

Jacksonville State University

Doctor of Science in Emergency Management

Student Handbook | 2026-2027



Welcome!

I want to welcome you to the doctoral program in emergency management at Jacksonville State University. The Doctor of Science in Emergency Management is designed to equip senior emergency management professionals and future emergency management faculty and scholars with comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the requirements for managing and reducing risk from hazards and effectively responding to and recovering from disasters when they occur. In particular, you will acquire advanced knowledge and skills in such areas as risk management; crisis management; risk and crisis communication; program implementation and evaluation; policy analysis; needs assessment and other applied research techniques; planning and program development; research methods and quantitative analysis; and leadership and facilitation. In addition to core requirements, you may select from a number of electives that will help you customize your program of study and help to focus your doctoral research. The doctoral program faculty have noteworthy records of scholarship, external funding, and community service to the profession, and a commitment to integrate research with practice. I am confident you will find our academic community both challenging and motivating. We look forward to working with you.



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General Information

Student Handbook Overview

This Doctoral Student Handbook introduces the philosophy underlying doctoral study in the academic discipline of Emergency Management at Jacksonville State University (JSU), describes the stages of progression through the doctoral program, states applicable policies and procedures, provides advice, and includes links to the forms that need to be filed as students progress through the program. The [Department of Emergency Management and Public Administration](#) reserves the right to make changes to the policies, requirements, and procedures stated in this Handbook. Changes will generally be applicable to all students at a specified date of implementation, but some changes will be applicable only to subsequently admitted students.

JSU's Graduate School provides administrative direction and support to all graduate-level programs, including the Doctor of Science in Emergency Management (D.Sc.). For the most up-to-date information concerning all aspects of graduate study at JSU, please access the [Graduate School](#) website.

The Doctoral Program Vision

The vision for the D.Sc. program encompasses the following:

- An academic program that integrates scholarly activity and professional practice in emergency management, emphasizing emergency management as both a field of study and a profession with political, organizational, and social contexts.
- A doctoral degree that imparts knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for senior emergency management professionals, emergency management faculty, and researchers, including in-depth knowledge of natural and human-induced disasters; human and physical consequences of such events; and the means to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impact of such events.
- A rigorous academic curriculum that engages students in analyzing, exploring, questioning/critiquing, and synthesizing theories from disaster and emergency management-related behavioral and applied sciences and practices in the emergency management field, emphasizing dominant perspectives and approaches to research and practice.
- Collaborative interactions with faculty and students from numerous specialty fields involved in emergency management to support scholarly discourse, research design, and implementation.
- The publication of doctoral-level research findings for the purpose of improving the nation's ability to respond and recover from disaster events.



General Information



The Doctoral Program Mission

The D.Sc. in Emergency Management program is designed to equip senior emergency management professionals and future emergency management faculty with comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the requirements for managing and reducing risk from hazards and effectively responding to and recovering from disasters when they occur. Students will acquire advanced knowledge and skills in such areas as risk management; crisis management; risk and crisis communication; program implementation and evaluation; policy analysis; needs assessment and other applied research techniques; planning and program development; research methods and quantitative analysis; and leadership and facilitation. In addition to core requirements, students may select from a number of elective courses that will enable them to customize their program of study and help focus their doctoral research.

The Doctoral Program Objectives

The D.Sc. program has been designed, developed, and delivered to support the attainment of the following learning and experiential objectives. Upon completion of the program, each graduate will have been engaged in the educational experiences to successfully:

- 1) Apply a knowledge base of scientific and technical concepts from which theories and skill-based applications can develop.
- 2) Demonstrate the skills to manage hazards and disasters effectively and efficiently and to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences, including elected officials, the general public, interest groups, and service providers.
- 3) Analyze emergency management administrative and policy issues from a cross-disciplinary perspective.
- 4) Integrate professional values and ethical standards in practice, research, and data analysis.
- 5) Design research projects.
- 6) Apply higher-level statistical theory and justify its application.
- 7) Develop written scholarly publications.
- 8) Demonstrate the ability to justify a research methodology and recommend next steps based on research findings presented orally in formal settings.





The Doctor of Science Program

Emergency Management Faculty

The Doctoral Program draws from numerous key disciplines that inform the theory and practice of emergency management. JSU Emergency Management represents several of these disciplines and is supported by affiliated faculty housed in other Jacksonville State University departments. The department augments its full-time faculty with highly qualified and experienced part-time faculty. Please see the [Emergency Management Faculty](#) website for specific biographical information for all faculty members supporting the D.Sc. program. Additionally, please see [Appendix I](#) for a list of emergency management regular (core) and distinguished affiliate faculty members, along with JSU faculty from other departments, who are interested in serving dissertation committees and/or research collaboration with EM faculty and doctoral students.

Doctoral Program Admission

Applicants for the Doctor of Science in Emergency Management degree must hold a master's degree and submit all the following documentation to the Graduate School, Jacksonville State University, 700 Pelham Road North, Jacksonville, AL 36265-1602, to be considered for admission:

**Application Deadline
March 31**

- A Completed JSU [Graduate Application](#) for Admission.
- Non-refundable \$35 application processing fee.
- A Statement of Purpose (minimum three pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font) setting forth career goals and research interests.
- A Writing Sample consisting of a published manuscript or paper written in an academic setting, with a minimum length of five pages. If you do not have such a sample available, then you may submit an example of technical or professional writing from within the past five years.
- A resume including education, employment, and service activities.
- A minimum of one "Graduate Reference Form" completed by an individual who can provide a qualitative assessment of the applicant's potential for success in doctoral course work and citing potential professional leadership ability (Note: Up to three reference forms may be submitted; however, preference will be given to academic references with substantive detail).
- Official transcript(s) from all postsecondary institutions attended. (Students who have previously attended JSU do not need to request a transcript from the University.) For international postsecondary institutions, please see the section entitled International Student Applicants in the Graduate Bulletin.
- If English is not the applicant's native language, the applicant is required to submit an official TOEFL score report or an IELTS score report.

Applicants should consult the [Graduate Catalog](#) for the most up-to-date requirements and materials. All application materials must be submitted by **March 31** of the year the applicant is seeking admission.



The Doctor of Science Program

The Program of Study

The doctoral program of study in emergency management requires students to carry out advanced study in the following areas: emergency management administration and policy, research methods and statistics, and a substantive area of specialization. Students work with a program advisor who guides them through their program of study. Students are expected to satisfactorily complete their coursework, pass qualifying exams, and successfully complete their dissertation research.

