

**Doctoral Examination
Public Administration and Management
Fall 2018**

PART I. Please answer one of the following two questions:

Question 1:

A classic debate since the 1940s focuses on how to hold the public bureaucracy accountable to democratic principles. One side argues that broad administrative discretion is unavoidable and that a variety of means must be used to hold public managers accountable, including professional standards, ethics, and a sense of duty to serve the public. This performance-centered perspective essentially would leave the details of management to the experts. The other side argues that democratic accountability requires close direction of the bureaucrats by the people's elected representatives, with an emphasis placed on bureaucrats complying with external controls and allowing very little administrative discretion. What theories or models exist in the literature to help scholars (and practitioners) reconcile these notions of accountability? What does the research suggest are the various obstacles and efforts to safeguard bureaucratic accountability and responsiveness? Has recent research in the field of public administration moved toward one side of the argument or the other? If so, how? Which approach(es) to research do you think would be effective in examining bureaucratic accountability in the public sector?

Question 2:

Discuss various theoretical approaches that have influenced the academic field of public administration during the past fifty years, and analyze how those theories have contributed to or detracted from the development of the field. Recently, some scholars have suggested that the field consider "big questions" in public administration. As a young scholar, what do you see as three big questions for the field? How have scholars previously addressed these questions? Would the study of big questions help the field to develop? Why or why not?

PART II. Please answer one of the following two questions:

Question 3:

Much of government work today involves an amalgam of public, private and nonprofit entities and those employed therein to get the job done. In such circumstances, how can public managers maintain accountability when contracting with others outside the public sector for the conduct of services and programs? Specifically, explain the effects of contracting on political control and democratic governance, undergirding your thoughts by reference to public management scholars and their theoretical perspectives.

Question 4:

Since the 1960s, much of the focus of organizational studies has been on the role of the external organizational environment and its influence on how we structure and manage organizations. A large body of public administration research has explored the distinction between public and private organizations, particularly regarding the question of how the political and legal environments of public organizations makes public management distinct from generic management or management of private firms. Assess the state of theory and research on external organizational environments. What have we learned about the role and influence of the external environment? In what ways is the public sector environment different from the environment in which private firms operate, and what effects do these differences have on public management?

PART III. Please answer one of the following two questions:

Question 5:

Governments operate in open systems, in which change is one of the few constant variables. Important public management and budgeting theories also explain that public agencies and budgets are subject to episodic shocks that can temporarily or forever change each in important ways. Today, governments around the world are subject to substantial disruptions—extremely fractured political systems, often dramatic technology innovations, advancing climate change and incidence of natural disasters, demographic shifts and migratory patterns among others—that slam directly up against highly entrenched bureaucracies. Assess organization theory or theories that offer the most compelling, yet realistic perspectives about how public bureaucracies can navigate such treacherous waters. Provide an example of one public agency, of a central or sub-national government, that has existed or continues to exist amid such disruptions and compare its navigation strategies with tenets of the theory or theories that you conclude to be most compelling.

Question 6:

What is science? What is social science? What are the criteria and procedures that determine whether we can consider an area of inquiry or knowledge acquisition a science? How can the study of public administration be considered a science-based discipline? Explain your answer. Where would the study of public administration fit in Thomas Kuhn's view of the world of science? For example, is there a dominant paradigm for the study of public administration? Are there approaches to inquiry and knowledge development in public administration that lie outside the realm of scientific inquiry? Discuss and describe such approaches, and comment on their value.