TECHNOLOGY, MEDIA AND SOCIETY - DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

The PhD program at CU Boulder’s ATLAS Institute emphasizes out-of-the-box invention and radical inquiry, attracting students whose interests span multiple disciplines. The most interesting research opportunities often encompass multiple domains, and as a thriving academic community of researchers and students who blend engineering, design and art, ATLAS is an excellent fit for those whose vision is not easily tethered to a single academic department.

Structurally, the ATLAS PhD program is like any other research-based doctoral program: a student forms an advisory committee, takes courses, takes a qualifying examination, proposes a dissertation, performs research, writes a dissertation and defends it.

However, unlike most U.S. doctoral programs, the ATLAS PhD program has no set of required courses. Rather, the student, in consultation with her or his advisory committee, identifies expertise that will be needed to perform the research and selects courses to develop the requisite expertise. The curriculum is crafted from one student to the next, based on background and experience.

In limited circumstances, for students interested in pursuing research but not prepared for a PhD, ATLAS is able to offer a research master’s degree. Students admitted to this program work with ATLAS faculty advisors on customized courses of study.

For more information, visit the ATLAS Institute’s PhD Program webpage.

Requirements

Course Requirements

- A minimum of 30 credit hours of courses numbered 5000 or above where students earn a minimum of 3.00 GPA.
- A minimum of 30 credit hours of dissertation credit are required for the degree.
- Students must complete at least one qualitative and one quantitative or other methods course, which may be taken in a variety of departments.

Program Proposal

To maintain good standing in the program, all students must complete their academic program plan/program proposal by the end of the second semester. In general, ATLAS academic plan/program proposals include general research area and the courses to be taken and other research/disciplinarily appropriate activities planned.

Preliminary Examination

To maintain good standing in the program, all students must complete their preliminary examination by the end of the second year. The preliminary examination will demonstrate the student’s preparation for scholarly work in his/her chosen area. Generally, this is a 3–5 page document that is approved by the advisor and the ATLAS graduate committee.

Comprehensive Examination

To maintain good standing in the program, all students must complete their comprehensive exam by the end of the second semester of their fourth year in the program. The comprehensive examination will outline the student’s completed research and proposed research agenda. This includes both an oral and written exam delivered to their dissertation committee and open to the larger community.

PhD Dissertation

Students must write a dissertation based on original research conducted under the supervision of a graduate faculty member. The dissertation must fulfill all CU Boulder Graduate School requirements. After the dissertation is completed, an oral final examination on the dissertation and related topics is conducted by the student’s doctoral committee.