

# Public Policy, MPP and Psychology, PHD (Joint Program)

## Modality

On Campus

## Program URL

<https://mccourt.georgetown.edu/programs/dual-degree-programs/mpp-phd-in-psychology/>

The McCourt School and the Department of Psychology offer a dual MPP/PhD in Psychology through the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. This 48-credit program provides an interdisciplinary education in the sciences that concern themselves with the processes and contexts of development across the lifespan. It is explicitly designed to offer students rigorous training in the range of theories and methods that characterize the developmental sciences and enable them to place the study of development into the broader contexts – biological, familial, social, cultural, economic, historical, political – from which the field draws its societal applications. The program will prepare students for an array of post-degree positions in institutions of higher education, research institutes, government agencies and other policy settings, medical settings, and nonprofit organizations. Conducting high-quality empirical research that make a contribution to both scientific understanding and human welfare is an overarching theme of this dual degree program.

## Academic Policies

The academic policies and procedures of the joint program in Public Policy and Government are those specified in Georgetown's University Bulletin.

## Requirements

### Program Requirements

This 48-credit program provides an interdisciplinary education in the sciences that concern themselves with the processes and contexts of development across the lifespan

### Course Requirements

| Course                    | Title                                                              | Credits     |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Fall I</b>             |                                                                    |             |
| PPOL 5004                 | Intermediate Microeconomics                                        | 0-3         |
| PPOL 5000                 | Stat Meth for Policy Analysis                                      | 3           |
| PPOL 5006<br>or PPOL 5007 | The Politics of Policy-Making<br>or Comp Politics of Policy-Making | 3           |
| PSYC 5001                 | Lifespan Dev:Brain & Cognition                                     | 3           |
| <b>Credits</b>            |                                                                    | <b>9-12</b> |
| <b>Spring I</b>           |                                                                    |             |
| PPOL 5005                 | Microecon II:Mkt Fail Pub Econ                                     | 3           |
| PPOL 5001                 | Reg. Meth. for Policy Analysis                                     | 3           |
| PPOL 5008<br>or PPOL 5009 | Public Management<br>or Mgmt & Implem in Dev Countries             | 3           |

|                           |                                                         |              |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| PSYC 4810                 | Child & Family Policy                                   | 3            |
| <b>Credits</b>            |                                                         | <b>12</b>    |
| <b>Fall II</b>            |                                                         |              |
| PPOL 5002                 | Adv Regression/Prog Eval Meth                           | 3            |
| PPOL 5011<br>or PPOL 5013 | Policy Analysis:Client Capston<br>or Thesis Workshop    | 3            |
| PSYC 5002                 | Human Development in Context                            | 3            |
| PPOL 5010                 | Ethics/Values/Public Policy                             | 3            |
| Elective                  |                                                         | 3            |
| <b>Credits</b>            |                                                         | <b>15</b>    |
| <b>Spring II</b>          |                                                         |              |
| PPOL 5010                 | Ethics/Values/Public Policy                             | 3            |
| PPOL 5012<br>or PPOL 5014 | Pcly Anlys:Clnt Basd Capstn II<br>or Thesis Workshop II | 3            |
| Electives                 |                                                         | 6            |
| <b>Credits</b>            |                                                         | <b>12</b>    |
| <b>Total Credits</b>      |                                                         | <b>48-51</b> |

## Required Examinations

The Doctor of Philosophy program in Psychology has several paper requirements.

In lieu of a formal Qualifying Examination, students must complete two research projects and an area paper prior to advancing to candidacy.

### First Year Research Project

During the student's first year in the program, intensive research experience with the mentor will result in a first-year research project. This project is likely to be part of an ongoing project in the mentor's lab, but students are welcome to conduct original research, including original secondary analyses of existing datasets, subject to the approval of their mentor(s). This project is designed to ensure that students rapidly gain experience conducting research and presenting their results. Students are required to present this research at Graduate Lunch in their second year. They are also required to submit this project as a conference presentation (poster or talk).

### Second Year Research Project

The second-year project is an independent research project conducted under the supervision of the mentor(s). In contrast to the first year research project, which is likely to be an offshoot of faculty research, this project is intended to be an independent research project designed and conducted by the graduate student. This project may grow out of the first-year project, or it may be separate.

Students are required to present their second-year project during Graduate Lunch in their third year. Students are also required to submit this project as a presentation (poster or talk) at a conference by the summer after their second year.

