



THE UNIVERSITY *of*
NEW ORLEANS

Urban Studies Doctoral Program Handbook 2026

Department of Planning and Urban Studies
College of Liberal Arts, Education and Human Development
184 Bicentennial Education Building
The University of New Orleans
2000 Lakeshore Drive
New Orleans, LA 70148

The Urban Studies Doctoral Program Handbook is a general guide to the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program at the University of New Orleans and is for advising and informational purposes only. It is neither a definitive statement of university policy nor a substitute for general university and program-related rules and regulations found in the University Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog (<http://www.uno.edu/registrar/catalog/index.aspx>), publications of the University of New Orleans Graduate School (<http://www.uno.edu/grad/>), and other University of New Orleans and University of Louisiana System publications. Any discrepancy between the program rules outlined in this handbook and the policies of the University of New Orleans or the University of Louisiana System will be resolved in favor of the latter. **PER UNO GRADUATE REGULATIONS:** *Failure of students to acquaint themselves fully with the organization and regulations of the University and Graduate School may lead to complications for which the student must assume full responsibility.*

UNO, PLUS, PPA AND COLAED

The University of New Orleans (UNO), part of the University of Louisiana System, is a publicly supported institution of higher education situated on a 300-acre campus on the southern shore of Lake Pontchartrain, a short distance from the Vieux Carré (French Quarter) and downtown New Orleans. UNO is a "higher research activity" doctoral degree-granting educational institution university according to the latest update of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Learning. UNO opened in 1958 with 1,500 students. The Graduate School was founded in 1963.

The Department of Planning and Urban Studies (PLUS), housed in the Division of Planning and Public Affairs (PPA) and the College of Liberal Arts and Education (COLAED), offers a bachelor's degree program in political science and in urban studies and planning; master's degree programs in public administration, transportation, urban and regional planning, and urban studies; and a doctoral degree program in urban studies with majors in urban affairs, urban history, urban and regional planning, and transportation. Participating faculty members hold advanced degrees in anthropology, city and regional planning, history, political science, public administration, and sociology; their varied academic backgrounds highlight the interdisciplinary character of urban studies as a field of academic inquiry. A favorable student-to-faculty ratio allows doctoral students to work closely with faculty members on a collaborative basis and to develop individual plans of study. The department enjoys a widely acknowledged reputation for excellence in urban research and public service, as evidenced by the large number of applications to the doctoral program. Scholarly research and teaching on the theory and practice of urban affairs, urban anthropology, urban history, and urban and regional planning and transportation provide the core of the department's educational efforts. The teaching and research specializations of the doctoral program faculty members are diverse and provide a number of perspectives from which to address urban research questions. Support for faculty research is provided by the extensive holdings in the University of New Orleans Earl K. Long Library, which provides access to tens of thousands of journals, print and online, books, e-books, and federal documents, and hundreds of research databases.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The program of study leading to the Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Studies degree enables students of exceptional ability to undertake advanced study and original research in the fields of urban affairs, urban history, urban and regional planning, and transportation. The primary goal of the program is to prepare people for careers in scholarly activity, applied research, and high caliber policy analysis. Although many graduates will undertake applied research and policy analysis outside of academic settings, the program provides a sound foundation for teaching and research in colleges and universities. Consequently, the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program emphasizes command of the literature in a particular area of scholarship and mastery of the research skills necessary to make original contributions to that literature.

After adequate preparation in the urban studies core curriculum, research design and methods, and elective courses in a major field and area of specialization, doctoral candidates complete an incisive and authoritative investigation in their chosen fields of study, culminating in the presentation and defense of a written dissertation. The dissertation must be either an addition to the fundamental knowledge of the field or a new and substantially better interpretation of facts

already known. It must demonstrate that candidates possess powers of original thought, talent for research, and an ability to organize and present research findings.

The Urban Studies Doctoral Program Handbook sets out only the general requirements of the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program. Specific areas of specialization may require additional work, depending on students' previous training and experience. Program rules may change from time to time, with any changes incorporated in successive versions of this handbook. The director of the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program, or the Ph.D. coordinator, is appointed by the Director of the Division of Planning and Public Affairs to a three-year term. The Ph.D. coordinator in turn appoints members of the Ph.D. Executive Committee, a body collectively responsible for advising the PLUS faculty on admissions, curriculum, and other program-related matters. The Ph.D. in Urban Studies Faculty consists of all PLUS faculty members plus cooperating faculty members from other UNO departments, schools, and colleges. All interested parties should submit questions pertaining to the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program to the Ph.D. coordinator.

The Ph.D. coordinator ensures that both faculty members and students follow the rules and procedures of the program, advises the PLUS department chair on administrative matters affecting doctoral students, chairs the Ph.D. Executive Committee, and processes applications to the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program. The PLUS director of academic services assists the coordinator in processing applications. Appeals of any administrative actions by the Ph.D. coordinator should be directed to the Director of the Division of Planning and Public Affairs.

Most guidance for individual students will come from their faculty major professors. General examination committee members formulate and evaluate students' written comprehensive examinations at or near the completion of students' coursework and evaluate their dissertation proposals. Dissertation committee members offer advice on and evaluate students' dissertations. There is usually a considerable overlap in membership on these committees.

