

University of Kansas

School of Public Affairs and Administration

PhD Student Handbook

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Mission of the PhD program

The mission of the doctoral program in Public Administration is to provide advanced graduate education in theory and research in order to prepare students for academic and research careers in public administration as well as professional careers in the advanced practice of public administration.

Objectives of the PhD program

Every graduating PhD student will gain advanced understanding of scholarship in two areas:

- The general foundations of the field of Public Administration, consisting of the historical development and current state of Public Administration theory, the place of public organizations in the broader constitutional state, and the place of public management in democratic politics and processes.
- A specialized subfield of Public Administration, consisting of one or a combination of the following: Public Management, Organizational Theory, Law & Public Administration, Human Resources, Budgeting and Finance, Public Policy Analysis and Evaluation, Public Administration Theory and Ethics, and Urban Policy/Politics and Community Building. In extraordinary cases, students, in consultation with their advisor, may propose a self-defined area of specialization.

Within resource constraints, our hope is for each student to gain the following experience:

- Teaching, as a teaching assistant and/or as a lecturer leading an independent section
- Research on a faculty member's project
- Presentation of a scholarly paper at a national conference
- Co-authorship with a faculty member of a refereed article

The School of Public Affairs & Administration is committed to providing each student with honest feedback about scholarly performance and potential. *If you have any question or concern*

about your graduate education or anything else, please ask the Doctoral Coordinator or any member of the faculty. We are here to help!

Graduate school rules

The School of Public Affairs & Administration PhD program operates under the rules, regulations and policies of graduate studies as established by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. These rules are published in the Graduate Catalog of the University of Kansas, and students should familiarize themselves with these rules. Many of these rules are not repeated in this handbook.

Basic PhD degree requirements

The PhD requires a minimum of 75 credit hours, including 66 credit hours of courses and 9 or more hours of dissertation credit. Students may count up to 30 hours of credit earned toward an MPA degree, or equivalent, toward the required 66 hours. Students who enter the doctoral program without having earned an MPA or its equivalent must complete all MPA core courses in SPAA or the comparable 900-level doctoral courses, except they may choose to take either PUAD 835 State and Local Public Finance or PUAD 837 Budgeting and Resource Allocation. The MPA core courses are listed on the next page.

In order to receive the PhD degree, students must meet all requirements identified in the Graduate Catalog; these requirements will not be repeated here. The following discussion outlines the particular requirements of the Public Administration PhD. The requirements for the PhD in Public Administration are based on coursework in the Foundations of Public Administration, a Specialization Field within Public Administration, a Cognate Field, and a Methods Sequence.

I. Foundations of Public Administration. Four of the five courses listed below are required of all PA doctoral students. Substitutions for these requirements require the approval of the Doctoral Coordinator.

- PUAD 932 Seminar in the Intellectual History of Public Administration,
- PUAD 930 Research Seminar in Public Administration and Democratic Theory,
- PUAD 931 Research Seminar in Public Administration and Management,

And either

- PUAD 943 Constitutional Foundations of Public Administration or
- PUAD 949 Law, Courts and Public Policy.

II. Methods. The PA doctorate emphasizes the development of research skills. The public administration field is epistemologically and methodologically diverse, and doctoral students will be encouraged to take several seminars in research design and methodology. Substitutions

for the required courses require the approval of the Doctoral Coordinator. The Methods requirement satisfies Option 1 of the Foreign Language or Research Skills (FLORS) Requirement of the Graduate School.

The program requires:

- PUAD 934 Research Methods in Public Administration
- PUAD 935 Advanced Quantitative Methods in Public Administration

We also recommend:

- PUAD 936 Policy Analysis and Evaluation
- PUAD 937 Qualitative Methods in Public Administration

III. Public Administration Specialization. In consultation with his or her advisor and the Coordinator of Doctoral Studies, each doctoral student shall develop a public administration specialization. The specialization consists of at least three courses. Within the public administration discipline, commonly considered subjects for specialization include the subfields of budgeting, public finance, human resources management, public policy analysis and evaluation, public values and ethics, organizations and organization theory, public law and administration, and urban policy/politics and community building. At least one 800- or 900-level course is available in the School in each of these areas. It is presumed that at least an additional course would come from an independent study. A third course could come from within the School or could be taken outside of the School. Potential cooperating departments include Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Communications Studies, Economics, the School of Education and the Business School. Communication in Appendix B from each of these units indicates their willingness to work with public administration doctoral students.

