



Payson Center for International Development

Doctoral (PhD) Program Policies and Procedures

August 13, 2012

Overview

The Payson PHD prepares students for applied research in international development agencies as well as academic research in interdisciplinary units in universities. Doctoral students follow a sequence of required courses offering methodological skills and development theory, and choose from a wide range of electives across the university. Depending on their special interests and focus, students--together with their academic advisor--will tailor the electives to meet their own learning and professional needs. Whatever their individual specializations, the Payson PhD program will prepare students to gain the following competencies (skills and abilities):

- General Knowledge in International Development: The student will be able to discuss and identify significant development topics and problems, to collaborate with other development researchers, and to teach at the graduate level in related programs.
- Research Questions/Design: The student will be able to articulate and justify relevant research, to conceive appropriate research approaches, to design and elaborate methods, and to conduct analyses to address research questions;
- Research Conduct: The student will become proficient in tasks and issues in research conduct, such as working with local partners, handling ethical issues and procedures such as human subjects review (IRB), organizing fieldwork logistics, identifying data sources, analyzing primary and secondary data, assessing data reliability and validity.
- Communication of Research: The student will be able to interpret and communicate research findings through conferences, academic and other publications, digital media and other appropriate venues.

1. Course requirements

The minimum requirement for the doctoral program is **48** credit hours: 21 come from core courses and 27 come from electives. Students can apply to transfer in up to 24 credit hours from previous graduate course work, subject to approval by the Executive Director of the Payson Center. A minimum of **24** credit hours must be completed in Payson's Ph.D. program. At least **18** credits must be completed on the New Orleans campus. On-line and Summer Institute courses do not fulfill residency requirements. The student's may take up to nine credits of Independent Study during the course of the student's degree.

Core courses

All Ph.D. students are required to take core courses for 21 credit hours. The core courses and recommended sequence are as follows below.

Core course requirements

- IDEV 6100 Introduction to Applied Economic Analysis (3)
- IDEV 6110 Introduction to Quantitative Analysis I (3)
- IDEV 6120 Introduction to Research (Design and Approaches) (3)
- IDEV 6130 Intermediate Quantitative Analysis (3) *or equivalent**
- IDEV 6640 Sustainable Human Development (SHD) (3)
- IDEV 6670 International Political and Economic Relations (IPER) (3)

AND either IDEV 6600 or IDEV 6680: For those who entered before 2011, IDEV 6600, "Information Technology for Development"(3) (or IDEV 6500 "learning to learn with technology") was required. For all students entering after 2011, IDEV 6680 "Six Decades of Development" is required. **

Notes:

*Students may substitute other advanced methods courses with similar skills and competencies with the approval of the student's primary faculty advisor, the Payson PhD Program Director and Payson Center Director.

** IDEV 6680 "Six Decades" has replaced IDEV 6600 "IT for Development" which is no longer presented as PhD core course. Students who entered the program before August 2011 may elect to take IDEV 6680 instead of IDEV 6600 if they have not yet completed this requirement.

Elective coursework

In addition to required core courses above, a doctoral student must complete at least 27 credit hours of formal coursework that enriches the student's theoretical, methodological, empirical, and substantive depth in relevant topics in international development research. Based on the student's own interests and prior experience, as early as possible, identify potential topics and course offerings from Payson or other departments at Tulane. Lists of potential elective courses in Payson and other units at Tulane will be available as a resource. Work with the PhD Program Director and the student's faculty advisor to develop a coherent program and sequence that meets the student's needs.

Foreign Language

Doctoral students are required to demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English prior to graduation. Proficiency is determined by an oral exam given by a faculty or staff member trained for such purpose and/or certified by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Waiving a Required Course

Prior graduate coursework may fulfill some of the requirements of courses listed above (core and/or elective). To get credit, a student must get written approval of the listed instructor for the required course and the Payson PhD Program Director. Compile information outlining the course details and the student's arguments: the course the student wishes to waive, the prior coursework that the student believe meets the requirement (the syllabus, the student's grade and other supporting materials).

Waiving a course is entirely at the discretion of the instructor of the required course. Submit documentation to the Payson PhD Program Director for our files.

Non-Credit Doctoral Seminar

All PhD students in residence are expected to participate in several non-credit (no cost) seminars and related events organized throughout the academic year specifically to meet the needs of students in the Payson doctoral program. The aim is to complement coursework and promote discussion of research design, methods, issues in the ethical conduct of research, committee formation, comprehensive exams, research proposal-writing, grant-writing, and related topics. The seminars will also promote (peer-to-peer, cross- university) doctoral student collaboration and support.