Degree Requirements

The Doctor of Science degree requires a total of 60 semester credit hours, in addition to an earned Master of Science Degree in Emergency Management or an approved related discipline. Students are expected to complete coursework in the following areas:

Integrative Seminar (In-Residence; 2 hours each; 6 hours required)

- EM 8742 Integrative Seminar (1st Year)
- EM 8744 Integrative Seminar (2nd Year)
- EM 8746 Integrative Seminar (3rd Year)

Administration and Policy (3 hours each; 9 hours required)

- EM 8412 Disaster Management Principles and Practice
- EM 8414 Interdisciplinary Disaster Theory and Research
- EM 8423 Institutional Context and Emergency Management Policy
- EM 8425 Systems Thinking and Applications in Emergency Management

Practice Areas (3 hours each; 6 hours required)

- EM 8032 Hazards Risk Management and Community Resilience
- EM 8034 Risk-Based Response and Recovery Strategy Development and Operations
- EM 8043 Emergency Management Program Management

Research (3 hours each; 12 hours required)

- EM 8530 Research Design
- EM 8550 Advanced Data Analysis
- EM 8564 Qualitative Research
- EM 8566 Evaluation Research
- EM 8568 and EM 8569 Directed Research

Electives (3 hours each; 9 hours required)

- EM 8671 Voluntary and Nonprofit Disaster Management
- EM 8673 Health Care Systems in Disaster
- EM 8675 Risk Communication
- EM 8677 Crisis Leadership and Management
- EM 8678 IT Applications for Emergency Management
- EM 8679 Spatial Analysis and GIS for Emergency Management
- EM 8882 8884, and 8886 Directed Study

Dissertation (Minimum of 18 hours required)

- EM 8999 Dissertation Research*

* Students may register for one to six hours of EM 8999 each regular semester with approval. A maximum of three hours of EM 8999 may be used to complete qualifying exams.





The Doctor of Science Program

The Plan of Study

Upon admission to the doctoral program in emergency management, each student consults with the Program Director for course registration and will fill out a [Plan of Study Form](#) (see [Appendix IV](#)). After that, an annual review and update of the Plan of Study is required. The annual review may be unnecessary if there are no changes to their Plan of Study; otherwise, students should update and resubmit the plan for the program directors' approval each year.

Note: All graduate coursework and degree requirements toward a D.Sc. must be completed within a period of eight (8) calendar years.

Doctoral students are required to register for an Integrative Seminar* during the first three years of their program. Participation in the on-campus Integrative Seminars is mandatory for all students—and a core requirement to receive the degree. Elective courses applicable to the D.Sc. program are offered during the summer academic semesters, but students are not required to register in the summer. A doctoral student may request a leave of absence for a maximum of two academic semesters (fall and/or spring) over the entire Doctoral program. (See [Appendix IV](#) for a link to the required [Leave of Absence Form](#))

***Note:** International students attending the seminar are required to adhere to the following reporting requirements:

Health Insurance & Reporting for International Students (ALL F1/J1 Students are required to enroll in Health Insurance provided through JSU.)

Health Insurance

The cost of the insurance must be paid immediately upon arrival. Students can choose to have a second policy, but they are still required to purchase insurance through JSU. For coverage and detailed information regarding the insurance, please review the [Student Secure: International Student Health Insurance Manual](#).

Health Reports

It is compulsory for all JSU students to submit the health records as listed by the RMC/JSU Health Center. These forms must be submitted to RMC/JSU Health Center prior to class registration. For more information about health records and documentation, please review the University's [Immunization Requirements](#).

Official Reporting

F1/J1 Students must report to the International House and Programs Office with travel documents such as a Passport, Visa page, I-20/DS 2019, a copy of the I-94, and an Admission Letter by the stated program start date on the I-20/DS2019.

The Doctor of Science Program



Continuous Enrollment

The D.Sc. program requires continuous enrollment in regular semesters (Fall and Spring). In the case of emergency situations that interrupt a student's studies, they can apply for a Leave of Absence for up to two regular semesters, which must be approved by the Program Director and the Graduate School. Any breaks in continuous enrollment without an approved Leave of Absence will result in the student's removal from the program. A student may request readmission when extenuating circumstances are present.

Academic Probation and Suspension

Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 to avoid being placed on academic probation. If a student receives a grade of "C" in a required core course, the course must be retaken the next time it is offered to improve the grade. A core course may be retaken only once. If the student is unable to improve the grade, the student may be dismissed from the program.

Students may count a maximum of six (6) semester hours of "C" grades toward their degree requirements. However, this allowance applies to elective courses only. Any student whose GPA falls below the required minimum of 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and will receive notification from the Graduate School of the requirements to reestablish good standing. Any student who does not attain good standing, as specified in their notification letter, will be dropped from their program by the Graduate School. Failure to resolve an incomplete within the established time frame will result in a failing grade and inability to progress in the program. Registration for the upcoming semester will not be allowed until the Incomplete is resolved. Review the graduate catalog for processing instructions and deadlines.

Academic Integrity

Students should carefully review the [Scholars' Code](#) of Jacksonville State University, which is available in the [JSU Student Handbook](#). All written work, including doctoral dissertation proposals and dissertations, will be screened electronically for proper citation and to ensure academic integrity—the Department screens for the use of AI and plagiarism of any type. Any egregious violations of Jacksonville State University's academic integrity standards will result in termination from the Emergency Management Doctoral program.

Use of Official JSU Email

JSU faculty and staff are not allowed to correspond with students about the doctoral program using their work or personal email addresses, according to Federal law (FERPA). It is the responsibility of all students to continuously monitor their JSU email address. Failure to do so can result in missing key deadlines, such as registration for EM 8999 or other reporting requirements. Missing these deadlines can lead to your being terminated from the program. Avoiding this issue is very simple. If necessary, students should make sure they forward their JSU emails to an account that they monitor daily.



The Doctor of Science Program

Disability Support Systems

The [Disability Support Services \(DSS\)](#) site provides student information, faculty resources, disability information, events and archives, partnerships, presentations, and other links including an FAQ. Every effort is made to address the needs of students for a successful learning experience. A Disability Support Services Handbook is available for DSS students. Any requests for academic accommodations must be directed through this office and will require official documentation to support your disability status.

Student Complaints and Grievances

Students are encouraged to seek informal resolution of matters of complaint directly with the faculty or individual(s) involved, as most complaints can often be resolved in this way. If an informal approach is neither advisable nor successful, please contact the Department Head, Dr. Tanveer Islam (tislam@jsu.edu).