Students may not submit or represent work generated, in whole or in part, by artificial intelligence (AI) as their own original work. Any use of AI tools for research or scholarly purposes must be fully disclosed and appropriately cited. The use of AI generated content in any portion of the written or oral exams is strictly prohibited.

ADMISSION

Prospective applicants should direct questions about admission procedures to the Ph.D. coordinator. Applications for admission to the doctoral program are made online at <http://www.uno.edu/admissions/apply>. An admissions committee made up of the Ph.D. coordinator and members of the Ph.D. Executive Committee evaluate applications and make recommendations for admission to the program.

Prerequisites

Students admitted to the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program will have typically earned a master's degree in urban studies, urban planning, public administration, anthropology, architecture, history, or a related discipline. In some cases, students admitted to the program may be required to

undertake additional preparation appropriate to their major fields of study or areas of specialization.

Application Checklist

The following documents are required as part of an application to the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program:

- Statement of personal goals and interest in doctoral studies
- Three letters of recommendation
- Official transcripts from previously attended institutions of higher education. International transcripts must be evaluated by a NACES certified evaluation agency. A course-by-course evaluation must be submitted.
- Examples of previous research and written work. The writing samples should not be co-authored.
- Curriculum Vitae or Resume
- Scores of Intensive English Language Program (IELP) at UNO, International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Pearson Tests of English, or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for students from countries in which English is not the primary or major language

Admission requirements for the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program include a minimum graduate grade point average of 3.0, an undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 or higher. The admissions committee may relax some admission requirements if the applicants' records show substantial professional or scholarly achievement. Minimum English language proficiency measures are available online at <http://www.uno.edu/grad/admission-requirements.aspx>. The statement of interest that accompanies the application to the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program is an important part of the application. It should reflect the applicants' best thinking about some area of academic inquiry pertinent to urban studies. It also is used to help those evaluating applications determine a correspondence between applicants' research interests and doctoral program faculty members' ability to help them develop a command of knowledge and skills in an area or areas of interest. In their statements of interest, applicants should outline a proposed area of specialization, including an appropriate theoretical foundation, suitable scholarly research skills, and even potential topics for dissertation research.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

Program Requirements

Students must earn a minimum of 60 semester credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree with a grade point average of 3.0 or higher, including a maximum of nine credit hours for dissertation research. All courses must be approved by the Department of Planning and Urban Studies and the Graduate School. Students are required to earn a B or higher in all required courses: DURB 6850, DURB 6830, URBN 6005, DURB 7020, DURB 7030, URBN 6165, HIST 6002, and research methods/statistics courses. For their other courses, students will be allowed two course grades of C or lower. Per Graduate School policy, students who receive a third C while in the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program must withdraw from the program.

Students may count up to 30 credit hours earned as part of a master's degree program toward Ph.D. in Urban Studies program requirements provided the courses are within the last nine years. All previous coursework counted toward the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program requirements must be approved by the Ph.D. coordinator and the Graduate School and, if approved, will be covered on a written comprehensive examination that all urban studies doctoral students must pass before advancing to candidacy. See Appendix 6.

In order to meet UNO residency requirements, students must enroll in either nine or more credit hours in each of two consecutive semesters or in six or more credit hours in three consecutive or non-consecutive semesters.

Students must complete 60 credit hours of coursework, including pre-doctoral graduate-level coursework, in three areas: the urban studies core, research design and methods, and the major area. In addition, students must complete nine credit hours of dissertation research through enrollment in DURB 7050 Dissertation Research. Students select courses for their major and field in consultation with their major professors and the Ph.D. coordinator.

Required Courses in the Urban Studies Core

(9 credit hours)

DURB 6850 Seminar in Urban Studies
and
DURB 6830 Urban Theory
and
URBN 6165 Urban Public Policy Analysis

Research Methods

(6 credit hours)

General Track

DURB 7020 Research Design Seminar
or
EDFR 6705
or
PADM 6001
and
DURB 7030 Research Design Practicum

Or

Urban History Track

HIST 6002 Historical Methodologies and Research Design
and
DURB 7030 Research Design Practicum

OR

Transportation Track

TRNS 6300 Applied Techniques for Transportation Professionals
and
DURB 7030 Research Design Practicum

Major Field
(36 credit hours)

Students choose from four major fields of study (27 hours): urban affairs, urban history, urban and regional planning, and transportation. They select a group of courses that provide a foundation in the theory and methods of their chosen field and a set of additional courses that constitutes an area of specialization. Typically, foundation courses are completed as part of a previous master's degree program. Students who do not have a master's degree in their major field or in a related field should expect to take courses to sufficiently demonstrate knowledge of the basic theory, concepts, and methods of their major fields of study.