PGSA Colloquium

The Payson graduate student association (PGSA) organizes various speaker events and workshops. These formal Payson Center “International Development Colloquium” comprise public speaker events, workshops and social functions organized by the PGSA for the benefit of the Payson community. These will be held throughout the semester on different topics and announced by PGSA. PhD students are encouraged to make use of these opportunities to present, attend facilitate discussion, gain specific skills, etc.

Academic Standing

- By university policy, all students must remain in “good standing” each semester. This means maintaining a minimum average GPA of 3.0, earning no grade less than a B-, paying all tuition and any other costs, and participating in departmental events and doctoral seminars.
- Students will be “on probation” if they do not meet these requirements for performance for one semester. Being “on probation” limits the student’s access to work opportunities.
- Being on probation for more than one semester puts the student at risk of dismissal from the program. Earning an “F” grade in a course is cause for immediate dismissal.
- See the student handbook “Policy on Academic Standards”.

2. Doctoral Committees

Doctoral Committees are usually comprised of three (3) (the minimum number) to five (5) (the suggested maximum number) faculty who provide direct and specific supervision to a single student, by mutual consent. Composition is described below.

The doctoral committee is involved in the student’s comprehensive exams, proposal development and the dissertation. Students form a Dissertation Committee by identifying faculty with relevant interests, getting to know them and being known by them --usually through coursework, paid work on research projects, and/or serving as Teaching or Research Assistant.

It is at the discretion of the faculty member to serve on any student’s committee. Faculty may choose to step down if the arrangement is not of mutual benefit, ideally giving several months’ notice. Note that committees can and do change and new members can be added later.

Ideally, full-time students form their Dissertation committee by the end of their second semester. Part-time students may need more time. The student’s need to form a committee early enough to allow time to prepare for the student’s Comprehensive Exams.

Committee Composition

- Committee Composition comprises the Chair and at least two other members, as follows.
- The Chair is the student's primary faculty advisor. S/he will most likely (but not necessarily) come from within Payson, either core or affiliated faculty.
 - S/he may come from Tenure-track, Research, Clinical or Professor of Practice appointment of any rank.
 - Adjunct faculty may serve as Co-chair but not as individual Chairs.
 - Co-chairing is recommended for faculty members who are not permanently resident in New Orleans.
- Members: in addition to the chair, at least two (2) other members are needed to comprise a committee of a minimum of three (3) people.
 - These other members can come from any department within Tulane or outside of Tulane University, but do keep in mind the other criteria outlined in this section and below.

Additional criteria

- Faculty of any type of appointment (i.e. Tenured/Tenure-track, Clinical, Research, Professor of Practice, Adjunct, Visiting) and at any rank (Assistant, Associate, Full Professor) may serve as committee members (as long as other criteria are met):
- The majority of the committee must be serving as Tulane professorial faculty. This means that Adjunct Professors serving on the student's committee do not count towards the majority.
- The majority of the committee must have an earned PhD or equivalent terminal degree in their discipline and School (e.g., a J.D. in Law or an M.D. in Medicine).
- Non-Tulane scholars and researchers with appropriate credentials-usually an earned PhD-- and appropriate knowledge can serve as additional member (i.e., as reader, but not chair).

3. Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive exams are a critical threshold and landmark in any doctoral program. PhD students will be tested on their ability to demonstrate mastery of the logic of research, research design and approaches as well as appropriate methodological and analytical skills and knowledge of chosen substantive areas as agreed upon in advance with the student's committee. Students can take exams only after completing all other required courses. Signing up for comprehensive exams requires that the student must have identified his/her committee. For full-time doctoral students, the comprehensive exams are usually taken in the third or fourth semester, after all coursework has been completed. The student must pass comprehensive examinations to demonstrate competence and readiness to proceed to the prospectus defense stage.

Format of Exams

- Exams are generally "open-book", essay style, written exams. (There is an optional oral component that may be used for clarification).
- The student will be responding to original questions provided by the students' own committee.
- No student will have exactly the same questions. Questions might span research design as well as content areas.
- The student will have five days to complete the exam. Exams can be completed off-site.
- The student should receive results within three (3) weeks.

- The Tulane Honor Code applies to all examinations.

Oral Exam

An optional oral exam will clarify or complement the student's written responses if deemed necessary (by the student's committee and PhD program director). Examining faculty and the student's committee only will attend (it is not public). This oral assessment is considered part of the initial exam, rather than a separate retake. The results will be summarized in a memo to the student's file.

Administration and Assessment of Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive exams are administered by the Payson PhD Program Director and Payson Program Manager. The questions are written and the answers assessed by the student's committee.