For complaints extending beyond the department, Jacksonville State University (JSU) has policies and procedures in place to address academic grievances and violations of the Student Code of Conduct. The Graduate School handles academic grievances for graduate students. The Division of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs addresses violations of the Student Code of Conduct for graduate students. Please click on the following link for additional information: [Academic Grievances](#).





Qualifying Examination

A Closer Look at the Qualifying Exam

Doctoral students must pass a qualifying examination to advance to the dissertation phase of the program. The qualifying exam covers two substantive areas: 1) emergency management administration and policy, and 2) research methods and data analysis. The qualifying exam determines whether students are ready to transition to the dissertation phase of the program. The exam is developed, administered, and graded by doctoral faculty teaching these core areas. The qualifying examination assesses the student's capacity to synthesize and structure knowledge gained from the program, functions to ascertain whether the student possesses foundational knowledge of emergency management theory and research methodology and validates the student's readiness to advance to the dissertation phase of their academic journey. The qualifying examination demonstrates the mastery needed for a terminal degree and the ability to complete a dissertation.

Students are eligible to take the qualifying exam after completing all required credit hours in Administration and Policy (9 Hours) and Research Methods and Data Analysis (12 hours). Students may schedule their qualifying exams during any regular or summer semester (Note: A schedule of available exam dates will be published annually by the Program Director). However, while students may schedule their qualifying exams during any regular semester after meeting the eligibility criteria, they must successfully complete the qualifying exam within one calendar year of finishing all required coursework (i.e., 42 credit hours). A failure to meet this requirement will result in dismissal from the program. If the qualifying exam is not successfully completed prior to finishing all required coursework, students will be allowed to enroll in one credit hour of EM 8999: Dissertation Research each semester, for a maximum of three credit hours to prepare for and complete the exam. All students must submit the [Request for Qualifying Exam Form](#) at the start of the semester in which they intend to take the qualifying exam.

Qualifying exams will be graded by a Qualifying Examination Committee, which is composed of at least three faculty members. Each committee member will grade the qualifying exam independently and without knowing the identity of the student. Moreover, the committee members will evaluate the student's responses based on a special grading rubric and then meet to discuss exam results to ensure consistency and reliability. Once the initial grading is complete, a Qualifying Exam Review Meeting will be scheduled with the student to review the results and address any deficiencies and/or additional questions posed by the committee members. Students normally receive their final exam results by the end of the semester when they take the qualifying exam. A doctoral student who fails any part of the qualifying examination will be given one additional opportunity to pass the examination. The exam committee will inform the student regarding areas that need to be improved to achieve a passing grade. If the doctoral student fails the examination a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program.



The Dissertation Process

Moving into the Dissertation Phase

After successfully passing the qualifying exam, students will begin to work formally with their Dissertation Committee Chair and form the full Dissertation Committee. The student will continue to enroll in the EM 8999: Dissertation Research course each semester. The number of credit hours they will need to take each semester will be discussed with their Dissertation Committee Chair, who will also serve as the student's Academic Advisor for the remainder of the program. Students must submit a [Dissertation Committee Form](#) to formally identify their Chair and committee members. Each committee will have a minimum of three members (i.e., the committee chair and two additional committee members). Below are the primary roles of the Committee Chair, Members, and External Examiners (if needed):

- **Dissertation Committee Chair:** Serves as the student's mentor and advisor. Committee chairs must be full-time faculty members. Committee Chairs will establish the size of the committee and lead defense processes and other committee work/meetings. They also act as a liaison between the student, the program, the department, and the Graduate School. Committee Chairs offer guidance on the structure, content, and methodology, and they ensure students remain cognizant of the rigorous writing and research standards that must be upheld throughout the dissertation process. Committee Chairs will review all written materials to be presented to other committee members and will serve as the first reader of your dissertation. Committee Chairs will also ensure that required modifications identified in a defense are made, will critique the final draft of the dissertation proposal and final manuscript, and will notify the student of any major problems.
- **Dissertation Committee Members:** Provide direct support to the student and Dissertation Chair. At least two additional committee members may be chosen among research-active faculty members from the university. Committee Members will review written material submitted by students prior to scheduled meetings and provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. They will also consult with the student between meetings as needed. Committee Members will further review and critique the final draft of the dissertation proposal and dissertation manuscript and will notify the student of any major problems. They will also attend, participate in, and offer final comments and recommendations at defense meetings.
- **External Examiners (Committee Members):** Supportive faculty from other universities or practitioners from outside organizations who have a doctoral degree. No individual lacking doctoral credentials can serve on any dissertation committee. They should also, at a minimum, be knowledgeable about the topic of the dissertation. Their role is to provide an objective critique of the dissertation proposal and final dissertation. They may also be involved with the preparation of the research proposal or dissertation. External Committee Members must not have any conflicts of interest with the student outside of the university, such as a supervisory relationship at work, a business relationship, or a personal relationship.



The Dissertation Process

The Dissertation Proposal Process

Upon successfully completing the qualifying exam, the student will advance to candidacy—transitioning from a student to a candidate for the Doctor of Science degree—and must formally secure a Dissertation Committee Chair. After formally securing a Committee Chair, the student must work directly with the Chairperson to identify a suitable research topic for the dissertation and create a formal research plan. Once the research topic and plan are approved, the student will begin finalizing the research proposal document for oral defense and approval. The research proposal document will be in the format of the final dissertation and, at a minimum, include the following components:

- The focus (or topic) of the dissertation and its salience;
- Research question(s) and hypotheses (if using a quantitative approach);
- Literature review of the topic that summarizes the history and current state of research and demonstrates the originality and contribution of the proposed topic to the body of knowledge;
- Research methodology, including the rationale, justification, and feasibility of using the selected method, and any requirements for Institutional Research Board (IRB) review and approval; and
- Detailed project plan for completing the research.

Note: The research proposal document is expected to be no more than 50 pages in length.

As development of the research proposal progresses, the Committee Chair will assist the Doctoral candidate in identifying two additional faculty members who will join as members of the Dissertation Committee. Within two regular academic semesters of completing all required coursework *or* passing the qualifying exam (if the exam was taken in the year after completing all required coursework), the candidate will submit the written research proposal to the committee, and following the unanimous concurrence of the committee, will provide an oral defense of the research proposal. Candidates are then required to submit a formal email request for proposal defense to their committee chair at least 30 days prior to the proposed date for the Dissertation Proposal Defense.

Following the oral defense presentation, the committee members will deliberate in private and make a unanimous decision to either *accept* or *not accept* the oral defense and written research proposal. If either or both the oral and written proposal are not accepted, the committee members will provide specific instructions to the candidate and establish a deadline to make required changes, resubmit the written proposal, and, once again, orally defend the written research proposal, if necessary. Upon the committee's final approval of the written research proposal and oral defense, the committee members will sign the doctoral research proposal approval form, and the form, along with a final copy of the written research proposal, will be submitted to the Program Director for approval and archiving.