Students select a group of courses that form an area of specialization within their major fields of study (9 hours). The courses may be offered in the Department of Planning and Urban Studies or other departments at the University of New Orleans. Students define their areas of specialization in consultation with a faculty major professor and the Ph.D. coordinator. The courses must be mutually reinforcing and coherent; assure expertise in some body of knowledge, methods, or problem area; and provide students with adequate skills and knowledge to undertake dissertation research, teach, and carry out original research in their areas of specialization. Students are expected to develop knowledge of the body of relevant theory in their areas of specialization, usually by taking courses in the social sciences, history, or planning; demonstrate an ability to apply theory and methods to specific problems; and develop a general proficiency in research design and methods. Areas of specialization available to urban studies doctoral students include, but are not limited to, urban development, transportation, social policy, social and cultural change, public culture, public history, cultural resource management, historic and cultural preservation, disaster management and community resilience, and geographic information systems.

Independent Study

Ph.D. in Urban Studies students wishing to register for an independent study must complete an Independent Study Agreement form and have it approved by both the faculty member directing the independent study and the Ph.D. coordinator [Courses and Student Forms | The University of New Orleans](#). The form must be accompanied by a description of the topical materials covered, a reading list, the nature of product to be graded, and a justification for its inclusion in the program of study.

Residency Requirement

The Graduate School of the University of New Orleans requires doctoral students to complete two consecutive semesters of nine or more credit hours, or three consecutive or non-consecutive semesters of six or more credit hours.

Advising

Students work under the direction of a faculty mentor or major professor, who is initially the Ph.D. coordinator. By the end of the first year in the program, students should either confirm or change major professors. Major professors help students establish a course or study in their major fields. Although major professors have primary responsibility and authority for students' programs of study, the most important steps in students' doctoral careers are also reviewed by the Ph.D. coordinator. Students wishing to change major professors must petition the Ph.D. coordinator for approval of the change and indicate why they wish to change major professors.

Major Milestones

The following lists highlight key milestones in a program of doctoral study. Individual programs of study and milestones may vary depending upon the extent of preparatory work in the major field, and area of specialization. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with the Ph.D. coordinator at each milestone.

During the First 18 Hours in the Urban Studies Doctoral Program at UNO

- Successful completion of the core courses in urban studies
- Successful completion of an intermediate statistics course and a first qualitative methods course
- Submission of an approved Ph.D. checklist with coursework in major field of study identified, and approval of all coursework from a master's degree students would like to count toward meeting Ph.D. in Urban Studies requirements

During the Next 24 Hours in the Urban Studies Doctoral Program at UNO

- Successful completion of coursework
- Successful completion of comprehensive examination and oral examination of dissertation proposal (the general examination)

After 42 Hours in the Doctoral Program at UNO

- Successful completion of dissertation research, including nine credit hours of DURB 7050
- Successful completion of dissertation defense
- Graduation

Program of Study

During the first semester of study, students should discuss their proposed programs of study with their major professors and submit the Ph.D. checklist to the Ph.D. coordinator. The Ph.D. checklist should be updated by the student as appropriate and submitted to the Ph.D. coordinator. See Appendix 3. The plan of study should include:

- A brief description of the major field or study and the area of specialization. The description will provide students' major professors and the Ph.D. coordinator with a basis for determining the degree to which the proposed courses will allow students to build competence in their major fields and areas of specialization.

- A list of completed courses and courses to be completed in the major field and area of specialization
- A list of courses from previous graduate coursework organized by major field and area or specialization. The list of pre-doctoral courses should include the name of the university where students completed the coursework, the semester and year taken, the course number and title, and the grade received. Students must have earned a grade of B or higher for all previous coursework listed. Students may be required to provide the course syllabus and major paper to their major professors, the Ph.D. coordinator, or their committee members for courses that constitute key components of the doctoral program of study.
- A brief description of any tentative plans for a dissertation project

Following the first year of study, students are required to submit a completed Ph.D. checklist and associated documentation to the Ph.D. coordinator, which includes:

- A list of degrees held with institutions and dates
- A list of graduate courses completed at the University of New Orleans
- A list of courses completed at other institutions that will become part of the doctoral program of study. (UNO does not require all prior coursework to be formally transferred into a student's program of study)
- A list of courses to be taken in the future
- A summary of semester hours, broken out by semester hours taken and in progress at UNO, courses taken elsewhere, and courses to be taken

The University of New Orleans Doctoral Program of Study form is available online at <https://www.uno.edu/media/25921>

Please note that students may not be able to register for additional courses if they are not making demonstrable progress in the Ph.D. in Urban Studies program or have not completed program requirements in a timely manner.

General Examination

All students must pass a general examination (both written and oral exams) of the required curriculum and their major. They must complete all required coursework apart from DURB 7050 Dissertation Research. The written portion of the examination must be completed prior to the oral examination.

The general examination assesses competence in the fields of knowledge defined by students' programs of study and the adequacy of the dissertation proposal. Students' examiners assess competence in the required curriculum and major field through a written comprehensive examination and evaluate the dissertation proposal through an oral examination. Please see Appendix 5 for a written exam template and Appendix 6 for an oral exam (dissertation proposal defense) template.

After passing both the comprehensive examination and the oral examination of the dissertation proposal, students advance to candidacy for the Ph.D. in Urban Studies degree. A Report on

General Exam Form must be developed and submitted by the student. See Appendix 4 for the general exam grading rubric.