- Usually there will be several major questions and sub-questions from each committee member.
- Exam questions will be graded separately by each examiner and assigned a nominal "grade", i.e., "high pass", "pass", or "no pass". This assessment will be based on the examiners' judgment of whether the student has answered the question adequately and demonstrated the relevant core competencies related to the specific methodological component and/or substantive area. A "no pass" leads to a retake of that question (from a single examiner). See below on retakes.
- Committee members will communicate their assessment and comments to the Payson administrator, who will in turn notify the student.
- Retakes: A "partial retake" of selected questions is called for when a student fails to achieve at least a "Pass" on a minority of questions, e.g., does poorly on most or all questions from a single examiner. A "full retake" of all exam questions will be called for when the student does not earn a Pass on the majority of questions. In either case, the retake might be of the original questions, or of new questions, at the discretion of the examiners.
 - The time period allowed for the retake is at the discretion of the examiners and the PhD Program Director and will reflect the type of retake.
- After the exam, the student has the right to discuss exam questions with the examiner. A student who fails both the original exam and any retake will not be allowed to continue in the program.

Notes for students on preparing for comprehensive exams

- Students begin to specialize by choosing their substantive coursework and research experience in relevant areas (such as economic development strategies, gender issues in development, information technology for disaster management, evaluation for responses to complex emergencies).
- Generally, coursework, reading lists, independent studies and other academic experiences are used to identify substantive areas and areas of specializations.
- The student's "substantive area" will be agreed upon well in advance of exams with the student's Chair and other committee members. Usually this entails developing and sharing an agreed upon reading list of core theoretical, methodological, and selected empirical articles which define the parameters of the substantive area and appropriate methods.
- Students can take exams only after completing all other required courses (see section above on core courses). The student must successfully complete all required coursework (core courses and approved electives) with a minimum grade of "B". Then he/she may register to take their

comprehensive examinations.

4. Dissertation Prospectus

Following completion of the comprehensive exams, the doctoral student must conceive, write, and successfully defend an original Prospectus. The Prospectus constitutes a research proposal for original, scholarly dissertation research. The student will need to develop a suitable research topic, methods, and data for research that advances knowledge in international development.

Students prepare both a written document and make a formal public oral defense of the Prospectus. The written Prospectus must be approved by the student's committee before proceeding to the oral public defense.

Format of written prospectus

- The Prospectus is a formal proposal for research following accepted structure appropriate for the student's proposed topic and methods. Thus the format and structure of the dissertation proposal or prospectus can vary widely.
- Comply with the student's Faculty chair and committee members for standards of length, organization, sections, language, and terminology pertinent to the student's methods and sub-field of study.
- The Department is not responsible for the cost of photocopying the student's prospectus dissertation. This cost is to be borne by the students.
- Find examples of successfully defended prospectuses in Payson archives (and PhD blackboard site) and by talking to faculty and students.

Prospectus Defense

- The written prospectus (once approved by the student's committee) must be defended publicly.
- Students need to apply for permission to hold the defense from their Chair and other committee members. Before the oral defense of the Prospectus the student's must also show evidence of completion of all other program requirements (coursework, exams).
- If the committee formally approve of the prospectus, then the student may proceed to request to schedule the defense. Contact the PhD program administrator and PhD Program director to aid in scheduling the prospectus defense.
- Consult with the student's entire committee for approval on dates and times.
- Long-distance participation of committee members via teleconferencing is acceptable.
- Defenses should be announced via email to the Payson community. (Prepare an email with the student's name, dissertation title, date and place of the defense to be circulated.)

Outcome of defense

- The student's committee must sign and turn in forms after the defense as a record of the outcome: "accepted without revisions", "accepted with minor revisions" (requiring the chair's approval of revisions), "accepted with major revisions" (requiring full committee approval of revisions), or "rejected" (the student may not yet proceed).
- Upon successfully defending the student's Prospectus, the student's can formally change the student's status to "Doctoral Candidate" and the student's may use that terminology.
- After defending the student's Prospectus, the student's may not change the student's dissertation topic without preparing and defending a new Prospectus.

Suggestion on process

- Writing a Prospectus is often the most difficult phase in the doctoral program for many students. The student's Chair will be most helpful through this process; the rest of the student's committee and even other faculty will assist in varying degrees.
- Attending other students' prospectus defense presentations—and practicing the student's own oral defense—will help the student know what to expect and how best to proceed when s/he enters the process.
- Attending and engaging with the doctoral seminars and collaborating with fellow students (i.e., student dissertation support groups) will help the student through this process.
- Many books and resources are available to help the student through the process of developing a feasible prospectus.

5. The Dissertation

The final requirement to earn a PhD is writing and then successfully defending and submitting a Dissertation: an original piece of scholarly research. The student will be supervised by the faculty advisor (chair of committee) and other members of the student's committee.

