

November 2023

## Program Policy Statement for Education and Social Policy PhD Program

UD's interdisciplinary Education and Social Policy program trains scholars with expertise in these areas. Housed in the Graduate College, this program is a joint program between the Biden School of Public Policy and Administration, and the College of Education and Human Development—including both the department of Human Development and Family Sciences, and the School of Education.

**Goals of the Program.** The goals of the doctoral program are to:

- recruit, support, and retain a diverse pool of high-quality graduate students in Education and Social Policy,
- bring together diverse, high-quality Education and Social Policy faculty invested in cutting-edge graduate student training,
- rigorously deliver foundational concepts in Education and Social Policy via a core curriculum,
- provide rigorous methods and policy electives to support broad exploration beyond the core curriculum,
- foster skills in engagement and collaboration with policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders, to develop truly engaged scholars, and
- facilitate cross-departmental and cross-college research collaborations, including large-scale external funding opportunities.

The guiding principles of the program are:

1. commitment to equity and social change,
2. rigorous training in design, methods and analysis that emphasizes multiple ways of asking and answering critical education and social policy questions;
3. true interdisciplinarity: students will not just be exposed to different disciplines, but will gain the ability to synthesize interdisciplinary perspectives in their research,
4. insight into the complexity between policy systems and communities, including understanding the multi-directionality of research and practice,
5. engaged scholarship: our students will interact with real data, with policymakers and practitioners, and with those impacted by the policies they are studying (families, schools, and communities, etc.), and

6. expansion beyond a technocratic approach to studying education and social policy, to include understandings of historical, critical, and political perspectives on inequality, situated in particular contexts.

**Degrees Offered.** The program offers a PhD in Education and Social Policy with the opportunity to earn a Master's Degree in Education and Social Policy if the program's coursework (43 credits) are completed. The M.A. in Education and Social Policy provides a master's degree option for Ph.D. students in good standing who want to obtain a master's degree in conjunction with their doctoral degree, or for students in good standing who must leave the doctoral program prematurely because of family, health, or personal reasons. Students will not be admitted directly to the M.A. program, since the program requirements are embedded within the Ph.D. requirements. Requirements to earn an M.A. include completing all of the coursework required for the PhD. The qualifying exam or other capstone is not a requirement for the M.A. Full-time Ph.D. students typically would be expected to complete the requirements for the M.A. degree at the end of their fourth semester. To obtain the M.A. degree, students will submit a change of classification form, and the completed Application for Advanced Degree to the Office of Graduate Studies by the deadline date stated in the University Calendar for the semester in which they intend to have their degree conferred.

The program is designed for doctoral students to have considerable flexibility in shaping their own area of interest. We anticipate that the following areas of interest will be the most common:

- *Social Policy:* This area of interest focuses on policies that address a wide range of social issues including poverty, social and economic inequality, and well-being.
- *Early Childhood Policy:* This area focuses on policies related to early care and education (encompassing both education and human services), such as family engagement, teacher preparation and professional development, and the quality and outcomes of early learning experiences.
- *K-12 Education Policy:* This area of interest includes the study of policies related to leadership, teacher preparation, instruction, curriculum, evaluation, school improvement, and other similar areas.
- *Higher Education Policy:* This area of interest includes policies related to equity, access, retention, learning and instruction in higher education.

**Learning Goals/Key Competencies.** The program is designed to ensure students have the skills, knowledge and competencies described below.

- **Content**
  - Identify/describe/build theories of change around policy, including policy-related theoretical approaches to social/educational issues addressed by policy.

- Understand major policy levers, systems, processes, and implementation issues.
- Know and understand theories about social/education issues.
- **Foundational Knowledge and Skills**
  - Synthesize the literature to identify gaps and needed future research.
  - Design and conduct rigorous policy analysis (e.g., implementation, impact) using rigorous empirical methodology, including mixed methods.
  - Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using descriptive, relational, critical, and causal methods.
  - Conduct independent research.
  - Include an ethical/critical perspective in research.
- **Engagement and Application**
  - Have the skills and dispositions to work jointly with, communicate with and learn from policy stakeholders in a productive way.
  - Democratize evidence principles.
  - Exhibit translational skills (e.g., use multiple dissemination strategies for different audiences)
- **Teaching**

Teaching is not a requirement of the program. However, for students potentially interested in higher education or teaching in other venues, we will provide opportunities for them to develop and demonstrate teaching skills. This can be accomplished in several ways, including teaching as instructor of record, either as part of a teaching assistantship or s-contract; co-teaching or apprentice teaching with a faculty member for credit through independent study; taking a course on teaching in higher education. Students should consult with their adviser to develop a plan consistent with their career goals related to teaching. Students also are encouraged to participate in workshops offered by the Delaware Center for Teaching and the Assessment of Learning.

We admitted transfer students starting in the fall of 2021. We accepted applications from incoming students starting December 2021, with our first cohort of students matriculating in the fall of 2022.

