too narrow and/or not clearly articulated; aspects of question(s) not addressed; multiple topics or threads of inquiry are presented that are not relevant and/or not clearly distinguished.
Concepts & Terms	Key concepts and terms are clearly defined and their relevance to the topic area is explained in detail.	Key concepts and terms are defined and used consistently throughout the document.	Key concepts and terms are not clearly defined or are inaccurate or not relevant.
Argument	Discusses scholarly literature and research supporting the topic and considers multiple perspectives in a comprehensive and clear way.	Discusses scholarly literature and research supporting the topic in a comprehensive and clear way.	Does not apply scholarly literature and research supporting the topic in a comprehensive and clear way.
Theory	Clearly identifies relevant theoretical framework(s) and provides a solid rationale for selection.	Identifies relevant theoretical framework(s) and connects them to the topic.	Selects inappropriate theoretical framework and/or makes no connection to the topic.
Writing	Writing is well organized, with proper grammar using consistent citation format.	Makes minor errors in sentence structure and/or grammar that do not impede understanding; generally, uses consistent style in text and references.	Makes frequent errors in sentence structure and/or grammar that affects understanding; citation style not consistent and has errors.

Overall Evaluation:

- Pass _____
- Fail: _____
- High Pass _____