The Dissertation Process

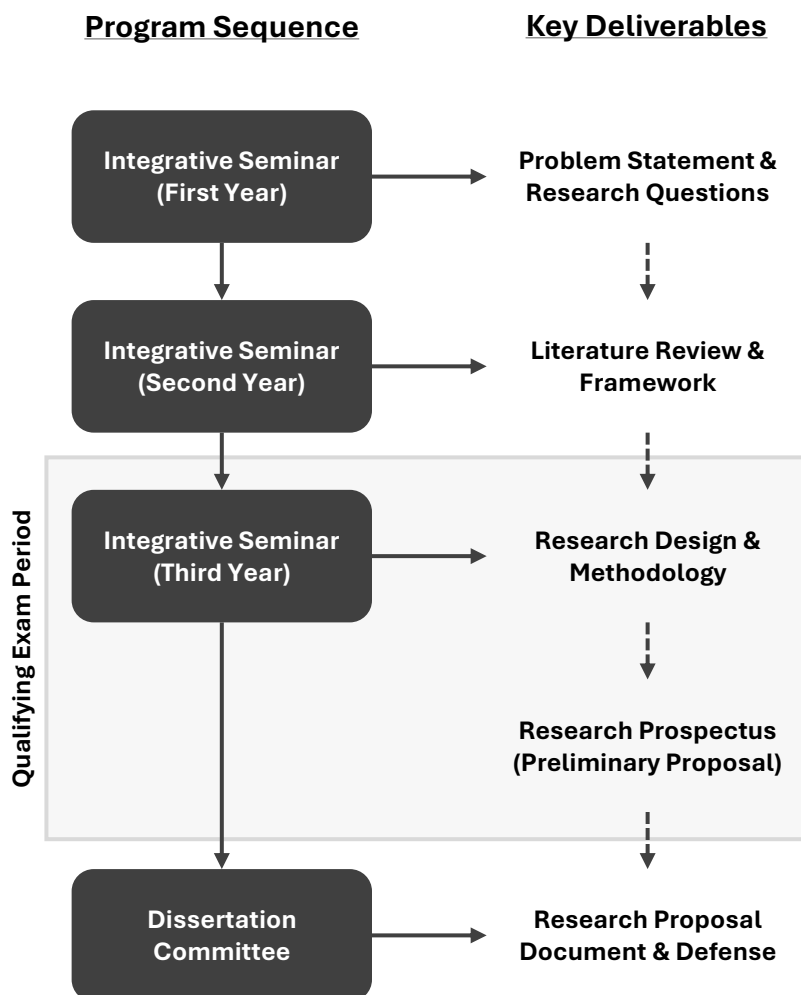
The Dissertation Proposal Process (Continued)

While formally establishing the Dissertation Committee and finalizing the research proposal document occurs after candidacy, it is important to understand that students should begin thinking about and working on their dissertation research during their first year of study—starting with the first Integrative Seminar course. Each seminar course is designed to engage students in the research process, clarify and refine their research focus, and produce specific deliverables that culminate in a research prospectus (or preliminary research proposal). This document will form the basis of the research proposal and will be refined with the assistance of Committee Chair—and possibly other committee members—once the student advances to doctoral candidacy.

During the first-year Integrative Seminar course, students will carefully explore their research interests, identify dissertation topic(s), and then narrow their interests to produce a formal problem statement and guiding research questions. This output will form the basis for Chapter 1 of the dissertation proposal.

During the second Integrative Seminar, students will continue to refine their research focus and complete a comprehensive literature review and synthesis on their chosen research topic (or problem). This output will build on the students' previous work from the first Integrative Seminar and form the basis for Chapter 2 of the dissertation proposal. At any time during this initial period (the first two to three years), students can modify or even change their research focus, if needed.

During the third-year Integrative Seminar course, students will select their research approach and flesh out the details of their research design and methodology. This output will form the basis for Chapter 3 of the dissertation proposal. Throughout the seminar experience, students will engage with different faculty to explore their research interests and expertise and to identify potential members to serve on their dissertation committees.





The Dissertation Process

The Institutional Review Board

Students must obtain approval from *Jacksonville State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB)* before engaging in any research involving human subjects. However, prior to submitting an application to the IRB, students must complete two [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative \(CITI\)](#) Courses: 1) Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research and 2) Social & Behavioral Research Investigators. Once this training has been completed, students will submit an IRB application package that outlines the purpose of their research, proposed methodology, and how their research will utilize and protect human subjects. Subsequently, the IRB committee will review the application and either grant approval or provide suggested revisions prior to approval. The review process may vary depending on the type of research (e.g., exempt, expedited, etc.). If questions emerge regarding the IRB application process, students may contact the [Institutional Review Board](#) staff directly. Additional information about the CITI training, the IRB review process, and research definitions can also be found on the University's [Institutional Review Board Website](#).

Researching and Writing the Dissertation

The final approved research proposal serves as a contract between the doctoral candidate and the Dissertation Committee. The ensuing doctoral research and dissertation must reflect the content of the approved proposal unless deviations are agreed to by the Dissertation Committee and approved in writing by the Program Director. The candidate should follow guidance in the [JSU Thesis Guide](#) throughout the dissertation writing process.

Students must make consistent and satisfactory progress throughout the dissertation. Upon completing all required coursework or passing the qualifying exam (if the exam was taken in the year after completing all required coursework), candidates will have two regular semesters to orally defend the dissertation research proposal. After successfully defending the research proposal, candidates will have up to three years to complete and defend the final dissertation manuscript. Candidate progress will be assessed through meetings with the dissertation chair/committee members and the dissertation progress rubric (see Table 1 below). Scores of less than three on the progress rubric demonstrate limited progress toward completing the dissertation. Candidates receiving unsatisfactory scores will be supported through targeted interventions, including developing written plans and goals for completion and follow-up by the Program Director, Department Head, and the Graduate School. Careful attention will also be given to *missed deadlines*. A *missed deadline* occurs when a candidate fails to satisfactorily pass a dissertation course (EM 8999) or when the candidate does not complete the dissertation in the prescribed timeline.



The Dissertation Process

Researching and Writing the Dissertation (Continued)

Missed deadlines shall be handled as follows:

First Unsatisfactory Progress Report

- The candidate will meet with the Program Director and Committee Chair to develop a revised written plan and timeline to complete the dissertation. The plan and timelines will be reviewed at the end of the course/semester to determine if progress was made and goals were met.
- The candidate will enroll in EM 8999 and receive a formal letter of unsatisfactory progress.