The program resides in the Graduate College. The program is a joint effort between the Biden School of Public Policy and Administration, the department of Human Development and Family Sciences, and the School of Education, the last two of which are both in the College of Education and Human Development. The core faculty of the Education and Social Policy program are the body that constitutes program faculty, and will have purview over all faculty governance, including admissions. If a UD faculty member would like to be an affiliate or core faculty member of the Education and Social Policy program, they will write a letter indicating their interest, include their CV and submit it to the Program Director. The letter and CV will then be circulated to the Education and Social Policy faculty, a virtual or in person discussion will be held, and the faculty will vote. Approval requires a majority of the core faculty who vote to vote in the affirmative. For decisions that need university approval, such as changes to this program policy document, the governance structure is as follows: (1) the Education and Social Policy core faculty, (2) the University Interdisciplinary Committee (this unit is the college-level body designed to oversee interdisciplinary programs, see <https://grad.udel.edu/faculty/graduate-college-council/>), and (3) the Dean of the Graduate College, who is the dean-level approver. Approval moves from the ESP faculty (which constitutes the “department”) to the University Interdisciplinary Committee, to the Dean of the Graduate College, to the Senate.

### **Admission Requirements**

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths. Faculty who participate in admissions will follow guidelines for addressing potential bias, such as those set forth by Julie Posselt in her 2016 book *Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping*, published by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. In addition to a holistic review process, she identifies five admissions practices that need to be specifically designed to ensure that inequalities are not reproduced: (1) a critical analysis of the requirements and information used in the initial cut, (2) attention to the structure and implicit bias in review, including the way reviewers perceive and speak about candidates; (3) how committees are constructed, trained, and maintained over time, (4) a focus on the need for making equity checks along the way; and (5) seeing admissions, recruitment, and retention as a system of institutional practices.

To officially apply for admission, see <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/apply/> for detailed instructions, web-based forms, and contact information. To be admitted to the graduate program, applicants should meet the following requirements:

- A completed University of Delaware Graduate Studies application. In the application, prospective students should indicate the area of interest that they anticipate wanting to study (though the program is designed to be flexible as students clarify their area of interest).
- Applicants are asked to include a writing sample, such as a college paper, master’s thesis, journal publication or report.

- A personal statement is required in the Graduate Studies application, between 2 and 3 pages, and should address the following:
  - Describe your interest in education and/or social policy, including your research area interest.
  - What is your prior experience, research or otherwise (for credit, as an intern, as a job, or any other relevant practical or industry-related experiences)?
  - What are your specific research and educational goals?
  - What are your long-term professional career objectives?
  - How do you see this program assisting you with achieving your objectives?
  - Describe how your interests intersect with one or more Ed and Social Policy faculty members.
  
- Graduate Record Examination Scores are required for domestic and international applicants (GMAT or LSAT scores may be substituted). Subject GRE scores are not required. The GRE is one of many data points that we may use for admissions. We will use the GRE for inclusion rather than exclusion (e.g., a student with poor grades may have excellent GRE scores). We have no pre-specified standard cut-off score. We will use the GRE as one piece of information in conjunction with other information; it will not be a qualifying factor.
  
- Official, up-to-date transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate records. Applicants are required to have a BA or BS. All majors are eligible. A minimum of 3.0/4.0 is competitive. We will review applications of those applying with a BA, BS, or master's degree. We will consider applicants with a variety of backgrounds, including the natural and physical sciences, social sciences, and the arts.
  
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals with knowledge of the applicant's research experience, academic preparation, and potential ability as a graduate student.
- Applicants will be asked to write an essay describing their interest in the program, their research experience, their area of interest, their reason for applying, which faculty they believe are good matches for them, and their career goals.
- Applicants will be required to submit a writing sample of a paper they have single-authored, such as for an academic course, a master's thesis, or similar research paper.
  
- International applicants must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (Minimum Score: 100) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (Minimum Score 7.0). TOEFL and IELTS scores more than two years old cannot be considered official.

The Admissions Committee will review all applicants and make recommendations to the core faculty. The core faculty will meet to decide on applicants to interview, conduct the interviews, and

make final decisions about admissions. Applicants with prior research experience will receive priority consideration.

### **Prior Degree Requirements.**

### **Change of Classification and Transfer Students**

Students who are currently matriculated in other degree programs at UD should complete a “Change of Classification” Form to seek approval to be admitted into the Education and Social Policy Program. The Admissions Committee will evaluate the change in classification and transfer requests on a case-by-case basis to determine if the applicant will need to complete a full application form submitted to the Graduate College. All transfer students will still have to meet the admission requirements listed above.

### **Application Deadlines**

Applications normally are considered only for fall entrance. To ensure optimum consideration for fall admission, complete applications should be received by December 10; decisions will be typically communicated in January and February, with accepted students needing to commit to enrolling by April 15th. Preference will be given to candidates who submit completed applications by December 10. This timeline is currently consistent with the CEHD admissions timeline. While the Biden School begins admissions in January, our proposed December admissions date will allow us to be competitive with education policy programs who typically communicate admissions decisions in January.