Written Comprehensive Examination

The written comprehensive examination covers:

Part I

Core Curriculum

Part II

Research Design and Methods

Part III

Major Field and Area of Specialization

- History and precedent in the field
- Theory and its evolution
- Current issues and debates
- Methods of inquiry

To schedule the date of the written comprehensive examination, students must submit a brief proposal to the Ph.D. coordinator. The proposals should include membership of the general examination committee, including the major professor and two additional approved graduate faculty members as well as the date the student wishes to take the examination. The major professor functions as chair of the committee. See the Non-UNO committee member section of this document if the student and their major professor would like an examiner from outside the University of New Orleans to serve on an examination committee. Additionally, the student should submit their Ph.D. checklist to the Ph.D. coordinator indicating sufficient course work has been completed to sit for the general examination.

Students may discuss and clarify the scope and content of the examination with committee members. Students are not expected to take off a semester to prepare for the examination but might prepare for the examination over the summer or winter recess. Upon request, the Ph.D. coordinator will provide sample questions to students preparing for their examinations. The examination is usually a four-day "take-home" examination. Students' general examination committee members evaluate their examinations.

The chair of the examining committee assumes responsibility for the initial distribution of question writing among committee members, coordinates questions, defines the purpose of each question in conjunction with committee members, and assures that the examination adequately covers the body of knowledge summarized in students' bibliographies and doctoral coursework. The chair of the general examination committee submits the examination approval to the Ph.D. coordinator at least one week prior to the examination.

The Ph.D. coordinator administers the written comprehensive examination and provides the chair of the examining committee with a copy of students' examination responses. The chair of the examination committee in turn distributes the examination responses to committee members for their evaluation.

General examination committee members evaluate each examination question independently of the others. Students may initially pass or conditionally pass one or more parts of the written examination and fail others. The general examination committee may deem it useful to conduct an oral review of the written examination with the student to clarify the content of responses to the examination questions; explore ideas presented in responses, expand on ideas or themes suggested in responses. Oral reviews are held at the discretion of the examination committee members. In the event of failure, students must retake only those parts of the written examination they failed.

There are four possible outcomes of the written comprehensive examinations:

- Pass with honors indicates exemplary responses to the examination questions.
- Pass indicates adequate responses to the examination questions.
- Conditional pass indicates that one or more of the responses show important weaknesses in the way students interpreted the question or questions, interpreted or applied the literature or methods of inquiry applicable to the question or questions, or otherwise did not offer a compelling argument or thorough discussion. The examiners, in consultation with the chair, determine appropriate remedial actions short of having the student retake the examination. Remedial actions may include preparation of a paper pertaining to the area or areas of weakness, completion of additional coursework, or other actions as determined by the examination committee. Students will have six months to complete the work. If they do not do so in satisfactory fashion within the six-month period, the conditional pass becomes a fail and they must retake the entire written comprehensive examination.
- Fail indicates insufficient mastery of the material or an inability to offer a compelling argument or thorough discussion. The student must work out a plan for remedial work with the committee chair and examiners and retake those parts of the examination they have failed, after satisfactorily completing any required remedial work. Students have one year to retake any parts of the comprehensive examination they have failed.

Chairs of the general examination committee are responsible for providing examinees and the Ph.D. coordinator with a summary of the examination committee members' assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the examinees' responses and for answering any questions the examinee may have. Please see the rubric in Appendix 4.

Students must pass all parts of the written examination. Students who fail any part of a second written examination, including any remedial work undertaken as part of a "conditional pass," must withdraw from the doctoral program.

Oral Examination of the Dissertation Proposal

To advance to candidacy students must also pass an oral examination of the dissertation proposal. The oral examination provides an opportunity for general examination committee members to

evaluate the significance and feasibility of the dissertation proposal. After students present their dissertation proposals, the general examination committee members may ask questions concerning the theory and research design underlying the proposed research. On completion of the oral examination committee members approve the proposal, approve the proposal with specific changes, or do not approve the proposal. If the proposal is not approved, students submit a new proposal and participate in the oral examination a second time. Students who fail the oral examination a second time must withdraw from the doctoral program.

Admission to Candidacy

In order to advance to candidacy all three general examination committee members must certify that students have passed the general examination (https://unograduateschool.formstack.com/workflows/tdapprovalform_copy_copy). By signing the Report on General Examination/Application for Candidacy form, students formally petition the Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. in Urban Studies degree and indicate the expected date of completion of the dissertation and graduation from the University. The report on General Examination/Application for Candidacy form is due in the term **prior** to potential graduation.

The Dissertation

The typical steps in developing a dissertation include preparing a preliminary proposal, selecting a dissertation major professor, formally defending a dissertation proposal, forming a dissertation committee, undertaking dissertation research with input from the dissertation committee chair and other dissertation committee members, and orally defending the dissertation.

Preliminary Proposal

Students typically begin exploring dissertation research topics in DURB 6850, where their research papers should identify important research questions within a major field of study or area of specialization. They should discuss the preliminary proposal with faculty members who have an interest in the subject area, or who may otherwise be able to advise students on the merit and feasibility of the project. The dissertation should be an original, carefully researched and written scholarly contribution to the major field of study or area of specialization.