Second Unsatisfactory Progress Report

- The candidate will be given a formal academic warning.
- The candidate will meet with the Program Director and Committee Chair to revise the written plan and timelines to complete the dissertation. The plan and timelines will be reviewed at the end of the course/semester to determine if progress was made and if goals were met.
- The candidate will enroll in EM 8999 and receive a formal letter of unsatisfactory progress.

Third Unsatisfactory Progress Report

- The candidate will meet with the Program Director and Committee Chair to revise the written plan and timelines to complete the dissertation.
- The candidate will submit monthly documentation to the Program Director and Graduate School about progress.
- The plan and timelines will be reviewed monthly and at the end of the course to determine if progress was made and if goals were met.
- At the end of the course/semester, candidates may be dismissed from the program and referred to the "Step-Out" master's degree options if further evidence of unsatisfactory progress is found by the Program Director and Committee Chair.

Table 1: Dissertation Progress Rubric

Criterion	Proficient (2)	Meets (1)	No Progress (0)
Dissertation Progress	Clearly defined and realistic goals were set, and all goals were met (or exceeded) during the semester.	Clearly defined and realistic goals were set, and at least 70% of the goals were met during the semester.	Goals were not set, or less than 70% of goals were met. Minimal or no progress was documented.
Communication	The candidate met with the Chair at least every two weeks during the semester and provided progress updates by completing the required journal entries.	The candidate met with the Chair at least every three weeks during the semester and provided progress updates by completing the required journal entries.	The candidate had minimal contact or communication with the Chair and provided limited or no progress updates by completing the required journal entries.
Research Processes	The program/research guidelines were followed along with all directions provided by the Chair.	The program/research guidelines and directions provided by the Chair were somewhat followed.	The program/research guidelines and directions provided by the Chair were not followed.



The Dissertation Process

The Dissertation Defense

The final approval stage of a dissertation is designed to ascertain whether the dissertation aligns with the accepted proposal, meets all style and formatting requirements (APA), and is acceptable to university representatives as a scholarly effort worthy of the Doctor of Science degree. The dissertation should constitute original research and include material suitable for publication in recognized emergency management journals.

Upon completion of the dissertation draft and after it has been certified as ready for defense by the Dissertation Committee, the candidate will schedule the final defense. The candidate must submit the [Doctoral Defense Announcement Form](#) at least 30 days prior to the proposed date for the Dissertation Defense. All members of the dissertation committee must participate fully in the defense and have full voting rights. The Dissertation Defense will follow the same format as the proposal defense, but the presentation will be 45-60 minutes in length.

Following the oral defense presentation, the committee will deliberate in private and make a unanimous decision to either *accept* or *not accept* the oral defense and written dissertation. If either or both the oral and written dissertation are not accepted, the committee members will provide specific instructions to the doctoral candidate and establish a deadline to make required changes, resubmit the written document, and, once again, orally defend the written dissertation, if necessary. Upon the committee's final approval of the written dissertation and oral defense, the committee members will sign the Doctoral Research Dissertation Approval Form, and the form, along with a final copy of the written dissertation, will be submitted to the Program Director for approval and archiving.

Accepted dissertations will be electronically archived by the [JSU Houston Cole Library](#) on its [Digital Commons](#) repository system.

Degree Completion and Graduation

Upon completion of all academic requirements for the *Doctor of Science in Emergency Management Degree*, the doctoral candidate may apply for graduation to the Jacksonville State University Registrar by following the step-by-step instructions and completing the [Online Graduate Degree Application](#).



Appendix I



Emergency Management Doctoral Faculty



Dr. Arjola Balilaj
Associate Professor

Research Interests:
Diversity, Mediation,
Conflict Resolution,
Program Evaluation, and
Public Finance/Budgeting



Dr. Shih-Kai Huang
Professor

Research Interests:
Risk Perception, Risk
Communication, Warning
Response, Comparative
Disaster Research, and
Quantitative Methodology



Dr. Tanveer Islam
Professor

Research Interests:
Hazard mitigation, GIS
Applications, Vulnerability
Assessment, Community
Resilience, and Social
Media



Dr. Jane Kushma
Professor Emerita

Research Interests:
Disaster Policy and
Management, Non-Profit
Organizations, Volunteer
Management, and Service
Learning.



Dr. Mark Landahl
Associate Professor

Research Interests:
Identity Management,
Preparedness, Incident
Response, Targeted
Violence, and EM Training
and Education



Dr. Scott Manning
Assistant Professor

Research Interests:
Strategic Planning, Public
Policy Analysis, Program
Management, Leadership,
and Organizational Theory
and Behavior



Gorgin Mansourian
Assistant Professor

Research Interests:
Public Policy, Narratives
and Storytelling, Foreign
Policy, Presidential Power,
Environmental Policy, and
Emergency Management



Dr. David McEntire
Distinguished Faculty

Research Interests:
EM Theory, Vulnerability
Reduction, Community
Preparedness, Response
Coordination, Terrorism,
and Homeland Security

Appendix I



Emergency Management Faculty



Dr. Laura Olson
Associate Professor

Research Interests:
Disaster Risk Reduction,
Vulnerability, Community
Recovery, and Climate
Change Adaptation



Dr. Laura Myers
Distinguished Faculty

Research Interests:
Safety Science, Severe
Weather & Climate Studies,
Stakeholder Engagement,
and Community Resilience



Dr. David Thorton
Distinguished Faculty

Research Interests:
Serious Games, Human-
Computer Interactions,
Multimodal and Speech-
Enabled Interfaces, and
Gamification



Dr. Chan Wang
Assistant Professor

Research Interests:
Risk Communication,
Crisis Policy Making, Social
Network Analysis, and
Qualitative Comparative
Research.