Applicants should provide evidence of research experience (academic or otherwise) in their personal statement and on their curriculum vita. Applicants with prior research experience will receive priority consideration. Matriculating students will need to have mastery of basic statistics. If they do not, they will need to take a basic statistics course immediately upon entry, which will be an additional requirement in addition to the coursework requirements for the degree. In addition, students without a master’s level background in policy and policy analysis may be required to enroll in UAPP701 and/or UAPP707 during the first year of study. The work in these courses will not be part of the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam for any student.

We will only have a regular admission category. We will consider deferments on a case-by-case basis.

### **Degree Requirements**

As shown in Table 1a below, PhD students are required to enroll in 12 credits from the core curriculum, 9 methods credits, and 6 research design credits. Additionally, students will have 12 elective credits: three of those will be advanced methods or

design, three will be their chosen discipline (e.g., sociology, psychology, political science), and six will be in their area of interest (e.g., early childhood policy or social policy). The program is designed to allow the completion of coursework in two years, though taking coursework into the third year is acceptable. Students may earn a master's degree by completing all of the course requirements, as shown in Table 1b.

The program requires 52 credits. For PhD students, each semester for two academic years, there will be pass/fail colloquium students are required to attend (one credit per semester for the first four semesters). For the third and fourth year, students are required to attend each year at least 6 academic presentations and participate in at least two sessions as a presenter or leader. Presentations can be in HDFS, SOE, Biden, or another unit on campus that aligns with the student's research interests. Students are also required to participate in a 20-hour a week research assistantship. In addition, we require students to have nine dissertation credits. Table 2 shows an example plan of study. The program does not require a formal dissertation preparation course; students may elect to take SPPA 863, Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Workshop.

Table 1a. Summary of Program Requirements PhD

PhD in Education and Social Policy		No. of credits
<b>Core (required)</b>		<b>12</b>
	Public Policy	3
	Social Policy	3
	Human Development	3
	Educational Foundations	3
<b>Methods (required)</b>		<b>9</b>
	Regression/Multivariate Analysis	3
	Advanced Quantitative (e.g., HLM, Longitudinal Data Analysis, Data Mining)	3
	Qualitative Analysis	3
<b>Research Design (required)</b>		<b>6</b>
	Research Design	3
	Causal Design	3
<b>Electives</b>		<b>12</b>
	Advanced Methods or Research Design (SEM, Mixed Methods, Evaluation)	3
	Discipline (e.g., sociology)	3
	Education and Social Policy electives	6
<b>Colloquium (1 credit for each of 4 semesters, followed by 4 semesters of zero credit colloquium)</b>		<b>4</b>
Total <i>course</i> Credits		<b>43</b>
<b>Dissertation credits</b>		<b>9</b>
Total <i>program</i> credits		<b>52</b>



Table 1b. *Summary of Program Requirements*  
*Master of Arts in Education and Social Policy*

<b>MA in Education and Social Policy</b>		<b>No. of credits</b>
<b>Core (required)</b>		<b>12</b>
	Public Policy	3
	Social Policy	3
	Human Development	3
	Educational Foundations (EDUC 805)	3
<b>Methods (required)</b>		<b>9</b>
	Regression/Multivariate Analysis	3
	Advanced Analysis Methods (e.g., HLM, Longitudinal Data Analysis, Data Mining)	3
	Qualitative Analysis	3
<b>Research Design (required)</b>		<b>6</b>
	Research Design	3
	Causal Design	3
<b>Electives</b>		<b>12</b>
	Advanced Methods or Research Design	3
	Discipline (e.g., sociology)	3
	Education and Social Policy electives	6
<b>Colloquium (1 credit for each of 4 semesters years)</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>Total program Credits</b>		<b>43</b>

**Table 2. Example Plan of Study for PhD Program\***

\*the plan is the same for MA, except that the MA ends in spring of Year 2

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Public Policy (3 credits)	Educational Foundations (3 credits)	Advanced Quantitative Analysis (3 credits)	Advanced Method or Design(3 credits)	Qualifying Exam	Proposal Defense	EDUC 969 Dissertation (9 credits)	Defend Dissertation and Graduate
Social Policy (3 credits)	Qualitative Analysis (3)	Human Development (3 credits)	Disciplinary Foundation (3 credits)	EDUC 964 Pre-Candidacy Study (9 credits)	EDUC 964 Pre-Candidacy Study (9 credits)		UNIV 999 Doctoral Sustaining (9 credits)
Regression/ Multivariate Analysis (3 credits)	Research Design (3)	Causal Design (3 credits)	Ed and Social Policy elective 2 of 2 (3 credits)				
		Ed and Social Policy elective 1 of 2 (3 credits)					
Colloquium (1 credit)	Colloquium (1 credit)	Colloquium (1 credit)	Colloquium (1 credit)	attend 6 presentations and lead or present at 2 colloquium/workshop sessions (0 credit)		attend 6 presentations and lead or present at 2 colloquium/workshop sessions (0 credit)	
10 credits	10 credits	13 credits	10 credits				
Research assistantship or TA	Research assistantship or TA	Research assistantship or TA	Research assistantship or TA	Research assistantship or TA	Research assistantship or TA	Research assistantship or TA	Research assistantship or TA

**List of Courses**

This program capitalizes on already available courses from all three units collaborating on the program, as well as departments and colleges across campus. Below are the core courses that will comprise the program. Advisors may substitute courses on a case-by-case basis for their

advisees; in these cases, students must submit a course substitution form. The ESP colloquium will comprise a subset of the already existing SOE and Biden colloquia. This honors the cross-school components of the program. We will be requesting a rubric for dissertation and colloquium courses. In the meantime, we list already existing dissertation and colloquium rubrics from SOE, Biden, and HDFS.