IV. Cognate Fields. The doctorate in public administration also requires a cognate field in addition the Public Administration specialization. The cognate field is envisioned as a subfield in one of the disciplines listed in the previous paragraph, or a combination of courses from several other disciplines on a common theme, or courses on a policy specialization (e.g., environmental policy, transportation policy, criminal justice policy, and the like)

The Cognate Fields sequence of courses requires the approval of the student's advisor and the Doctoral Coordinator and does not require a comprehensive examination.

V. MPA Core

Students who enter the doctoral program without having earned an MPA or its equivalent must complete all MPA core courses in SPAA or the comparable 900-level doctoral courses, except they may choose to take either PUAD 835 State and Local Public Finance or PUAD 837 Budgeting and Resource Allocation. The MPA core consists of nine courses:

- PUAD 824, 825, 826, or 827 Public Policy

- PUAD 834 Human Resource Management
- PUAD 835 Public Financial Systems
- PUAD 836 Intro to Quantitative Methods
- PUAD 837 Budgeting & Resource Allocation
- PUAD 841 Role, Context, & Ethics of Public Administration
- PUAD 842 Law and Public Management
- PUAD 845 Organizational Analysis
- PUAD 853 Policy Analysis & Evaluation

Comprehensive Written Examinations

School of Public Affairs and Administration doctoral students are required to take two separate written exams: one in the foundations area and the other in their area of specialization. These two exams are referred to as the Comprehensive Written Examinations.

Preparing to take the exams:

- The student must complete the course credit and Ph.D. student residency requirements before registering for a comprehensive written examination.
- Only students who complete the required courses in the Foundations, Specialization, Cognate and Methods Sequence, with a GPA of 3.0 or better may proceed to the comprehensive written examinations.
- Students should consult their advisor to plan a schedule of course work and seminar preparation in anticipation of the comprehensive written examinations in public administration foundations and specializations.
- Students must declare their area of specialization **six months** prior to taking the exams. For their specialization exam, the student will only be required to answer questions in their declared specialization.

Foundations Exam:

The foundations exam will be taken on the next available date after the completion of foundations courses. (For example: if foundations courses are completed in the Spring semester, the student should plan to take the comprehensive written exam in September.)

The foundations exam will be eight hours with students allowed two pages of notes (double-sided page).

The drafters and graders of the foundation exam will be the members of the School of Public Affairs and Administration Ph.D. committee and any other faculty member who would like to participate.

Specialization Exam:

The specialization exam will be taken after successfully passing the foundation exam, on the next available date after completion of specialization courses.

The specialization exam will be eight hours with students allowed two pages of notes (double-sided page).

The drafters and graders of the specialization exam will consist of two or three faculty members within the School of Public Affairs and Administration who have expertise in the student's chosen subfield, and who will serve as member of the student's committee.

Registering for the exams:

The comprehensive written examinations are offered twice each calendar year, in February and September. The exams are given seven calendar days apart, and are generally administered on the second two consecutive Fridays in February and September.

In order to be eligible to take the exams, the student must register by the specified deadline:

For the February exam:

Declare specialization by: August 1

Registration Deadline: December 1

For the September exam:

Declare specialization by: March 1

Registration Deadline: August 1

Students may register by contacting the Graduate Secretary in the School of Public Affairs and Administration. Students must ensure that their Ph.D. summary spreadsheet is complete and up-to-date prior to contacting the School to register for exams. A copy of the spreadsheet is maintained in your student folder; please contact the Graduate Secretary if you need a copy.

On the day of the exam:

- A member of the School of Public Affairs and Administration faculty will be designated as the exam supervisor. The exam supervisor may provide brief remarks or directions to those taking the exam prior to beginning the exam.