Selection of Major professor

The selection of a dissertation major professor (also known as the dissertation committee chair) is initiated by students and is determined by mutual agreement of students, faculty members, and the Ph.D. coordinator. Any member of the urban studies graduate faculty may serve as a dissertation major professor and students may have more than one dissertation major professor.

Students' program major professors or their general examination committee chairs are often a logical choice as the dissertation major professor, but there is no requirement that

students' program major professors or general examination committee chairs serve as their

dissertation major professors. Faculty members electing to serve as dissertation major professors commit to reasonably seeing students through their dissertation projects.

Non-UNO Committee Member

With the support of the department chair and dean, an external committee member who meets the Graduate Faculty minimum requirements as outlined in AP-AA-07.4 may be approved by the Graduate School on an ad hoc basis to serve on a student's dissertation committee. They may not serve as chair but could serve as a co-chair if the other chair is a UNO graduate faculty member. The student would need to fill out the Graduate School's AD HOC COMMITTEE MEMBER APPROVAL FORM which must include a brief biographical sketch and resume/CV of the external member request and a justification for why this person should serve on the committee. If the department chair approves, the chair will email that recommendation to the dean. If the dean approves, the dean will email this approval to the graduate school who will determine if the person meets the minimum requirements. If so, the student and Ph.D. coordinator will be emailed an approval from the graduate school. Ad hoc graduate faculty appointments are only for the specific committee requested by the student; blanket approvals are not provided.

Formal Dissertation Proposal

Students, in consultation with their dissertation major professors and other faculty members as needed, prepare a formal proposal of the dissertation project. The exact format will be determined in considerable measure by their major professor, but it should include at a minimum a description of the research problem, a statement of the significance of the dissertation to a recognized body of knowledge, a summary of existing literature on the problem, a statement or a relevant theoretical base for researching the problem, a set of research questions or hypotheses, a description of research methods, a working bibliography of the most critical literature. Some major professors and students also find it useful to develop a list of chapters of the dissertation with a summary of what students will cover in each chapter. A timeline for the completion of the dissertation must be included.

Selection of the Dissertation Committee

Dissertation committees consist of no fewer than three members though four people are strongly recommended. In addition to the dissertation chair and, if necessary, co-chair, at least two additional graduate faculty members must serve on dissertation committees. Students and their major professors may invite faculty members from other departments or scholars from outside the University of New Orleans to serve on their dissertation committees. See the Non-UNO Committee Member Section of this document. Students and their dissertation chair propose committees and obtain agreements from members to serve on it. The Ph.D. coordinator, however, must approve committee membership.

Dissertation committee members consult with students as students research and write the dissertation and participate in the final oral examination of the dissertation project.

Dissertation Hours

After advancing to candidacy, students must complete at least nine credit hours of dissertation research through registration in DURB 7050 Dissertation Research. The Dissertation Research Agreement Form must be submitted to the Ph.D. coordinator before permission to enroll will be granted <https://www.uno.edu/academics/colaehd/la/planning-and-urban-studies/forms>. Students should register for DURB 7050 during any semester in which they are working on the dissertation and actively seeking the advice of the dissertation chair and committee members. Students may enroll in more than nine hours of DURB 7050 but only nine hours may count as part of a program of study.

Dissertation Preparation and Feedback from Committee Members

Doctoral students should expect to consult with members of their dissertation committee at frequent intervals and must submit a progress report at least once a year. Major professors and students jointly decide whether draft chapters should be distributed to other committee members as students complete them, or else wait to distribute complete or nearly complete drafts to committee members.

In extreme cases when students feel that they are not receiving timely feedback, they should inform the Ph.D. coordinator, who will discuss the situation with the relevant parties. At the same time, students should not expect faculty members to provide feedback within unreasonable time constraints. Students, under normal circumstances, should provide faculty members with at least three weeks to review and comment on the dissertation materials provided.

Collaborative Dissertation Research and Co-Authorship

The Department of Planning and Urban Studies and the Division of Planning and Public Affairs encourages students to conduct dissertation research, where practicable, as part of larger externally funded faculty research grants or contracts. While there are many benefits to such an arrangement, it also raises a number of issues, including: (1) protecting doctoral students' rights and responsibilities of authorship of their dissertation; (2) providing a means for faculty members to judge whether the dissertation represents students' ability to conceive and carry out independent research; and (3) providing an environment that maximizes opportunities for students to participate in funded research and mentoring by faculty researchers, while also fostering doctoral students' intellectual growth and creativity.

All chapters in a dissertation are expected to be primarily the work of students. Students may include work co-authored with faculty members through summaries of the work and appropriate citation in a manner similar to the use of other published sources, which will help ensure proper attribution for all work students include in their dissertations. Verbatim inclusion of co-authored work in dissertations is permissible only with unanimous approval of the dissertation committee.

Advice normally expected from and provided by dissertation major professors and committee members on research design, analytic strategies, editing style, and the like should not constitute an expectation of co-authorship of any articles or other publications that may result from students' dissertation research.