#### Policy, Education and Human Development Core

1. HDFS 803, Human Development in Life Span Perspective
2. EDUC 805 Proseminar in Education
3. (Biden) UAPP 822: Proseminar in Governance, Planning, and Policy
4. (Biden) UAPP 823: Social and Urban Policy

#### Two-Course Research Design Sequence

1. (Biden) SPPA 800: Research Design and Data Analysis
2. HDFS 815 Research Issues and Designs, also entitled EDUC 884 Advanced Research Design for Causal Inference.

#### Methods

1. EDUC 844 Intermediate ANOVA and Regression or SPPA704 Multivariate Regression for Public Policy analysis and Social Science Research
2. Advanced Quantitative Analysis

See below under quantitative analysis electives for options students may choose from to meet this requirement.

3. EDUC 850 Qualitative Methods or SPPA 808 Qualitative Research Methods

#### Electives

**One course in advanced methods or research design.** Students may meet this requirement by (1) taking an advanced method or design course or (2) taking a methods or design independent study, which reflects substantive area work that they do independently or through their assistantship. The work would need to equate to that of a 3-credit course, for example, if the student learned and applied a new analytic technique. In this case, the student would need to provide a product that documents the work (e.g., an academic manuscript, a detailed analysis). To count as a 3-credit course, the work and product will need to be approved by the primary advisory, the assistantship advisor (if done in the context of the assistantship), and the program director. Students may choose from

advanced quantitative or qualitative methods courses or advanced research design courses. Options include the following:

- SPAA Quantitative Two (in process)
- EDUC 812 Regression and Structural Equation Modeling
- EDUC 874 Multivariate Analysis
- EDUC 873 Multilevel Modeling
- SPAA 704 Survey Research Methods
- SPAA Qualitative Two (in process)
- EDUC858 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods
- EDUC 852: Critical and Interpretive Methods in Education Research
- EDUC 859: Ethnographic Research
- Other methods electives as approved by the students' advisor

### One Course in a Social Science Discipline

To meet this requirement, students choose a course that is grounded in a particular disciplinary perspective. Students who already have a master's degree in a discipline (e.g., sociology, psychology), with their advisor's approval, may replace the disciplinary requirement with an advanced method or additional education or social policy course. Below is a suggested list of courses students may choose from to fulfill the discipline requirement.

#### **History**

- HIST 603 - Historiography of Technology
- HIST 605 - Historiography of Material Culture
- HIST 650 - Problems in Cultural History
- HIST 680 - Studies in World History: History of Capitalism

#### **Political science**

- POSC 803: Proseminar in American Politics
- POSC812: Proseminar in Political Theory
- POSC 807: American Political Behavior

**Psychology** (these do not appear in curriculum because they do not have permanent numbers yet; we list them here to illustrate the type of psychology courses our students might take to satisfy their disciplinary requirement.)

- PSYC 867 Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination
- PSYC 867 Seminar on Social Status
- PSYC 867 Self & Identity

PSYC 867 A Social Neuroscience Approach to Social Status

**Sociology**

SOCI 661 Racial Stratification

SOCI 607 Sociology of Gender

SOCI 655 Law and Society

Education and Social Policy Electives

Students are required to earn 6 credits in education and social policy. They may do so by (1) taking two education and social policy elective courses or (2) taking one education and social policy course and taking an independent study, which reflects substantive area work that they do independently or through their assistantship. The work would need to equate to that of a 3-credit course, for example, a thorough literature review conducted in the student's area of interest. In this case, the student would need to provide a product that documents the work (e.g., an academic manuscript). To count as a 3-credit course, the work and product will need to be approved by the primary advisory, the assistantship advisor (if done in the context of the assistantship), and the program director. Students may choose from the courses listed below. To be included as an elective in the Education and Social Policy PhD program, a course will have to be 600-level or higher and be approved after a review of the syllabus by the core faculty. Advisors may approve substitutions from the list below.

- UAPP 709 Advanced Topics in Economics for the Public and Non-Profit Sectors
- UAPP 703 urban Society and Public Policy
- HDFS 601: Theories of Human Development
- HDFS 621, Family Studies I
- HDFS 855, Family Studies 2
- EDUC804 How people learn (learning sciences)
- EDUC815 Design of learning environments
- EDUC854 Topics: Equity in Education
- EDUC855: Topics: Sociocultural theories of education
- EDUC878 Topics in Education (former topics have included Higher Education Policy, and Inequality and Education)
- EDUC839 Policy and Governance
- EDUC Cultural Diversity, Schooling, and the Teacher
- EDUC836: Research/Theory of Mathematics Teacher Education and School Improvement. Also listed as Research/Theory of Mathematics Teacher Education and Policy

Doctoral students who have been admitted to candidacy must enroll in nine credits of EDUC 969 or SPPA 969 or similar dissertation credits and thereafter maintain their matriculation in the degree program during each fall and spring semester by registering for sustaining (UNIV 999).