- The time allocated for each exam is 8.5 hours, which includes a 30 minute lunch break. The exam will begin promptly at 8:00 a.m., with a lunch break from 12:00 – 12:30 p.m., and conclude at 4:30 p.m. (Note: students may bring their lunch, and utilize the refrigerator and microwave located in the break room.)
- Your exam room has been chosen to provide an environment conducive to thoughtful scholarship and writing. If there is a problem (e.g., excessive noise or disruption), please contact office staff immediately (864-3527) and they will find another space for you. In such an event, your time allotment will be adjusted accordingly.
- The exam is closed-book, but you may bring two pages of notes (four single pages or front and back of two pages). You may not bring any other written materials or computer flash drives into the exam room, and you may not access the internet during the exam period.
- Each student will be provided with a laptop computer, USB drive and a hardcopy of the exam questions. Internet connectivity will be disabled. Students will be asked to respond to each question in a Word document. At the conclusion of the exam, the student should download the completed document onto the USB drive provided by the School. (Students may not bring their own USB drives to the exam.)
- Once you have completed your exam and downloaded exam answers, please take your laptop, USB drive and the question sheet to the supervising Professor's office, where he or she will print out a copy of your answers and determine if everything is complete.

Grading the exams:

- The SPAA Doctoral Director will notify each student of their exam results within two weeks following the second (specialization) exam.
- If an aspirant receives a grade of “unsatisfactory”, the comprehensive written examinations may be repeated but under no circumstances may a student take them more than twice.

The Comprehensive Oral Examination and Advancement to PhD Candidacy

Following the successful completion of the written preliminary examinations, the student must satisfactorily complete a Comprehensive Oral Examination and present a dissertation proposal in order to become a PhD candidate. Oral exams will be held after the completion of all coursework and typically within six months after successfully passing both written examinations. In the Oral Examination, participating faculty may ask the student any question relevant to the field of Public Administration. Typically, the exam focuses on questions arising from the student's written preliminary examinations and a review of the student's dissertation proposal.

The committee for the Final Oral Examination will consist of at least five members (the three members of the dissertation committee plus other members of the Graduate Faculty). At least

one member shall not be a member of the SPAA faculty; this member will represent the Graduate School and must be a regular member of the Graduate Faculty in another school or department. The representative of the Graduate School shall be a voting member of the committee, shall have the right to full participation, and has the authority to report any unsatisfactory or irregular aspects of the examination to the Graduate School. Interested members of the university community may attend the Final Oral Examination and may ask questions.

NB: students and their advisors must ensure that the outside member of the oral exam committee is a member of the University's Graduate Faculty.

If the aspirant receives a grade of “unsatisfactory,” the examination may be repeated but under no circumstances may the student take it more than twice.

Scheduling your Oral Exam and Exam pre-approval (Progress to Degree form)

Students should work closely with their advisor to schedule the date and time for the oral examination. The student and/or chair should notify the School's graduate secretary a minimum of three weeks prior to the oral exam, for the purposes of 1) reserving the conference room for the oral exam meeting and 2) satisfying the requirement of the Office of Graduate Studies that a pre-approval **progress to degree form (PtD) be filed two weeks in advance of the exam.**

The student must choose a committee for the comprehensive oral examination, which must consist of at least five members, all of whom must be members of the graduate faculty. For more detailed information, please see the Doctoral Comprehensive Oral Examinations Policy.

At the oral exam, students will present and defend their dissertation proposal, which should be developed in consultation with the student's advisor.

Completion of the Progress to Degree (PtD) Form following the exam

Upon successful completion of the oral exam, the committee chair certifies this to the Graduate School on a form prepared by the graduate secretary. Please return the completed form to the graduate secretary immediately following the oral exam meeting.

The Dissertation

After passing the Comprehensive Oral Examination, the doctoral candidate must write a dissertation and pass a final oral defense of the dissertation before a dissertation committee consisting of members of the SPAA faculty and a member of the University's graduate faculty from a department other than those in SPAA.

The procedure for scheduling the dissertation defense (“Final Oral Examination,” under University rules) is as follows. After all degree requirements have been met and the dissertation

committee has preliminarily accepted the completed dissertation but before it has been bound, the School requests the Graduate School to schedule the Final Oral Examination, allowing a minimum of two weeks to verify requirements and publicize the examination. At least five months must elapse between the successful completion of the Comprehensive Oral Examination and the Final Oral Examination (dissertation defense).

The dissertation is to report substantial original research in the field of Public Administration. Whether the dissertation satisfies the requirements for the degree is determined by the dissertation committee. A link to the University's dissertation requirements is provided below.