When students use faculty-initiated research projects as the basis for their own dissertation research, their faculty major professors or principal investigators should actively assist them in

identifying pieces of the larger research project upon which students can base their dissertation research. In such cases the dissertation research might be significant enhancements, or extensions of work already done collaboratively, or central parts of larger research projects that principal investigators have asked students to design and carry out. Students must demonstrate that they have added an extra dimension to the research that goes significantly beyond any input provided by faculty members and that satisfies well-recognized standards for independence and originality. Ultimately, the dissertation research must be able to stand on its own and must be judged in terms of the scope and quantity of students' contributions to the final research design, assembly of evidence, and valid and defensible interpretations of results.

The Department of Planning and Urban Studies and the Division of Planning and Public Affairs strongly encourage co-authorship by Ph.D. in Urban Studies students, either as lead or junior authors, with their faculty major professors of work that represents extensions of their dissertation is unrelated to their dissertation research, since it contributes substantially to students' professional development to their professional reputation.

Final Oral Examination

Dissertation major professors are responsible to members of the dissertation committees for ensuring that drafts are in appropriate form prior to distributing them to committee members. The final oral examination of the dissertation, or the dissertation defense, should be held only after all committee members have had at least two weeks to review the draft of the doctoral dissertation and a majority of committee members have deemed it defensible. The final oral examination is primarily a defense of the dissertation research and report, but it may include questions that relate the dissertation to the major field of study or area of specialization. It is conducted by the dissertation committee members but is open to all students and faculty members in the Department of Planning and Urban Studies, the Division of Planning and Public Affairs and other departments. Students are responsible for posting a notice in the PLUS office announcing the date and time of the dissertation defense and inviting attendance by interested students and faculty members.

After the oral examination, committee members evaluate students' overall performance, inform students of their judgment (pass, conditional pass, or fail), and sign the Dissertation Approval Form if the dissertation or any subsequent revisions are acceptable to them. See Appendix 4 for the Dissertation Defense Rubric. The Dissertation Approval Form is available online at <https://unograduateschool.formstack.com/workflows/tdapprovalform>. At least three of the four dissertation committee members must approve the dissertation for a passing grade at the final oral examination. Under no circumstances may a student who receives two failing grades on the final oral examination retake the examination; they must withdraw from the doctoral program.

Application for Graduation

During the expected term of graduation, students must file an application for graduation in Workday. Filing deadlines may vary by semester and are posted on the UNO website.

FINANCIAL AID

Urban studies doctoral students may at times receive various forms of financial assistance.

University of New Orleans Graduate Scholarships and Fellowships

The University of New Orleans offers graduate scholarships and fellowships on a competitive basis to exceptional applicants. For information about the types of awards available and how to apply, visit the UNO Graduate School Awards webpage at <https://www.uno.edu/academics/grad/graduate-financing>.

Graduate Assistantships

The Department of Planning and Urban Studies has typically offered a number of graduate assistantships to qualified doctoral students every year. Students holding graduate assistantships work 20 hours per week on sponsored research activities under the direction of faculty members or PPA staff members. All graduate assistants must register as full-time students. Stipends vary depending upon students' duties, qualifications, and experience. For more information on graduate assistantships at the University of New Orleans visit the UNO Graduate Assistantships webpage at <https://www.uno.edu/academics/grad/graduate-financing>

Grants and Loans

The University of New Orleans Office of Student Financial Aid assists students in applying for other sources of financial aid, including various grant and loan programs and part-time work. Students interested in these sources of aid should contact the financial aid office directly well in advance of their expected date of enrollment. Information about student aid and application forms for grants, loans, scholarships, and part-time campus employment is available online at <https://www.uno.edu/financial-aid>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions or additional information about the doctoral program, please contact:

Bethany Stich

Director, Ph.D. in Urban Studies Program

Department of Planning and Urban Studies

112D Kirschman Hall

University of New Orleans

2000 Lakeshore Drive

New Orleans, LA 70148

Telephone: 504-280-6520

Email: bstich@lsuneworleans.edu

APPENDIX 1: PH.D. IN URBAN STUDIES FACULTY

Vern Baxter (Emeritus)

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/vern_baxter

David Beriss

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/david-i_beriss

Jane S. Brooks (Emerita)

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/jane_brooks

Jeffrey David Ehrenreich (Emeritus)jeff

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/jeffrey_ehrenreich

David Gladstone

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/david_gladstone

Monica Farris

<https://www.uno.edu/profile/>

D. Ryan Gray

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/d_gray

Max Krochmal

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/max_krochmal

Mary Mitchell

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/mary_mitchell

Marla Nelson

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/marla_nelson

Grace Reinke

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/grace_reinke

Bethany Stich

https://www.uno.edu/profile/faculty/bethany_stich

APPENDIX 2: DOCTORAL PROGRAM FORMS

1. Program of Study
<https://www.uno.edu/media/25921>
2. Report on General Examination
https://unograduateschool.formstack.com/workflows/tdapprovalform_copy_copy
3. Dissertation Research Agreement Form
<https://www.uno.edu/academics/colaehd/la/planning-and-urban-studies/forms>
4. Dissertation Approval Form
<https://unograduateschool.formstack.com/workflows/tdapprovalform>
5. Independent Study Agreement for Doctoral
<https://www.uno.edu/academics/colaehd/la/planning-and-urban-studies/forms>
6. Ad Hoc Committee Member Form
https://unograduateschool.formstack.com/workflows/ad_hoc