### **Residency, Qualifying Exam and Other Requirements**

Students are required to participate in the program in person during the academic year. Exceptions must be approved by the Program Director. English proficiency is required. Teaching experience is not required but is an option for students interested in gaining competence in this area.

#### Assistantship

All students will participate in a 20-hour a week academic year research assistantship in each year of the program (except students who may be acting as a Teaching Assistant for one or two semesters). Summer assistantships are encouraged but are optional based on available funding. During the assistantship, students will engage in hands-on research design, analysis, writing and presentation of results. Students must perform adequately in their research assistantship to continue in the program. Each year the student will be evaluated, and if adequate progress is not being made (in grades or the assistantship), the student may be put on notice for improvement in the next semester or may be terminated from the program.

#### Qualifying exam

After completion of the required coursework (43 credit hours), students will be asked to complete a qualifying exam to be created and evaluated by an exam committee comprised of three members of core or affiliated faculty (rotating every 2-3 years). The exam will usually take place in the summer after the fourth semester, typically early in the summer. The exam will constitute an authentic task that builds on knowledge we expect students to develop as part of the program: the ability to identify, synthesize, and critique policy literature, communicate evidence to policy/practice partners, and design research to inform policy/practice partners' work in that policy area. The Qualifying Exam Committee will select the topic for the exam. Students will be provided a packet of information, instructions, and a rubric to guide their work. They will complete the work in a specified time period. Exam evaluators will independently score student performance using the rubric and come to consensus based on this rubric as to whether the student passes. Students may pass with distinction, pass, pass conditionally, or fail. Students who fail will be recommended for termination from the program; they may leave with a masters' degree if they fulfilled the requirements for that. Students who earn a "pass

conditionally” will be required to complete specific tasks in a time frame set by the Qualifying Exam Committee (which will be before the first day of classes in the fifth semester), and to their satisfaction. If the student fails to accomplish these activities to the satisfaction of the Qualifying Exam Committee, the student will not be able to continue in the program. Students completing the coursework and two years of assistantship requirements, who choose to leave, may earn a master’s degree. The purpose of the qualifying exam is for the student to demonstrate they have the knowledge and skill to progress in the program to the dissertation proposal stage.

**Purpose of the exam.** The ESP qualifying exam is designed as an opportunity for students to demonstrate that they are able to (1) synthesize research in a particular area, utilizing ideas from a discipline of their choice (e.g., economics, psychology, sociology), education, social and public policy, and human development and family sciences, including a lens of social and/or racial equity and justice, (2) understand fundamental research design and analytic methods as they pertain to real world policy problems, and (3) understand the value of collaborating with practitioners and communicate research ideas and findings in an accessible way.

Much of the material covered in the exam will be addressed in coursework, but students should expect that they also draw from their assistantship and their own independent reading. Expectations on the exam will be calibrated to the short time period allotted. There are no set page requirements for the answer to each question.

#### **Structure of the exam.**

1. The exam will consist of a series of questions targeted to three areas (1) the student’s substantive area of interest, (2) research design and methods, and (3) policy/practitioner activities.
2. The exam can be taken any time the student and exam committee chooses, after most or all coursework is complete. Students may take it in the summer, during winter or spring break, or during the semester. The date of the exam must be mutually agreed upon by the student and exam committee. In consultation with the student’s advisor, the student will indicate to the exam committee the week they would like to take their exam, via email. The exam committee will respond within a week, to agree on the 5-day period for the exam, and/or to propose an alternative date. The student should propose an exam date at least one month in advance of the date they are requesting (e.g., if they want to take the exam the week of June 1st, they should make the request no later than May 1st, but preferably 6-8 weeks prior to the target date).
3. Students will receive all questions at once and have 5 business days to complete them. They will receive the questions on Monday morning at 8am, and they must turn in their exam by 5pm on that Friday.
4. Each member of the exam committee will grade the exam. The advisor will be a member of the student’s exam committee.
5. After the student has completed the qualifying examination, the faculty readers will decide within three weeks from submission whether the student’s performance on each of the questions is one of the following:

## Changes to Qualifying Exam Scoring Rubric:

Score:	1	2	3	4
	Fail	Pass conditionally	Pass	Pass with Distinction

- If the student earns a “fail” on any parts of the exam, this results in a termination of candidacy.
- If the student earns a pass for each of the questions, the student may continue in the program.
- If the student earns a “pass conditionally” in one or more areas, the student must rewrite those portions within one month. In unusual circumstances an extension of up to two months may be granted.
- In the event of earning a “pass conditionally” on any of the exam questions, the committee must provide a written statement of reasons for the judgment as guidance for preparation for the re-examination.