Finally, students are required to submit their first-year project and/or second-year project to a peer-reviewed journal. This submission should occur no later than the fall semester of their third year (but preferably the preceding summer). Writing and submitting a journal article requires students to conduct a more sophisticated review of the literature, data analysis, and interpretation of their results than does preparing a poster or talk. In many cases, first- and/or second-year projects also provide pilot data for inclusion in the pre-doctoral research proposal.

## Area Paper (Third Year)

The Area Paper is a written review of the theoretical and empirical literature on the student's planned dissertation topic, written in the style of a scholarly review article (e.g., *Psychological Bulletin* or *TICS*). Ideally, it should serve as a preamble to the dissertation proposal by identifying gaps in the literature the dissertation would aim to fill. The Area Paper can be a meta-analysis, and thus empirical, of a particular research question; however, the paper must still contain sufficient theoretical and empirical background to provide the committee a thorough grounding in the relevant literature.

Students select an Area Paper committee with a minimum of three members; at least two of whom are members of the Department of Psychology, and the third of whom can be a member of the Department or external to the Department. (Usually, this committee comprises 3 of the 4 committee members for the student's dissertation). Students then must schedule an oral defense in consultation with the committee members. Students submit the written Area Paper to the committee no less than one week in advance of the oral defense. The oral defense involves an approximately 45-minute presentation by the student followed by an exam (questions from the committee). The oral exam also provides an opportunity for students and their committee to reflect on the student's first two years of study, preliminary plans for their dissertation, and career plans. The area paper and its oral defense serve as the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination. Upon its successful completion, the committee completes the Qualifying/Comprehensive Examination Report Form, collects the signatures of the committee, and delivers it to the Registrar. The student should request that the Psychology Department administrator send the committee members the correct form.

Successful completion of coursework and the defense of the Area Paper advances the student to Doctoral Candidacy.

## Thesis Requirements

A dissertation is required for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

In consultation with their mentor(s), students must identify a four-member dissertation committee. The committee must consist of three Georgetown University faculty plus one external reader. The three Georgetown University faculty include the primary mentor(s), and at least two of the three must be members of the Department of Psychology. The external reader must be faculty from another institution (although they may be affiliated with Georgetown University) who is an expert in the topic of the dissertation.

The dissertation is a description of original research conducted by the student during their 4th and 5th years in the program (although data collection or analysis may have begun earlier). The dissertation is required to be the original work of the student, rather than being derivative of previous research, although the dissertation can be part of a larger project directed by the mentor(s). The dissertation must contain at least one publishable set of findings, which is to say findings that make an original, empirical contribution to the field and thus advance knowledge. Ideally, one or more studies that compose the dissertation will have been submitted for publication by the time of the defense. Dissertations in the Psychology Department typically follow the "three paper" format, consisting of several (usually three) stand-alone but interrelated papers, each suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Accordingly, the dissertation should be written in the format of a series of journal articles suitable for submission to a peer-

reviewed journal. Each article represents a chapter in the dissertation, which will also include separate introductory and concluding chapters.

For the dissertation defense, students (Ph.D. candidates) present their research to the committee in the format of a 45-minute research colloquium. In addition to the committee (who may attend virtually or in-person) Psychology Department faculty and graduate students are encouraged to attend, as are friends and family of the candidate and members of the wider Georgetown community. Following the research presentation, audience members are invited to ask questions. Following this open question period, the candidate and committee go into a closed session during which the members of the committee question the candidate. At the end of questioning, the candidate leaves the room while the committee comes to a conclusion about the status of the dissertation. The candidate is then invited to return and informed of the committee's decision.

If the members of the committee determine that this dissertation is complete and satisfactory in all respects, that all revisions required by the committee have been made, and that the candidate has demonstrated knowledge of the field commensurate to Ph.D. status during oral questioning, they sign and date the Dissertation Cover Sheet. This cover sheet is then returned to the Psychology Department administrator by the dissertation committee chair (not by the candidate).

Although the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences allows Committees the option of selecting "High Pass" and "Distinction" when grading the Dissertation Defense, our Department does not make these distinctions.

## Plan of Study

## Program Requirements

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| PPOL 5010                 | Ethics/Values/Public Policy                                        | 3           |

|                           |                                                         |              |
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| Elective                  |                                                         | 3            |
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