PhD checklist (Fall 2026)					
Student name / ID#					
Prefix	Course #	Term	Credits	Grade	
					<u>Core curriculum</u>
					DURB 6850
					DURB 6830
					URBN 6165
					DURB 7030
					DURB 7050 at least 9 hours; max for degree = 9
					<u>Research Methods (DURB 7020)</u>
					3 to 15 hours, depending on prior preparation
					<u>Major field of study</u>
					up to 27 credit hours
					Urban History
					Urban Affairs
					Urban Planning
					Transportation
					<u>Specialization</u>
					Students should expect at least 15 hours for a specialization
					Urban Development
					Urban Anthropology
					Sociology
					Social & Cultural Change
					Public Culture
					Public History
					Cultural Resource Management
					Historic Preservation
					A minimum of 60 hours is required
		tll hours=			
<u>Committee Chair:</u>					
<u>Committee members:</u>					
<u>Date of General Exam:</u>					
<u>Status of Report on General Exam:</u>					
<u>Notes</u>					
No more than six semester hours of credit with a grade of C may be applied to a graduate degree					
At least half of the hours to be used for the degree must have been completed at the 6000-level or higher					
The degree must be completed within six calendar years following admission to candidacy (upon completion of General Examination)					
Prior work applied to the degree (including transfer and locally-earned credits) must have been completed within nine calendar years immediately preceding the date on which the degree is conferred					
No more than 20% of the total hours required for a degree may be satisfied by coursework completed as independent study					
A doctoral student must earn two consecutive semesters of a minimum of nine hours of residence					
The doctoral residence requirement may be met alternatively by three semesters of enrollment at six or more hours, which may be non-consecutive					
<u>Transfer of credit</u>					
A maximum of one-half the credits required for a second degree may be applied from a prior master's degree at UNO, if approved by the program and the College					
A maximum of one-half of the credit hours required for the degree transferred from other schools may be used in a doctoral program, if approved by the program and the College					

APPENDIX 4: RUBRICS

Comprehensive Examination

	Component fully met (4)	Component met (3)	Component partially met (2)	Component not met (1)
Quality of responses	Highly effective, insightful responses; arguments well-grounded in the relevant literature	Effective responses grounded in the relevant literature	Ineffective responses or insufficiency in citing relevant literature	Ineffective responses and insufficiency in citing relevant sources
Review of relevant scholarship	Sophisticated synthesis and critique of literature	Meaningful summary of the literature	Failure to cite relevant scholarship	Little or no relevant Scholarship

Dissertation Defense

	Component fully met (4)	Component met (3)	Component partially met (2)	Component not met (1)
Argument	Effectively and insightfully argued, persuasive thesis	Well-argued, clear thesis	Develops a thesis	Develops no viable point of view, vague or limited
Review of relevant scholarship	Sophisticated synthesis and critique of literature	Meaningful summary of the relevant literature	Fails to cite relevant scholarship	Little or no relevant Scholarship
Theoretical framework	Integrated, demonstrates sophisticated understanding	Grounded, relevant, and well explained	Poorly understood, not effective	Lacks relevance, Inappropriate
Research design and methods	Appropriate, well designed, effective	Appropriate methods with some weakness in execution	Appropriate methods but lacking in execution	Poorly designed, inappropriate methods
Originality	Clear, original contribution, theoretically significant	Utilizes extant theory or methods in an original manner	Incremental contribution to knowledge	No original contribution

APPENDIX 5: WRITTEN EXAM TEMPLATE

*The following serves as a template only. Committees may choose to make all questions required or allow the student to pick from several questions. The sections below are examples of how an exam *could* be set up.

Department of Planning and Urban Studies Ph.D. in Urban Studies Program Comprehensive Examination

Prepared for Student X

Examination instructions. Your written examination is due at 10:00 a.m. X X, XXXX.

Please email your responses to Dr. Bethany Stich (bstich@lsuneworleans.edu). Be sure to cite your references and include a bibliography of the sources you consult. Individual work only.
Good luck!

PART I: Core Curriculum - This section should include questions on urban studies, urban theory, and urban policy

Required questions

- 1)
- 2)

Answer X of the following questions

- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

PART 2: Research Design & Methods - These questions should include questions about the specific strategies and techniques used for the collection, measurement and analysis of data

Required questions

- 6)
- 7)

Select one additional question

- 8)
- 9)
- 10)

PART 3: Major Field - This section is either Urban Affairs, Urban History or Transportation and should include questions about history and precedent in the field; theory and its evolution; current issues and debates; and methods of inquiry

Required questions

11)

12)

13)

APPENDIX 6: ORAL EXAM TEMPLATE

*The following serves as a template only. Committees may choose how the dissertation proposal should be written. The section below is an example of how an exam *could* be set up.