- The dissertation must be successfully defended within seven (7) years of the student entering the program.
- Numerous examples of completed dissertations exist as examples of acceptable work. Find examples in Payson archives, from colleagues or online dissertation abstracts.
- The Payson center is not responsible for the cost of photocopying the student's dissertation. This cost is to be borne by the student.

Oral Defense of Dissertation

- A public oral defense of the student's dissertation is expected by the university.
- Submit the student's final written dissertation (formatted according to university guidelines) at least two weeks before the student's scheduled defense to all committee members and the Payson PhD Program Director.
- It is understood that the student's committee will have approved the final written version of the student's dissertation before the student schedules the defense.
- The dissertation defense is announced university-wide at least two weeks in advance of the date.
- Long-distance participation by some members of the committee is acceptable.

Dissertation Deadlines and the doctoral clock

- As indicated above, the student must complete and successfully defend the dissertation within seven (7) years of entering the doctoral program (i.e., usually, the student's first semester of coursework).
- In extraordinary circumstances, a student may apply for an extension of time on the "doctoral clock". The student's written request for extension must be accompanied by formal written letters of support from the student's committee. Extensions are not guaranteed. Students who

have reached the stage of “Doctoral Candidate”-- who have defended a Prospectus—will have a better chance of getting an extension of up to one (1) year.

Notes for Students on the Dissertation-Writing Process

The student’s dissertation process will build upon a successful Prospectus defense. The more specific and detailed the student can be, the easier will be the student’s dissertation-writing process. This relates to data collection, analysis, and writing.

Faculty vary in their preferences and level of involvement in the student’s process of writing (ranging from daily or once a week to once every few months). This depends primarily on whether they are serving as Chair or member, since the Chair is most responsible and involved. Other members have lesser roles depending on their level of interest and availability.

The student should work with his/her Chair and other committee members to decide upon a mutually agreeable process and timeline for submitting drafts, soliciting, and incorporating feedback. As the student proceeds--often in isolation and often while working on a paid job—he/she should consider writing groups, books, or online resources about “surviving the student’s dissertation”.

6. Monitoring Progress in the Program

Payson will monitor student progress and provide timely feedback. Please prepare a short semester report. The student should meet with his/her Chair and the PhD Program Director as needed.

Student Self- Report

Each doctoral student should submit a brief report assessing progress each semester. This will help us assess the student’s status, identify resources, and help overcome problems. Submit this brief report via email to the Payson PhD Program Director. Include any or all of the following information, as relevant.

- Name and contact information: email, phone number, address
- Faculty Chair & other committee members, indicating whether confirmed via email, or tentative
- Coursework completed, in progress and remaining
- Dissertation topic: title, brief description, proposed data, method(s), site(s)
- Comprehensive Exams (proposed date or results if taken already)
- Prospectus or Dissertation Abstract
- Prospectus or Dissertation Defense date (proposed/ tentative or firm)
- Presentations at conferences or publications
- Research projects
- Teaching assistantships
- Grant applications (submitted, underway)
- Financial or other awards received
- Other matters that seem relevant --family, health, work, travel, etc.

Maintain copies of appropriate documentation such as, transcripts, waiver requests, grades, forms submitted, email correspondence with committee. The student need only provide these upon request.

Payson Program Review of Students

- The Payson PhD Program Director together with other faculty will monitor the progress of all doctoral students each year.
- As needed, the PhD Program Director will provide a short confidential, individualized report summarizing the student's formal status ("in good standing," "on probation" or other). This is intended to provide the student's with timely feedback to help the student's progress through the program.

7. Other policies and guidelines

Doctoral Student Work on Sponsored Projects

- Students often seek work with faculty. This is generally remunerated at a standard rate that varies by student status: i.e., whether the student is pre- or post- comprehensive exams.
- Opportunities vary based on students' experience and skills as well as faculty's sponsored research projects and budgets. Some students travel on behalf of faculty research. These opportunities are not guaranteed to all doctoral students, but the Payson Center will try to assist students who wish to pursue these opportunities.
- Faculty seeking to hire students will place advertisements through the Payson list-serve for student worker positions that would be paid from Payson budget. These include research assistant, teaching assistant, or student office assistant. These will be advertised with several weeks' notice and all qualified applicants will be considered.
- Do also actively look for work with other faculty outside of the Payson Center.

External Funding

Students can and should apply for external funding wherever possible to agencies such as the Fulbright Foundation, the NIH, National Science Foundation (NSF), Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and many others. On-campus resources include the Stone Center for Latin American Studies for summer research in Latin America. The Payson Center regularly shares notices of fellowships and awards available to students.

Restrictions on student work.

Students who are not "in good standing" in terms of GPA, or participation in the life of the department will not be allowed to hold student worker positions of any kind, so that students can focus on improving their academic performance.