<https://graduate.ku.edu/electronic-thesis-and-dissertation>

Expectations of PhD Students: A Practical Guide

I. An original program of research.

The most basic element of a successful PhD student career is active development of an original program of research. Ultimately the dissertation constitutes the final expression of this program of research. Entering students should not think of their research as something that may be put off until the "dissertation stage." Students' research programs begin the moment they enter the program, and students are encouraged to begin thinking about possible dissertation topics and ideas from their start in the program. Nearly every course requires a final paper; these papers may be used to explore aspects of students' research interests.

There is room, of course, for "experiments" with dissertation ideas that are abandoned for one reason or another. Almost no successful student knows his or her final dissertation idea at the start of the program.

In the process of exploring research ideas and developing a dissertation topic, students should work closely with their advisor/mentor. Some advisors may prefer to direct dissertations that are elements of the advisor's research program; others may prefer to have students develop their own independent dissertation topic. In either case, advisors have a good sense of which ideas have already been "taken," which ideas are likely to lead to "dead ends," which ideas are "marketable," and how to implement ideas in the form of a practical program of research. Although advisors may help in these and many other ways, students should play a very active role in developing their own basic research program.

As a matter of practicality and prudence, students should expect to have a well-developed dissertation idea and research plan *prior to sitting for the PhD prelim exams*.

As a matter of formal School rules, students are required to present a dissertation idea to a faculty committee as the basis for the PhD oral exam, which shortly follows the written prelim exams, as described above.

II. The relationship between "foundations," "major field," and "cognate."

The PhD program is designed to provide intensive training in Public Administration “foundations” and in a “major field.” Additionally, students are required to develop a “cognate” field. Foundations refer to the enduring theoretical issues and questions in the field; thus, on entering the academic job market, students can justifiably claim to be familiar with the core P.A. “canon.”

The student’s major field, by contrast, is his or her primary area of specialization. The standard specializations are Public Management, Organizational Theory, Law & Public Administration, Human Resources, Budgeting and Finance, Public Policy Analysis and Evaluation, Public Administration Theory and Ethics, and Urban Policy/Politics and Community Building. In exceptional cases, students may have a specialization that is not included in this list. However, students should be mindful that academic jobs in the Public Administration market are typically framed within the standard specializations.

The “cognate” field is to be a coherent series of courses *outside* the discipline of Public Administration. Ideally, students, in conjunction with advice from their advisor, will craft cognates that are closely related to their areas of specialization and their research program. For instance, a student specializing in budgeting may develop a cognate in related areas in the School of Business; a student specializing in theory and ethics may develop a cognate in Philosophy; a student specializing in organizational theory and behavior may develop a cognate in Sociology and Psychology.

III. The responsibility of students in relation to advisors

A PhD advisor is crucial to a successful career as a PhD student. The importance of the advisor cannot be overstated. Advisors provide guidance on research ideas, help to provide direction and coherence to the student’s program of independent research, coordinate the dissertation research plan, help to find funding for dissertation research, ensure that a dissertation is successfully completed, and coordinate the job search.

Students should seek out and cultivate a scholarly relationship with an advisor as soon as possible in their student career. The primary basis for selecting an advisor is the advisor’s “fit” with the student’s academic interests. An equally important consideration is the ability of the student and advisor to work together productively.

Although advisors play a critical role in students’ scholarly development, students have an equally significant responsibility to remain in ongoing communication with advisors, respond to advisors’ advice, and report progress, especially during the critical period after the completion of coursework.

IV. Attending Seminars and School Lectures

The Graduate Students of Public Administration Council (GSPA) hosts several lectures each year by top scholars in the field. These include the “Return to the Roost” and “Visiting Scholar”

lecture series. Return to the Roost lecturers are given by scholars who graduated from the KU Public Administration PhD program. Visiting Scholar lectures are given by other scholarly leaders. The scholars who speak in these lecture series meet separately with KU doctoral students to discuss research, career development, and other topics.

V. Financial support and student obligations

The School strives to provide ongoing financial support for PhD students who are making normal progress toward their degree. The level of support may vary and is subject to the School's budgetary exigencies. This section of the Handbook pertains to PhD students receiving financial support from the School.

Unless special arrangements have been made, financial support from the School is contingent on students' working exclusively on PhD coursework and research. This means that funded PhD students are ordinarily prohibited from carrying outside employment.

