

# THE SIX STEPS TO THE PHD IN LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY

## 1) Complete course work

- Course work consists of the seven core courses, one law course and electives to equal 30 semester hours.
- One of the elective courses must be a law course (for students without a J.D.).
- Students entering the program with a bachelor's degree are expected to take 36 semester hours of coursework.
- Students entering the program with a graduate or professional degree (M.A., M.S., JD, MBA, MPH, or MPA) are expected to take 30 semester hours of coursework.
- Students are expected to complete the course work in three academic years.

## 2) Pass the Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam covers three areas: Law, Methodology, and Policy. Comprehensive exams are given two times a year: Spring (early May) and Fall (early September). Copies of past exams are available in the LPS graduate resource room (202 Holmes Hall). Reading lists for the policy and methodology components of the exam are available of the LPS website. Students typically form study groups to prepare for the exam.

The comprehensive is a take-home exam and you may consult any materials you have while taking it. You may not discuss the exam with other students, however. Students have 72 hours in which to write the exam after it has been delivered by email or hard copy. Specific directions are available to students once they declare their intention to take the exam.

## 3) Take Two Semesters of Dissertation Research Workshop

After passing the comprehensive exam students become PhD candidates. This starts a five-year time clock in which all of the remaining requirements of the degree must be completed. During the first two semesters of candidacy (summer exempt) students must register for dissertation. Students are required to attend a bi weekly research workshop during these two semesters.

Steps 4 and 5 of the seven steps will be done during the two semesters of Dissertation Research Workshop.

## 4) Prepare a Dissertation Proposal

The Dissertation guide can be downloaded from the LPS website. ([www.lps.neu.edu](http://www.lps.neu.edu)). The basic steps are:

- Form a committee.
- Petition the curriculum committee for approval.
- Write the proposal (the proposals should be 12-20 pages, with one-half devoted to research design).

### 5) **Conduct a Seminar**

The seminar provides an opportunity for students to present their proposals. It is open to students and faculty. In the seminar the student presents the dissertation research methodology and receives feedback from the seminar leader, and faculty and students in attendance. The seminar leader, Professor Ballard Campbell, submits a written report with suggestions for strengthening the methodology. This report should be discussed by the student and dissertation committee, after which changes are agreed upon.

The steps are:

- Send Dissertation Proposal to B.Campbell at [campbell@neu.edu](mailto:campbell@neu.edu) requesting an LPS seminar.
- If the dissertation proposal is accepted, a seminar will be scheduled, no sooner than 2 weeks hence. Seminars will be held during the Research Workshop which meets every other week in the Fall and Spring semesters.

Students should attend as many seminars as possible to learn about the research process.

### 6) **Complete and Defend the Dissertation**

Once the dissertation has been completed and the committee agrees it is ready, students conduct a defense. During a defense, which is open to the public, students present the findings of their research. After the presentation and a question and answer period, the committee votes on whether to pass the student. Changes may be requested. Once the dissertation has been approved, students must format their thesis to conform to the regulations of GSAS.