Dr. Chongming Wang
Associate Professor

Research Interests:
Evacuation Behavior,
Preparedness, GIS
Applications, and Special
Populations Vulnerability



Appendix I



Additional Faculty (Committee Support & Research Collaboration)

Faculty Name	Faculty Title	Department	Research Interests	Email Address
Dr. Tina Deshotels	Professor	Sociology & Political Science	Inequalities, Crime, Gendered Violence	tdeshotels@jsu.edu
Dr. Sarah Donley	Professor	Sociology & Political Science	Gender Inequality, Qualitative Methods, Organization Culture	sdonley@jsu.edu
Dr. Heidi Dempsey	Professor	Psychology	Emotions, PTSD	hdempsey@jsu.edu
Dr. Jenna Ridlen	Assistant Professor	Biology	Biological Research	jridlen@jsu.edu
Dr. Sean Chenoweth	Associate Professor	Chemistry & Geosciences	GIS, Drone Usage in EM	mchenoweth@jsu.edu
Dr. Mark Sciuchetti	Associate Professor	Chemistry & Geosciences	GIS, Statistical Modeling, Cultural Geography	msciuchetti@jsu.edu
Dr. Kathryn Carlin	Assistant Professor	Chemistry & Geosciences	Anthropology	kcatlin@jsu.edu
Dr. Joshua Lang	Assistant Professor	Chemistry & Geosciences	Environmental Chemistry	jlang@jsu.edu
Dr. Chris Murtagh	Assistant Professor	Criminal Justice & Forensic Investigation	First Responder Stress and Wellness, Crime Mapping and Analysis	cmurtagh@jsu.edu
Dr. Chris McCollough	Associate Professor	Communication	Media Relations, Public Sector Communications	cmccollough@jsu.edu
Dr. Priscilla Wilson	Associate Professor	Counseling & Instructional Support	Mental Health, Multicultural issues, Diversity	pgwilson@jsu.edu
Dr. Christie Calhoun	Assistant Professor	Curriculum & Instruction	Multicultural issues, Mentorship, Emotional Learning	cfcalhoun@jsu.edu
Dr. Cynthia Sneed	Professor	Finance, Economics, & Accounting	Forensic Accounting, State and Federal Fraud	csneed@jsu.edu
Dr. Keith Lowe	Professor	Finance, Economics & Accounting	Data Analytics, Business Statistics	klowe@jsu.edu
Dr. Falynn Turley	Assistant Professor	Finance, Economics & Accounting	Statistics, Quantitative Methods, Retention	fturley@jsu.edu
Dr. Kihyun Kim	Associate Professor	Management & Marketing	MIS, Business Statistics, Strategic Planning	Kkim2@jsu.edu
Dr. Douglas Stephens	Assistant Professor	Nursing	Healthcare Disparity	djstephens@jsu.edu
Dr. Lori Hill	Associate Professor	Nursing	Mental Health, Educational Technology	ljhill@jsu.edu

Appendix I



Additional Faculty (Research Collaboration)

Faculty Name	Faculty Title	Department	Research Interests	Email Address
Dr. Donna Perygin	Associate Professor	Chemistry & Geosciences	Water Quality, Watershed Monitoring After Disasters	dperygina@jsu.edu
Dr. J. Patrick McGrail	Professor	Communication	Copyright, Media Literacy, Critical Thinking	jmcgrail@jsu.edu
Dr. Jennifer Savage	Assistant Professor	Kinesiology	Epidemiology, Sports-Related Issues	jsavage@jsu.edu
Dr. Coco Huang	Assistant Professor	Management and Marketing	Business Crisis, Product Related Strategies	jhuang@jsu.edu
Dr. Xiang Yi	Professor	Management and Marketing	HRM, Strategic Management	xyi@jsu.edu
Dr. Eric Gamess	Assistant Professor	Math, Computer Science	Cybersecurity, Digital Forensics	egamess@jsu.edu
Dr. Arup Kumar Ghosh	Assistant Professor	Math, Computer Science	Cybersecurity, IT Applications in EM	akghosh@jsu.edu
Dr. Kazi Rahman	Assistant Professor	Math, Computer Science	Agent-Based Modeling, Applied Math, Migration	krahman@jsu.edu
Mr. Robert Cochran	Instructor	Math & Computer Science	Statistical Analysis, Correlation	rcochran@jsu.edu
Dr. Stacy Mikel	Assistant Professor	Nursing	Diversity and Inclusion, Mental Health	dmikel@jsu.edu
Ms. Robyn Snider	Instructor	Social Work	Resiliency, Ethical Decision Making	rsnider@jsu.edu
Dr. Jody Long	Assistant Professor	Social Work	Therapeutic Alliance	jlong@jsu.edu
Ms. Hanrong Wang	Professor	Library	Library Skills, Outreach	hwang@jsu.edu
Ms. Paula Barnett-Ellis	Professor	Library	Library Skills Outreach	pbarnett@jsu.edu
Ms. Kim Westbrook	Associate Professor	Library	Library Outreach, Information Literacy	kwestbrook1@jsu.edu
Mr. Sean Creech	Adjunct faculty, Director	Disability Support Services	Disabilities, Disaster Migration	sccreech@jsu.edu
Dr. Serena Gramling	Assistant Professor	Nursing	Diversity and inclusion, mentorship, marginalized students	sgramling@jsu.edu



Appendix II

Doctoral Program Course Descriptions

EM 8742, 8744, 8746 Integrative Seminar (2). On-campus integrative seminar during the first three years of program of study. Specialized topics include how to review and critique scholarly literature and research findings, how to present scholarly work at conferences, and how to write for journal publication. Opportunities for students to exchange ideas, present their work, and interact with faculty. Includes special topics of current interest.

EM 8412 Disaster Management Principles and Practice (3). In depth analysis of disaster management principles and practice, including historical and emergent trends and conditions relevant to the current state-of-the-practice and standards, plus future development.

EM 8414 Interdisciplinary Disaster Theory and Research (3). Examination of the major theoretical topics, questions, and literature that inform the discipline and practice of emergency management, with topics including the nature of disaster, human and organizational behavior under stress, and risk perception and communication. An interdisciplinary approach whereby students think critically about the epistemological assumptions of alternative theoretical perspectives and divergent policy approaches.

EM 8423 Institutional Context and Emergency Management Policy (3). Analysis of political, administrative, and fiscal relationships among governments in the provision of emergency management programs and disaster relief policy in the American political system. Exploration of the role of society in shaping institutions and how these institutions influence and structure public policy making and administration.

EM 8425 Systems Thinking and Applications in Emergency Management (3). Analysis and application of systems thinking concepts and methodologies to problems encountered in emergency management.

EM 8032 Hazards Risk Management and Community Resilience (3). Tools and methods used to manage risk associated with the hazards facing a community; role of emergency management programs in community resilience and sustainability.

EM 8034 Risk-Based Response and Recovery Strategy Development and Operations (3). Explores strategies public officials employ to cope with disasters and their impacts, risk-based operational considerations, and management structures.

EM 8043 Emergency Management Program Management (3). Examines emergency management functional demands and program delivery on a day-to-day basis; considers managerial practices such as communication with the public, the meaning of public service, making effective presentations to governing boards and legislatures, effective meetings and group facilitation, citizen engagement, media relations, and ethics.



