PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, PHD

School of Public Administration, College of Public Affairs & Community Service

Mission, Vision, Values

Mission: The UNO PhD in public administration 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.

Vision: Our students and alumni will make significant contributions to theory, policy, research, and practice towards enhancing a democratic society.

Values: Intellectual openness, collaboration, diversity, and excellence.

Program Contact Information

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Admissions

Application Deadlines (Spring 2021, Summer 2021, and Fall 2021)
• For applicants seeking a funded graduate assistantship: January 15
• For all other applicants: March 15

Program-Specific Requirements

• An earned master’s degree in public administration or related field from an accredited institution.

• Generally, the target master’s degree level GPA is above 3.20 (on a 4.0 scale).

• Applicants are required to have a command of oral and written English. Those who do not hold a baccalaureate or other advanced degree from the United States, OR a baccalaureate or other advanced degree from a predetermined country on the waiver list, must meet the minimum language proficiency score requirement in order to be considered for admission.

  • Applicants should present a TOEFL score of 557 or higher; 90 internet-based, IELTS 6.5 or PTE 61 or better.

  • International applicants are expected to demonstrate the ability to communicate orally and in writing in a manner sufficient to compete effectively at the doctoral level.

  • 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.

  • Graduate Record Examination (GRE): combined scores of at least 305 on the verbal and quantitative portions of the exam.

  • At least 3 Letters of Recommendation, two of which must come from academic references

  • Statement of Purpose
    • A statement of purpose, not to exceed 5 double-spaced, typewritten pages, explaining why the student wishes to pursue a doctoral degree in public administration and research interests. The statement of intent should also address the applicant’s interest in two of the specializations listed and faculty with whom they would like to work. These statements are reviewed for quality of writing, academic sophistication, and the extent to which the applicant’s goals are compatible with the strengths and interests of the public administration faculty and the stated objectives of the program.

• Resume
  • The resume will be examined to assess an applicant’s professional work experience and/or extracurricular activities while attending school. Additionally, resumes are examined to assess an applicant’s potential ability to understand and do research on the context and practice of contemporary public management.


• The doctoral program committee reviews student academic preparation, specifying appropriate courses that must be taken as prerequisites to doctoral study. Except for those who have completed an MPA degree, new doctoral students may be required to first complete MPA course prerequisites prior to enrolling in 9000-level core or research courses.

Degree Requirements

Required Courses Summary

90 hours of graduate credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. This includes 12 hours of core courses, 9 hours of research courses, 6 hours each in two areas of specialization (12 hours total), a 1-hour workshop in teaching and professional skills, 20 hours of dissertation coursework, and 36 hours of additional graduate-level coursework. The 36 hours of additional graduate-level coursework may be earned from an accredited institution toward a Master of Public Administration degree or a master’s degree (MA or MS) in a related academic discipline or field.

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core Courses</td>
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<td>Research Courses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Area Specialization Courses</td>
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<td>Workshop</td>
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<td>Dissertation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Additional graduate-level coursework (from master’s degree)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
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Required Courses

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<tr>
<td>PA 9000</td>
<td>FOUNDATIONS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</td>
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Research Courses
Research is an integral aspect of doctoral education. The faculty expects that graduates of the program will have the ability to contribute original and systematically rigorous knowledge to the field. Thus, the PhD in public administration requires three research courses. These courses focus on logic and techniques of basic and applied research in public administration. They include:

- PA 9950 QUANTITATIVE METHODS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 3
- PA 9960 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS 3
- PA 9800 ADVANCED RESEARCH DESIGN 3

Area Specialization Courses
Select 6 hours each in two of the following areas: 12
- Information & Technology Management
- Nonprofit Management
- Public Administration Theory
- Public Aviation and Transportation
- Public Budgeting and Finance
- Public Policy
- Urban Management

PA 9920 TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS WORKSHOP 1
PA 9990 DISSERTATION 20

Progress Review
The doctoral program committee will conduct a review of student progress each year. The committee will make such recommendations as appropriate to the student’s advisor. As part of the review, students will be required to submit a summary of annual progress.

Field Examination
Following completion of all coursework, doctoral students take the field examination, covering work in the areas of specialization and related research methods. The purpose of the field exam is for the doctoral student to demonstrate mastery of the area in which the dissertation will be conducted. The field exam testing periods are September 1-November 15 in the fall semester and February 1-April 15 in the spring semester. The field exam is given in closed-book format in an eight-hour period, which can be divided into two four-hour sessions. The exam is designed and graded by the student’s supervisory committee.

Degree Candidacy
Students who have successfully passed the required coursework in their program of study and the field examination apply for Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree. This application requires majority consent of the student’s supervisory committee, the doctoral program committee, and the dean for Graduate Studies.

After admission to degree candidacy, the student must maintain continuous enrollment until he/she receives the degree. The school monitors this enrollment. Students not in residence must register for a minimum of one semester credit hour of dissertation research. Failure to register during each academic semester will result in termination of the Candidacy.

The time limit on granting the PhD in public administration degree is eight (8) years from the time of filing the plan of study in the Office of Graduate Studies.

Quality of Work Standards
Doctoral students are expected to do work of high caliber. Failure to maintain quality of work standards will result in probation or dismissal from the program. These standards include:

- GPA of at least 3.33 for all coursework
- A grade of C+ or below in one course
- Failure to maintain continuous enrollment
- Failure to pass field exams