Dissertation Proposal Template¹

Length: The dissertation proposal will be approximately 20-25 pages

Section 1: Proposal Abstract

Proposal abstract is about 250 words and consists of:

- One or two sentences summarizing Section 2 (Context)
- One or two sentences summarizing Section 3 (Theoretical Background)
- One or two sentences summarizing Section 4 (Methods)
- One or two sentences summarizing Section 5 (Purpose/Research Questions)
- One or two sentences summarizing Section 6 (Significance)

Section 2: Introduction/Context

The context section begins with an introductory paragraph that orients the reader to what will be covered in this section. This section describes the context or site or topic area where the study occurs, using support from the literature. The context section may also focus on a particular issue.

The section must also show a formal problem statement showcasing the need for the study and gap in the literature. It must state the purpose of the study by way of introduction to the research questions that follow.

Outline the major research question(s). Importantly, detail any sub-questions. The writing must be clear and concise and effectively orient the reader to the more detailed narrative that follows. The concluding paragraph of the section emphasizes the significance of the research context and site and transitions logically into the next section.

The following is a basic outline of some suggested topics to cover within this section:

- Context/Background on topic (the headings here can vary depending on your topic).
 - Discuss state of affairs, context, existing studies supported by literature in brief
 - Every time you make a statement of fact/assertion, support it with one of more sources.
- Research Problem Statement - (using literature to support assertions/facts)
 - the urban studies issue or topic under study (use various sources)
 - summary of recent studies addressing the topic or some aspect of the topic
 - the need for the study and

¹ Adapted from Halmos College of Arts and Sciences (2025)

- what is missing/lacking in the literature that has not been sufficiently researched that your study will address.
- Include research question(s) and sub-questions
- Purpose Statement/Research Questions
 - You can use Creswell Script as a guide for discussing your research purpose/approach:

Creswell (2007, p. 103-104):

- 1) “The purpose of this _____ (quantitative study, narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, case) study is (was? will be?) to _____ (understand? describe? develop? discover?) the _____ (central phenomenon of the study) for _____ (the participants) at _____ (site). At this stage in the research, the _____ (central phenomenon) will be generally defined as _____ (a general definition of the central concept)².”
- 2) Discuss expected at least 2 -3 goals for the study.
 - Urban Studies Theories:
 - Discuss Theories related to US in brief in intro and expand later in lit review
 - Definition of terms and section conclusion or summary

Section 3: Literature review and theoretical framing

This section reviews the theoretical literature that underlies the study. A brief review of the extant literature on the subject must be presented to illustrate that the student knows what is known so far on the topic and is conversant with developments in the area of the proposed study.

Usually, two to four theoretical perspectives inform a dissertation project, and each of these bodies of theory should be presented in different sections. For example, in a study on women peacemakers in Northern Ireland, the theoretical literature might cover (a) causes of ethnic conflict, (b) definitions of peace, and (c) gender theory.

The presentation should have a coherent, logical organization that reflects an interpretation of the theoretical literature and how the theories will help in understanding and/or analyzing the issue. The number of references listed can vary, but a good rule of thumb is that references should number 60 to 200. Importantly, references should be up to date, with most references within the past ten years.

Section 4: Methodology

Describe in detail the research procedure to be used:

- The methodology must be indicated and explicated i.e. whether quantitative, qualitative or mixed method as well as the specific methodology under each research tradition. Provide a rationale for your choice of methodology.

² Adapted from Creswell, John W. (2007 editions). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-4129-1607-3

- The sampling and sampling criteria must be presented i.e. who are the participants, or what are the data texts, how many they are and why them and not others. You also need to explain how access will be obtained, the ethical concerns such as confidentiality as well as the potential risks and benefits to participants (even if the risks are minimal).
- Explain the data gathering or data generation techniques (detailed rationale and description of how data will be gathered).
- Explain the data analysis (description of and rationale for the data analysis process).
- Sometimes, there is an additional body of theory that is relevant to the methodology, for example a particular type of methodology (e.g., semi-projective tests, narrative methods, etc.) may require some description and theoretical support.

A concluding paragraph summarizes the section and transitions to the next section.

Section 5: Significance of the Study

In this concluding section, the significance of the study is pointed out e.g.:

- How and/or why the study will advance knowledge within the urban studies field
- How the study will contribute to the development of theoretical knowledge
- What practice-related contributions the study might make; and/or what policy implications the study might have.

Section 6: Timeline to Completion

In this section, your anticipated timeline is included

- Be specific on what you will turn in when (one completed draft is unacceptable)
- Provide appropriate time between submissions for review and revisions
- Include appropriate Graduate School deadlines for graduation

APPENDIX 7: TRANSFER CREDIT REQUEST INFORMATION

The following information must be completed and attached the Graduate School Request for Transfer Credit form.

Transfer Credit Information										
Courses to Transfer							Course Equivalency at UNO			
Course Prefix	Course Number	Course Title	Term and Year	Credit Hours	Grade	Institution	Course Prefix	Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours