

Public Policy Studies
Policy Brief Form
revised: 6/15/2009

This form is to document that a student in public policy studies has completed the capstone or policy brief requirement for the major. This form is to be completed by the faculty member who has overseen the student writing of the policy brief. A policy brief is normally written during the student's senior year as part of a course, taught by a member of the Public Policy Steering Committee, in which either all students are required to write a brief or students are given the option of writing a brief. (In the latter case, the policy brief may either be part of the course requirements for the author, that is, as a substitute for another course requirement, or may be in addition to the regular course requirements.) Occasionally, in unusual circumstances, a policy brief may also be a product of an Independent Study, or written outside the context of a course (but must be supervised by a member of the Public Policy Steering Committee). In the latter case, the writing of the policy brief does not diminish the number of credits required for the major or minor.

Normally, a policy brief should meet the following requirements. A policy brief is a major research paper, at least 15 pages in length, that includes the following: (1) an executive summary (short, clear overview of #2-6); (2) a clear description of the public problem the policy needs to address; (3) a clear account of the policy history of attempts to address the problem, along with the changes in our understanding of the nature of the problem; (4) a sampling of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature from at least two different disciplines; (5) presentation and development of the principal alternative policy proposals for dealing with the problem, including arguments for and against each; (6) careful explanation of the policy proposal that the author chooses to defend, including a discussion of the proposal's positive and negative implications, such as its intended and unintended consequences, and a strong argument in favor of the policy proposal.

Student _____

Faculty member overseeing the writing of the brief: _____

Course in which the brief is written _____

Title of the brief _____

I affirm that the student has written an acceptable policy brief:

Signature of the supervising faculty member

Date

I affirm that I have received a copy of the student's completed policy brief:

Signature of the Public Policy Studies Program Coordinator

Date

After this form is completed, the student should file it with the Registrar.

Registrar: please send copies of this form to the student's Public Policy advisor and to the Coordinator of the Public Policy Studies program.