Students may not retake the exam unless they demonstrate that illness or other intervening factors prevented them from demonstrating effective performance.

### Petitions for variance in degree requirements

Each student in the program will have a primary and secondary advisor, each from a different unit (Biden, HDFS, or SOE). Advisors have purview to allow their advisees course substitutions; the student will complete a course substitution form in these cases. If the two advisors disagree on a course substitution, they may ask the Program Director to adjudicate the substitution, who may ask the faculty to vote. If students want to request an extension for the qualifying exam based on extenuating circumstances, they will need to submit a request to the Qualifying Exam Committee by April 1st of their second year, which will respond within three weeks.

Grades lower than B- will not count toward the degree (university policy counts C-s). Students will be asked to retake the class if it is necessary for the program; if it is an elective they will be permitted to choose a different elective. Additional university GPA policies will apply.

We will accept up to nine transfer credits toward this degree that have not been used to complete another degree. Decisions about whether credits are transferable and count toward the degree as



course substitutions are at the discretion of each candidate's two advisors. Independent studies may count toward the degree, at the discretion of the advisors.

Students will be expected to complete their course papers and qualifying exam, demonstrating proficiency in English. Similarly, at their oral proposal and dissertation hearing, they will be expected to speak English proficiently.

### **Admissions, Exam and Dissertation Committees**

Each student will have a primary and secondary advisor, each from a different unit (i.e., HDFS, Biden, or SOE). This will help ensure the collaborative, inter-disciplinarity of the student's experience. Upon acceptance into the program, each student will be assigned a primary and secondary advisor. At least one of the advisors will be core program faculty. Advisors will meet with the student at least once per semester to ensure adequate progress, provide feedback, and help solve any issues that arise. Students may request a change of advisor at any time by contacting their current primary or secondary advisor and/or the Program Director.

Students will need a Qualifying Exam Committee, and a Dissertation Committee. The Qualifying Exam Committee, constituted by the Program Director, will be comprised of three members of the core or affiliate faculty, including emeritus professors (though emeritus may not serve as chair of the committee). The Dissertation Committee will be comprised of four members: (1) two core program faculty members, (2) a core or affiliate program faculty member or a UD faculty member outside of the program, and (3) a fourth member who is a researcher, practitioner, or policymaker external to UD. If three faculty members from ESP are chosen, at least one faculty member must be from a different academic unit than the other two (e.g., two from HDFS and one from the Biden School) to maintain the interdisciplinarity of the program.

It is the primary responsibility of the Program Director to constitute the Exam Committee. It is the primary responsibility of the student to develop their Dissertation Committee and complete the appropriate dissertation committee form(s). The advisors' primary role is to make suggestions and talk through options. However, if the student, after concerted effort, is not able to constitute their dissertation committee, the advisors should help the student recruit appropriate members to the committee.

Changes in the Dissertation Committee may be initiated at the request of the advisors or the student. The student should discuss changes with his or her advisors and develop a mutually agreed upon plan.

Any member of the core or affiliate faculty may suggest changes to the program, curriculum, exam, and other processes at any time. The Program Director will call a

meeting (virtual or in-person) within a month to respond to a suggested change. Such changes will be discussed in the meeting and voted on; approval will require a majority of the core faculty who vote to vote in the affirmative for any changes.

**Qualifying Exam.** Students will take their qualifying exam after they have completed their coursework requirements, typically in the summer after their second year. The program's coursework and assistantship experiences are the core preparation for the qualifying exam. After completing their coursework requirements, typically between the end of Year 2 and beginning of Year 3, the student should schedule their qualifying exams (written and oral). The Qualifying Exam Committee will be responsible for grading the exam and will grade the exam on the following scale: pass with distinction, pass, pass conditionally, pass, and fail. The Qualifying Exam Committee will grade the exam within 3 weeks of receiving it. If the student receives a "conditional" pass, this requires the student to re-take some or all of the exam. The Qualifying Exam Committee will determine the specific tasks for the student to complete and set the time period for completion and will determine whether the additional tasks warrant a "pass." A grade of "fail" will result in the dismissal of the student from the program. Upon successfully completing the qualifying exam, the chair of the Exam committee will notify the advisor and the Program Director. Completion of the qualifying exam and the proposal defense in the same semester is not encouraged but is permissible.

### **Human Subjects Research**

Research using human subjects will only be approved if students follow all UD rules and regulations. Students working with human subjects in the Education and Social Policy Program must attend human subjects training and request approval from the human subject committee at the University. Proposals that include interviews, case studies, or other interrogative methodologies must have all questions approved by the University Human Subjects Review Board.

