Public Management Field Examination
July 2020

Part A (Answer <u>one</u> of two)

1. One of the premier public administration journals emphasizes the contribution of scholarship to practitioners. Another emphasizes the need for scholarly research to contribute to the theoretical development of public administration. These differing perspectives address the relationship between research and practice in a multidisciplinary field. Using literatures of your choice, please address the degree to which these perspectives produce substantively different research. Are the questions, research designs, data, estimators, conclusions, or other elements of publications in these two traditions significantly different? How did this bifurcation (real or rhetorical) come about? Finally, to what degree has the field of public administration produced rigorous, theory-driven research that can inform practice?

2. Public management scholars often draw from a variety of academic disciplines and fields in their research. What characteristics, if any, make the study of public management distinct? Do these characteristics allow public management scholars to develop theories unique to public agencies, or do they mean that public management largely applies ideas from other fields to the context of public agencies? Identify what you view as two subjects on the forefront of public management research and discuss how public management's relationship to other academic disciplines detracts from or enhances our understanding of governmental bureaucracy, from a theoretical and practical standpoint.

Part B (Answer <u>one</u> of three)

1. Public agencies in a variety of contexts are now required to develop and track strategic goals, performance targets, and other outcomes. Discussion by public management scholars considers citizen perceptions of organizational performance reports, managerial use of performance information, and the development of performance information systems by policymakers. Describe what contemporary empirical research has determined about how each of these groups (citizens, managers, and policymakers) interacts with performance information. From these findings, what are perhaps the biggest strengths and weaknesses of performance information systems? Finally, describe what questions scholars working in this area need to tackle in order to advance knowledge that can develop theory or provide useful information to practitioners.

2. With the goal of making public organizations and programs more effective, efficient, and responsive, governments throughout the world have undertaken various public sector reforms (or large-scale organizational changes). Select several of these reforms, describe the drivers or rationale behind them, analyze how well they have been implemented, and assess their impact (positive and/or negative) on governmental performance. Are these reforms transferrable to other institutional, political, and cultural settings? How can the design and implementation of these reforms be enhanced to increase the odds of their achieving desired results?

3. Prominent public administration scholars like H. George Frederickson, Donald Kettl, Rosemary O'Leary, Lisa Blomgren Amsler, Robert Agranoff, Larry O'Toole, Tom Christensen, and Per Laegreid have observed the field moving towards theories of cooperation, collaboration, networks, implementation, participation, and institution building in an era of governance. This development represents a repositioning of the field to cope with the consequences of a fragmented state, particularly, the need to manage multi-actor and inter-sectoral relationships in addition to hierarchical structures. What evidence is there to support the claim that alternative service delivery arrangements are supplanting direct provision of services by governmental bureaucracies? Which theories help us to understand and explain inter-organizational relationships and what insight into good governance do they offer?

Part C (Answer the following question)

1. A central part of doctoral training is to prepare you to conduct original research and develop your own research agenda. Engaging scholarship from your courses, propose a research design that can contribute new insight to the field of public management. You may select the area of interest (networking and collaboration, performance management, representative bureaucracy, political control of the bureaucracy, organizational behavior, personnel management, administrative reform, or any other topic in which you are well versed). Be sure to include in your answer a review of the pertinent literature, a theoretical discussion that has the potential to push our understanding of public management forward, testable hypotheses derived from theory and research, a basic causal map or path diagram describing how the main variables in your analysis are related (including any mediating and moderating variables), and a study design that considers potential data sources, measures, and methods that could be used to test your proposed hypotheses.