Financial support typically comes in two forms: Research Assistantships and Teaching Assistantships. When the primary assignment is a Research Assistantship, the student's obligation is to the faculty member who is directing the Research Assistantship; the student should carry out the tasks assigned by the faculty member, up to the number of hours per week allocated for the position. Evaluations of the student's work are the primary responsibility of the faculty member in charge of the position. When the primary assignment is a Teaching Assistantship, the student's obligation is to the School, the faculty member in charge of the course, and the students in the course(s). Evaluation of the student Teaching Assistant is the primary responsibility of the Doctoral Director.

In addition to RA and GTA positions, the School provides limited funding to assist in defraying students' travel expenses to academic conferences. These funds are available on the basis of requests to the Doctoral Director.

Ongoing financial support is contingent on normal progress toward the PhD degree. At the end of each semester, the Doctoral Committee, in conjunction with advice from the School's graduate faculty, assesses each student's progress toward the degree. Ordinarily, "normal progress" is contingent on having no more than one grade of "incomplete" at any time, passing PhD prelim exams by the start of the fourth academic year in residence, successfully defending a dissertation proposal within thirty days of successful completion of the prelim exams, and certification of progress on the dissertation by the advisor. Additionally, students' responsibilities may be revised in light of their ongoing performance of their duties.

VII. The responsible and ethical conduct of research

Research in Public Administration commonly involves the use of "human subjects" as defined by federal regulations and University rules. In order to conduct their research, therefore, many PhD students in Public Administration must gain University certification for compliance with regulations governing human subjects. Please see the University website concerning these regulations and the process for gaining certification:

<http://www.rcr.ku.edu/h scl/>

More broadly, the University requires training in the responsible conduct of research before sitting for comprehensive PhD exams, and the School provides this training as part of our core research methods courses.

VIII. Discrimination, sexual harassment, and accommodations for students with disabilities

The University and the School of Public Affairs & Administration seek to foster a diverse and welcoming learning environment. We prohibit discrimination and sexual harassment of and by our faculty and students. If you have a concern about discrimination or sexual harassment, please speak with the School Director, the Doctoral Coordinator, or any faculty member with whom you feel comfortable talking about the issue, or contact the KU Office of Institutional Opportunity and Access:

<http://ioa.ku.edu/>

Additionally, as part of our effort to foster a diverse and welcoming learning environment, we seek to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and seek to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. If your learning would be enhanced by an accommodation, please speak with the School Director or Doctoral Coordinator and consult with the KU Student Access Services in order to determine an appropriate accommodation:

<http://access.ku.edu/>

Program Alumni

Erin Borry	2013	borry@uab.edu	University of Alabama - Birmingham
Maneekwan Chandarasorn	2013		Ministry of Finance, Thailand
Randy Davis	2011	rsdavis@siu.edu	Southern Illinois University
Wendy Hildenbrand	2016	whildenb@kumc.edu	University of Kansas-Med Center
Susan Keim	2013	skeim.@ku.edu	
Robin Kempf	2014	rkempf@jjay.cuny.edu	John Jay College - CUNY
Leonard Lira	2016		San Jose State University
David Matkin	2007	dmatkin@albany.edu	University at Albany
Cullen C. Merritt	2014	merritt1@iupui.edu	University of Indiana - Indianapolis
Zachary Mohr	2013	zmohr@uncc.edu	UNC - Charlotte
Alisa Moldavanova	2013	fk5503@wayne.edu	Wayne State University
Suzette Myser	2016	suzette.myser@ucf.edu	University of Central Florida
Rob Nye	2009		President, Finger Lakes Community College, NY
Angela Paez Murcia	2013		University de la Sabana, Colombia
Brian Pappas	2014		Boise State University

Shannon Portillo	2008	sportillo@ku.edu	University of Kansas
Tony Reames	2014	treames@umich.edu	University of Michigan
Ed Stazyk	2012	estazyk@albany.edu	University at Albany
Linda Williams	2013		University of Texas-El Paso
Solomon Woods	2014		
Nathaniel Wright	2014	nathaniel.wright@ttu.edu	Texas Tech University

KU resources

Libraries

The KU libraries, taken together, are an outstanding research collection. Most materials of interest to public administration students will be found in the Watson, Anschutz, and Green Law libraries, all of which are on the main campus within walking distance of Blake Hall.