### **Dissertation Approval Process**

Students will work with their advisors to identify a topic for their dissertation. They will form a dissertation committee, and the committee will agree on a date for the dissertation proposal hearing. The student will write a dissertation proposal, typically having their advisor review it, and then submit it to their committee at least 3 weeks before the oral defense date. Students will then present and defend their dissertation proposal to the committee. The committee may ask students any questions related to the proposed work and completed coursework during this defense. The dissertation committee will determine the outcome of the defense. Internal program outcomes may be pass with distinction, pass, and pass conditionally (student will pass, provided they meet criteria such as revisions to their proposal), re-examination (student did not meet the criteria for passing, but will be

given an additional opportunity to do so), or fail. These correspond to university categories of approved (pass with distinction, pass or conditionally pass) or not approved (re-examination or fail). The Dissertation Committee members will sign the Doctoral Degree Candidacy Recommendation Form and forward it to the Program Director for approval. Procedures for the dissertation are the same, except after the Program Director approves the dissertation; it is submitted to the Dean of the Graduate College for approval. Admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, and acceptance of the Ph.D. dissertation in partial fulfillment of the degree requirements, will be recommended if no more than a single dissenting vote is cast by a member of the Dissertation Committee, and the program director and dean of the graduate college both approve.

## C. Timetable and definition of satisfactory progress towards the degree

### 1. Academic load (full & part-time) expectations. Define normal progress. Define departmental review procedures for evaluating normal progress and evaluation of performance.

#### **Expectations, Progress, Review Procedures**

This is primarily a full-time program. Part-time students will only be accepted in rare circumstances, at the request of core faculty, and support from the Admissions Committee. Coursework for the PhD program should be completed in the first 2-3 years, with the exception of the colloquium, which students will attend for four years.

In any given semester, students enrolled in at least nine credit hours or in sustaining credit are considered full-time students. Those enrolled for fewer than nine credit hours are considered part-time students, although students holding assistantships are considered full-time with six credits. Students will be required to take 12 credit hours per semester plus the 1-credit colloquium. Additional credit hours may be taken with the approval of the student's advisers and the Graduate College. A maximum course load in either summer or winter session is seven credit hours. Permission must be obtained from the Graduate College to carry an overload in any session.

**Student evaluation.** Each year, students in the program will be asked to complete a self-evaluation. They will submit this self-evaluation at the end of May. In June, program faculty will meet to discuss the progress of each student in the program, in consideration of the student's self-evaluation. The student's primary advisor will write a letter to the student in June, providing the student with feedback on their coursework, assistantship, and other relevant areas. If a student is failing to make satisfactory progress towards the degree, the

advisor will recommend suitable action to the Program Director. Possible actions include (but are not limited to): (i) requirement for additional courses, (ii) suspension of financial support, and (iii) recommendation for dismissal. This timeline and activity is consistent with current practice in the SOE, which provides an example of the feasibility of the approach. In addition, in the student's first year, in December, each student will complete a self-evaluation and submit it to their advisor. Their advisor will then evaluate the students' academic and assistantship work. The director or associate director will synthesize this information and add their own assessment to this document, and the document will be provided to the student before the start of classes in February. We see this as a way to provide our first-year students with an opportunity for feedback on their progress before the end of the year and will assist in identifying opportunities for support and growth. It will also serve as a tool to identify any problems or challenges.

**Grade requirements.** Students must earn a B- or higher to earn graduate credit for courses toward the Education and Social Policy program. If a student receives a C or lower, they will need to take the course again, if it is a core class, or they may choose a different elective if the class is an elective. Students must obtain at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average in the courses in the curriculum to receive the degree. Graduate College guidelines in this area will be followed.

**Dissertation timeline guidelines.** Table 2 shows the timetable guidelines for the dissertation.

Table 2. *Dissertation Timeline*

Year 1	Discuss emerging dissertation ideas with advisors
Year 2	Establish dissertation committee
Year 2/3	Pass Qualifying Exam
Year 3	Defend dissertation proposal
Year 4-5	Defend dissertation

**Dissertation defense guidelines.** The defense of the dissertation proposal and the defense of the dissertation both involve submission of the written document, followed by a meeting with the Dissertation Committee, during which the student presents their proposal or dissertation, and answers the Committee's questions. Each defense should be scheduled for no more than 3 hours and should be scheduled at a time when all of the Members can

attend. Virtual attendance is not encouraged but is permissible. The written proposal or dissertation must be submitted to the Dissertation Committee members at least 3 weeks in advance of the oral defense date. The oral defense date will be publicly announced at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date and will be open to the public and all members of the Education and Social Policy Program, as well as Biden School and CEHD faculty. The Dissertation Committee will approve the candidate’s dissertation. The student will be responsible for making all corrections to the dissertation document and for meeting all Graduate School deadlines for submission.

**Required forms.** Forms are required for (1) yearly approval of the program of study (listing courses taken, indicating which course requirements have been fulfilled), (2) dissertation proposal approval, signed by Dissertation Committee members and the Program Director, and (3) dissertation approval form, signed also by the Dissertation Committee members, the Program Director, and the Dean of the Graduate College.

**Consequences for failure to make adequate progress.** The Education and Social Policy faculty will meet once each academic year to evaluate each student's progress. If a student is failing to make satisfactory progress towards a degree, the committee will recommend suitable action to the Education and Social Policy Program Director. Possible actions include (but are not limited to): (i) requirement for additional courses, (ii) suspension of financial support, and (iii) recommendation for dismissal.