Appendix II

Doctoral Program Course Descriptions

EM 8530 Research Design (3). Social science research methods including research design and approaches to inquiry (quantitative, qualitative, experimental, evaluation), the role of theory in empirical research, causal inference, and reporting and reviewing research.

EM 8550 Advanced Data Analysis (3). An examination of statistical and research techniques appropriate to emergency management applied research, including descriptive statistics, probability theory, sampling and statistical inference, hypothesis testing, regression and correlation, analysis of variance, modeling and techniques for data reduction (e.g., factor analysis). Prerequisite: EM 853.

EM 8564 Qualitative Research (3). Examination of qualitative methods that can be applied in the study of disasters; explores a range of activities necessary to perform disaster field research. Prerequisite: EM 853.

EM 8566 Evaluation Research (3). Practical application of appropriate social science research methodology to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector and nonprofit policies and programs, with topics including how to develop an evaluation plan; evaluation types such as process, impact, cost-benefit, and cost-effectiveness evaluations; and management of evaluation projects. Prerequisites: EM 853.

EM 8568 and EM 8569 Directed Research (3). Directed reading and research in fields of special interest. Prerequisite: consent of program director.

EM 8671 Voluntary and Nonprofit Disaster Management (3). Unique considerations of nonprofit disaster management and service delivery, including volunteer administration, donations management, fundraising, and cross-sector collaboration.

EM 8673 Health Care Systems in Disaster (3). An overview of emergency management considerations for health and medical professionals and range of medical, public health, behavioral and psychological problems associated with disaster; incident management processes and organization that integrate health and medical assets into the response.

EM 8675 Risk Communication (3). Examines theories related to risk perception and behavior; principles of risk communication and special communication challenges with diverse audiences; and development of crisis and emergency risk communication plans.

EM 8677 Crisis Leadership and Management (3). Classic and contemporary theories and models of leadership, with emphasis on the role of leadership in crisis situations; principles of crisis management.

EM 8678 IT Applications for Emergency Management (3). Explores the importance of information in emergency management; information requirements and breakdowns; and information technologies applied to crisis and disaster situations.



Appendix II

Doctoral Program Course Descriptions

EM 8679 Spatial Analysis and GIS for Emergency Management (3). Disaster-related applications of spatial analysis techniques; use of GIS software.

EM 8882, 8884, and 8886 Directed Study (3). Independent study under the direction of the instructor. Prerequisite: consent of program director.

EM 8999 Dissertation Research. (Pass/Fail) At least 18 credit hours required; no credit assigned until dissertation has been completed and filed with the graduate dean. Continuous enrollment required subsequent to passing qualifying exams for admission to candidacy. Students may register for 1, 2, 3, 6, or 9 hours per semester. Prerequisite: consent of program director.





Appendix III

Doctoral Program Course Rotation

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
EM 8742 or 8744 or 8746 Integrative Seminar EM 8412 Disaster Management Principles and Practice EM 8414 Interdisciplinary Disaster Theory and Research EM 8032 Hazards Risk Management and Community Resilience EM 8530 Research Design EM 8550 Advanced Data Analysis	EM 8423 Institutional Context and Emergency Management Policy EM 8034 Risk-Based Response and Recovery Strategy Development and Operations EM 8043 Emergency Management Program Management EM 8530 Research Design EM 8564 Qualitative Research (odd years) <i>or</i> EM 8566 Evaluation Research (even years) EM 8677 Crisis Leadership and Management (odd years) <i>or</i> EM 8679 Spatial Analysis and GIS for Emergency Management (even years)	EM 8425 Systems Thinking and Applications in Emergency Management EM 8564 Qualitative Research (even years) <i>or</i> EM 8566 Evaluation Research (odd years) EM 8671 Voluntary and Nonprofit Disaster Management (even years) <i>or</i> EM 8675 Risk Communication (odd years) EM 8673 Health Care Systems in Disaster (even years) <i>or</i> EM 8678 IT Applications for Emergency Management (odd years)



Appendix IV



Doctoral Program Forms

Internal Department Forms

- Plan of Study Form
- Leave of Absence Request Form
- Request for Qualifying Examination Form

JSU Graduate School Doctoral Forms

- Dissertation Committee Form
- Doctoral Proposal Defense Approval Form
- Doctoral Defense Announcement Form
- Doctoral (Dissertation) Defense Approval Form
- Dissertation First Submission Form
- Dissertation Final Approval Form
- Graduate Degree Application (Steps to Apply Online)



SCAN ME

How do I apply for Graduation?

Graduate Students who apply for graduation are required to complete a two-step process. Both steps must be submitted to complete the application process. A non-refundable fee is charged for this process.

Step 1 of 2: Application for Degree in **MyJaxState**.

The Registrar outlines each step of this process on the [Graduation Procedures](#) page.

Step 2 of 2: Graduate Exit Survey

Completion of this survey is mandatory. An email will be sent to your JSU email address during the semester in which you plan to complete.





Appendix V

Scholarships, Fellowships, and Tuition Assistance

The **Royce B. Woodruff Scholarship** is open to JSU Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) students who have successfully defended their dissertation proposal. The scholarship provides funding to support data collection for their dissertation research. Submit your application to the D.Sc. Program Director.

The Natural Hazards Center's [Mary Fran Myers Scholarship](#) is open to students and professionals in natural disasters careers who require financial support for the Hazards Research and Applications Workshop. The program is funded through the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado-Boulder. Past recipients have been from highly specialized studies and careers such as public safety for the disabled and natural disaster preparedness in relation to physical structures.

The Natural Hazards Center's [Quick Response Research Award Program](#) offers limited funding to study disasters immediately following their occurrence, with a particular focus on collecting perishable data.

The [Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education \(ORISE\)](#) administers a broad range of internships, scholarships, fellowships, and research experiences. These assistance programs are available to students and faculty at every level of education and are accessible through an extensive online catalog.

The International Association of Emergency Managers established the [IAEM Scholarship Program](#) to further the education of students studying the field of emergency management. The mission of the program is to assist the profession by developing students with the intellect and technical skills to advance and enhance emergency management. Scholarships are awarded each spring for the following academic year.

State Offices of Emergency Management and State Emergency Management Associations may offer scholarships for students pursuing graduate-level degrees related to Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

[College Sholarships.org](#) provides links to scholarship opportunities with the introduction that "Our A-Z list of student-specific scholarships runs the gamut from commonplace to downright unique scholarships for homeschool students to twins and first-generation students to vegans. Here is the American Melting Pot of scholarships. We believe that this list makes good sense: now, imagine all the ways you could qualify for college scholarships." Please note that there is a listing of scholarships by state of residence and/or state of the educational institution that may yield funding opportunities.