The library catalog may be searched online, and most journals are available in electronic format via the library catalog or the library's electronic databases. Useful databases for article searches are ArticleFirst, JSTOR and Google Scholar.

Center for Research Methods & Data Analysis (CRMDA)

The Center for Research Methods and Data Analysis helps with research projects. They provide service to faculty, students and staff at the University of Kansas.

CRMDA offers consulting and support for all phases of the research process. They can assist in the formulation of plans for data collection, surveys, and pilot tests of survey instruments. After the data collection is finished, they can help with the re-organization of data structures and statistical analysis. See the link below for more information.

<http://crmda.ku.edu>

Office of Multicultural Affairs

The KU Office of Multicultural Affairs provides direction and services for current and prospective students from underrepresented populations. In addition, through collaborative partnerships they offer diversity education programs that foster inclusive learning environments for all students. Their programs and services enhance the retention of successful matriculation of students, while supporting their academic and personal development. For more information, see the following link.

<http://oma.ku.edu/>

Graduate Students of Public Administration Council

GSPA promotes high standards and professional development of graduate students in the School of Public Affairs & Administration at KU.

GSPA Officer Roles

- *Council Coordinator & Communications Officer:* Organize records and announcements
 - Liaison to faculty and administration; all programmatic concerns will be vetted through council rather than this position. GSPA is not a grievance council; however, we will discuss issues that impact the group collectively.
 - Take and publish meeting minutes; maintain other relevant meeting documentation such as proxies
 - Conduct annual survey, including ballot organization for annual elections each spring (Ballot requests in April, meeting in May after semester concludes)
 - Send annual memo to doctoral students
 - Annual registration of GSPA Council with Rock Chalk Central (available when you log onto Rock Chalk Central website using KU ID)
 - Report relevant information from annual survey to doctoral committee; organize annual meeting with them, as needed
 - Collect information of interest for students: when colleagues take comps, dissertation defenses; announce incoming students; announce visiting students, etc.
 - Work with School to organize calendar for events relevant to doctoral students
- *Student Affairs Officer:* Organize student development opportunities
 - Lead on outside speaker
 - Work with faculty to get doctoral students opportunities to meet with visiting scholars
 - Faculty talks/workshops for their work
 - Manage Blackboard site
 - Co-manage doctoral student guide with Student Support Officer
 - Return to the Roost
 - Send Student Affairs Update to Communications Officer for annual memo/ongoing communication
- *Student Support Officer:* Organize information useful for incoming and visiting students
 - Co-manage doctoral student guide with Student Affairs Officer
 - Work with Diana & Holly on recruiting/visiting students; work on outreach to prospective doctoral students
 - Welcome incoming students; share necessary information to move to Lawrence/KU
 - Facilitate KU PhD alumni network
 - Send Student Support Update to Communications Officer for annual memo/ongoing communication
- *Social Events Officer:* Organize social opportunities
 - Monthly happy hours

- Brew to Brew
- Work with faculty who may be interested in hosting a social event or having drinks with doctoral students
- Other ideas – take the lead
- Send Social Events Update to Communications Officer for annual memo/ongoing communication; Social Events Officer responsible for sending out event reminders and circulating details for events
- *Financial Officer:* Organize GSPA finances
 - Acquire funding for outside speakers and events
 - Attend Student Senate meetings, IPSR, ROL; defend funding request, as needed

Elections for GSPA are held at the start of the fall semester and officer positions last until the next election. The current Council Coordinator & Communications Officer will provide information of how to get involved.

<https://rockchalkcentral.ku.edu/organization/gspa>

Useful information regarding resources for students:

KU Graduate Studies offers links to some resources regarding housing, transportation, health-care, and many other things at:

<https://graduate.ku.edu/coming-ku>

Travel funding:

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences provides travel funding for graduate students. Students can apply for an award of \$500. See the link below.

<https://graduate.ku.edu/graduate-scholarly-presentation-travel-fund>

Teaching Support:

The Center for Teaching Excellence provides various programs and resources for faculty members, instructional staff, and graduate students to help enhance their teaching. See the link below for more information.

<https://cte.ku.edu>