**Grievance procedures.** Students who feel that they have been graded inappropriately or receive what they perceive as an unfair evaluation by a faculty member may file grievances in accordance with University of Delaware policies. Students are encouraged to contact the Education and Social Policy Program Director prior to filing a formal grievance in an effort to resolve the situation informally.

**Assessment Plan**

As shown in Table 3, we will assess student outcomes through course exams and papers, the qualifying exam, and feedback from advisors. We will assess program-level outcomes through analysis of programmatic data, and a survey, as shown in Table 4.

Table 3. *Student Outcomes and How They Will Be Assessed*

Student Outcomes	Measure 1	Measure 2
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Policy Theory/Foundational Knowledge	Final course paper, project, or exam	Qualifying Exam
Research Design Skills	Final course paper, project, or exam	Qualifying Exam
Quantitative and Qualitative Analytic Skills	Final course paper, project, or exam	Qualifying Exam
Engagement with Policymakers/practitioners/ stakeholders	Final course paper, project, or exam	Qualifying Exam
Disciplinary Knowledge	Final course paper, project, or exam	Qualifying Exam
Independent Research	Final course paper, project, or exam	Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation

Table 4. *Program-level Outcomes and How They Will Be Assessed*

Program-level Outcomes	Measure 1	Measure 2
Interdisciplinary faculty	Data on faculty involvement	Survey*
Recruitment of excellent, diverse students	Application and admissions data	Survey*
Funding/training grants	Grant applications	Survey*
* Survey: at the end of each academic year, for the first 3 years of the program, we will survey faculty to ask about their experiences participating in the program, recruiting students, and applying for grants, to identify areas in need of additional supports.		

**Financial Aid**

Each student we admit to the program will be provided with a support package. This support will include an academic year stipend and tuition and subsidizes the cost of medical insurance for four years. Summer support will not be guaranteed but will be provided based on available grants and fellowships. Students may seek financial aid opportunities, such as fellowships or scholarships from

sources within the University and from private and federal agencies. Interested students should check the Office of Graduate Studies website for the most current opportunities (<https://grad.udel.edu/>). Education and Social Policy faculty will apply for UD fellowships on behalf of our students, where applicable. The Program Director will be responsible for doing this.

The University of Delaware's policies apply to all forms of financial aid. Please refer to the University Policies for Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships.

Graduate students in the Education and Social Policy program may be funded from various sources—external grants, Teaching Assistantships, or fellowships. Typically, graduate research assistants will be funded by research grants and contracts provided by external funding agencies. The primary responsibility lies with the Program Director to solicit funding opportunities from research centers and faculty and match students in consultation with center directors and faculty who have funding. A graduate research assistantship provides an appropriate amount of tuition per College guidelines, and a stipend. The GA's advisor is responsible for defining the student's responsibilities and for evaluating the student's performance. The amount of service or research may vary from week to week, but the average expected is 20 hours per week.

As available, Teaching Assistantships (TAs) will be offered for graduate students to perform teaching and other instructional activities. The amount of service may vary from week to week, but the average is usually expected to be 20 hours per week. A teaching assistantship provides full tuition and a stipend. The award of TA will be decided by the primary advisor and their department.

**Responsibilities of students on contract.** Students funded on research projects are expected to fulfill their 20-hour a week assistantship to the satisfaction of their assistantship advisor.

Assistantship advisors should have reasonable expectations for timely, careful, organized, thoughtful work. Students may establish set hours or have a more flexible schedule, depending on the needs of their assistantship advisor. Similarly, students funded by TA lines will be expected to fulfill their teaching duties to the satisfaction of their advisor, the Program Director, and the chair of the department for which the student is TAing.

As indicated above, the faculty will meet each year to discuss the progress of each student, including their assistantship and teaching assistant work. In June of each of their first three years, the student will receive a letter providing feedback on their performance.

## **Departmental Operations**

## Part VI. Departmental Operations

Students will be responsible for communicating with the program's administrator any change of address or other relevant demographic information.

Students who use project owned laptops or other equipment (video equipment) will be expected to use this equipment responsibly and report any accidental damage.

Students who rent vehicles as part of project work (e.g., rent a car to travel to a data collection site) must follow all UD rules and regulations that apply to car rental and use.

Students will have a key to their office area, access to shared computers and telephones. The program administrative assistant will assist them with their administrative needs. Each student will be allotted a certain amount of printing capability each semester. Physical assignment of space will depend on availability in Biden, HDFS and SOE.

Students will be able to join any student government or organization on campus that includes graduate students.

Students are encouraged to present papers at professional meetings. Assistantship advisors will often be able to support the student to travel to present at conferences. When funds are available from the Education and Social Policy program, we will support students to present at national conferences, with the goal of at least one presentation a year.

### Reference

Rahm, D., Brittain, V., Brown, C., NandhiniRangarajan, C. Shields, P., & Yun, H. (2015). Exploring the Demand for PhDs in Public Affairs and Administration. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 21(1), 115-128. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24369708>