Appendix V

Scholarships, Fellowships and Tuition Assistance

The [Public Risk Management Association \(PRIMA\)](#) sponsors student scholarships that offer travel expenses to the annual PRIMA conference. The PRIMA Student Scholarship Awards are competitive and provide for four students at the conference. Professional conferences are an integral part of student education and offer a collegial arena in which to meet industry professionals as well as keep up-to-date with the latest industry education and information.

The [Lieutenant General Julius Becton Jr. Scholarship](#) is sponsored by the [Institute for Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management](#). The scholarship is available to part-time or full-time students enrolled in an emergency management or homeland security-related field. Students must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and an interest in improving disaster outcomes for underserved and/or marginalized populations.

Please learn more about the [National Science Foundation's \(NSF\) Funding for Graduate Students](#), including the Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants and those specifically for disaster-related research.





Appendix VI

Frequently Asked Questions

What subject matter is covered on the Qualifying Exam?

The Qualifying Exam is divided into two sections. The first section is proctored (closed book) and will cover the courses taken in the Emergency Management Administration and Policy core. Students will be asked questions based on the three courses that they took within this core area. The four courses that could be taken within this core area are: EM 8412, EM 8414, EM 8423, and EM 8425.

The second section covers the courses taken in the Research Methods and Statistics core. Students will be asked questions based on the four courses that they took within this core area. The six courses that could be taken within this core area are: EM 8530, EM 8550, EM 8564, EM 8566, and EM 8568/8569.

How do I study for the Qualifying Exam?

The exam questions are based on the course objectives from the core courses. The best way to study is to revisit your notes and readings from those courses and to be comfortable answering questions based on the course objectives. You are welcome to discuss the format of the exam with professors, study with other students, share notes, and seek advice from those who have taken their qualifying exams already.

When are the Qualifying Exams administered, and how do I schedule one?

Both sections of the Qualifying Exam will be taken together and completed in one semester. Students must submit their Request for Qualifying Exam form to the Doctoral Program Co-Director at the start of the semester in which they wish to sit for the exam. Students must select an available exam date/time from the most current Qualifying Exam Schedule. The [Request for Qualifying Exam Form](#) should be submitted within the first two weeks of the semester in which the student wants to complete the exam.

Who grades the Qualifying Exams?

Qualifying exams are graded by a Grading Committee. The Committee is comprised of at least three faculty members, all of whom teach or have taught at least one of the substantive courses in that area. The Committee members grade the exams separately, without knowing the identity of the student, and then meet to discuss the results. The Committee also utilizes a grading rubric to assist with consistency.

How long does it typically take to hear back?

Students normally receive their final exam results by the end of the semester when they take the qualifying exam. However, it can take longer if committee members are unavailable or if several students take their exams at the same time.



Appendix VI

Frequently Asked Questions

What format is the Qualifying Exam administered in?

As previously stated, the Qualifying Exam is divided into two sections: *Administration and Policy* and *Research Methods and Statistics*. The Administration and Policy section contains ten short essay questions, designed to be completed within a specified time frame under closed-book conditions. It is administered through Canvas, using HonorLock, and will show up as a ten-question quiz in EM 8999. You will have six (6) hours to complete this section of the exam. You will also be given 15 minutes before the exam begins to get set up and complete the validation process with HonorLock. You will also be allowed an additional 30 minutes for breaks. The total test time will therefore be six (6) hours and 45 minutes. You will not have access to your textbooks or notes at any point during this section of the exam. If you have any technical issues, you can contact the help desk, the HonorLock help line, or the Doctoral Program Director.

Once the proctored section is complete, the student will be given access to the Research and Statistics section of the exam. The Research and Statistics section will not be proctored, and students will be allowed to use their textbooks, class notes, and any supporting literature deemed relevant by the student. The Research and Statistics section will involve answering a limited number of short essay questions and/or responding to a research problem or scenario(s). Students will be given seven (7) days to complete this section of the exam. The exam will be accessed and submitted through Canvas.

Upon successfully completing the Qualifying Exam, students will formally select their dissertation chair and schedule a transition meeting, where the student will formally become a candidate for the Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) degree. The transition will be held between the student, Dissertation Chair, and Doctoral Program Director.

What if I need accommodations for my Qualifying Exam?

A student who requires accommodations should contact the Doctoral Program Director. The student will then work with Disability Resources to create a plan for accommodations.

What is the purpose of the Qualifying Exam?

Incorporating insights beyond coursework, the qualifying exam assesses students' capacity to synthesize and structure knowledge gained from the doctoral program—ascertaining whether students possess a foundational depth and breadth of knowledge encompassing emergency management and research methodologies and validating their readiness to advance to the dissertation phase of their academic journey. The comprehensive exams show the mastery needed for a terminal degree and the ability to complete a dissertation.



Appendix VI

Frequently Asked Questions

Are the exams graded as pass/fail?

Typically, the exam outcomes are conveyed through a straightforward pass/fail framework. However, the committee retains the discretion to grant a conditional pass or any other necessary dispositions, which might involve requesting supplementary information from the student. After all, the primary objective of the exam is to meticulously gauge the students' state of readiness.

What happens if a student fails the Qualifying Exam?

Each student has two attempts to pass the Qualifying Exam. In the event of an unsuccessful first attempt, students are permitted to reschedule their second attempt within a six-month timeframe. In some cases, students may be granted a provisional pass with some additional work assigned.

Upon receiving an unfavorable decision, students have several options: a) They can arrange a meeting with the committee chair to collectively review the results and assessments, b) An alternative recourse is to request an appeal in which a student can request the involvement of an additional faculty member to reassess the evaluations, c) Additionally, students may choose to seek the guidance of a faculty member, ideally one from the committee, who can provide support either in the form of aiding exam preparation or contributing to the student's professional growth.

However, if a student does not pass the Qualifying Exam after two attempts, it will result in their dismissal from the program.

What does the Post-Qualifying Exam Transition Meeting cover?

The scope of the transition meeting is dependent upon the student's performance on the Qualifying Exam. On one hand, the Transition Meeting committee—typically the Program Director and the student's formally selected Dissertation Chair—may choose to address any gaps, uncertainties, or inaccuracies apparent in the Qualifying Exam, affording the student an opportunity to show their grasp of the subject matter. On the other hand, the committee may focus solely on the student's future dissertation plans, contextualizing them within the framework of the established knowledge base. This aspect of the transition meeting prompts the exploration of the student's potential research trajectory.

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