



DrPH Program Student Handbook

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The School of Public Health, Georgia State University
DrPH Student Handbook
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Note: The School of Public Health reserves the right to change information contained within this handbook without prior notice.

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Academic Departments and Faculty

The graduate programs in the School of Public Health (SPH) are comprised of two academic departments. Each department is headed by a Department Chair, with faculty assigned to specific concentrations. Academic Departments provide academic mentoring, course offerings and research opportunities for students in SPH.

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- MISSION STATEMENT -

We provide the high quality and relevant teaching, research and service needed to evolve public health practice in a changing world. By investigating the contemporary problems that challenge diverse urban communities, we are preparing the next generation of public health professionals to make a difference through leadership, scholarship and practice in Georgia communities and around the globe.

The Georgia State University (GSU) faculty and staff of the School of Public Health (SPH) is committed to providing a supportive academic environment that promotes the growth and progress of students engaged in graduate studies. The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) program at GSU is designed to provide the knowledge, skills, and experiences to prepare the next generation of public health leaders and chief health strategists to advance public health and health equity. Our program is grounded in the School of Public Health's urban-global focus together with our overarching commitment to health equity, diversity, and inclusion. This handbook contains information that will be helpful to students while enrolled in the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) program. Students are also encouraged to utilize the DrPH iCollege site where additional program information, resources, and documents can be found.

The Doctoral Student Handbook contains the most recent SPH policies and procedures; thus, this handbook supersedes any publication regarding policies and procedures related to the DrPH. This handbook does not replace published college and university requirements and should be used in conjunction with the *GSU Graduate Catalog*¹ and the *GSU Schedule of Classes*² to answer policy and procedural questions regarding your program of study. Students are subject to all policies and procedures of GSU, specifically those listed in the *GSU Graduate Catalog* and the *Student Code of Conduct*³. The faculty and administration encourage you to obtain and keep a copy of the GSU Graduate Catalog for the year in which you were admitted. Updated versions of the SPH Doctoral Student Handbook will be available on the SPH website.

Referenced forms and policies can be found in the Appendices, and original forms may be downloaded from the SPH website⁴ and above-referenced iCollege site.

Background, Accreditation, and Goals

In the 2002-2003 Academic Year, GSU began offering the Graduate Certificate in Public Health (GCPH) to provide an introduction to public health concepts, methods and theory. In January 2004, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program at GSU. The first MPH cohort of students was accepted during the 2004-2005 Academic Year. In June 2007, the MPH program received full five-year MPH *program-level*

¹ GSU Graduate Catalog: <http://www.gsu.edu/enrollment/catalogs.html>

² GSU Schedule of Classes: https://www.gosolar.gsu.edu/bprod/bwckschd.p_disp_dyn_sched

³ GSU Student Code of Conduct: <http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/>

⁴ GSU SPH Website: <http://publichealth.gsu.edu>

accreditation from the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)⁵—making the GSU MPH program the first public university in Atlanta, Georgia to gain that distinction. CEPH is an independent agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit schools of public health and public health programs outside schools of public health. The GSU SPH is was fully accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH).

The Ph.D. degree program in Public Health at GSU was approved by the Board of Regents in March 2011, and the inaugural class enrolled in August 2011. In June 2013, the School began the rigorous process to transition from its MPH *program-level* only accreditation to its new full *school-level* accreditation in 2013. In June 2016, the CEPH Board of Councilors accredited the SPH at GSU at the *school-level* for five years, superseding its MPH *program-level* accreditation. Two months later, the SPH enrolled its first bachelor of science in public health undergraduate students.

The DrPH degree program was approved by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents in March 2018. The Executive Committee of the CEPH Board of Councilors met on June 25, 2018, at which time they reviewed and acted to accept GSU's addition of a DrPH degree offering under its *school-level* accreditation. The inaugural DrPH cohort enrolled in August 2018.

In February 2021, the SPH hosted a CEPH site visit for reaccreditation as a school of public health. The CEPH Board of Councilors will make its reaccreditation decision in fall 2021.

Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision:

Our vision is to be a leading public health research institution dedicated to understanding and solving contemporary health problems. We are the destination of choice for students seeking an affordable and meaningful public health education.

Mission:

We provide the high quality and relevant teaching, research and service needed to evolve public health practice in a changing world. By investigating the contemporary problems that challenge diverse urban communities, we are preparing the next generation of public health professionals to make a difference through leadership, scholarship and practice in Georgia communities and around the globe.

Values:

Integrity, accountability and transparency in our operations, scholarship and inquiry; Respect for all aspects of diversity; Health as a human right; Prioritizing health in all policy decisions; Sustainable healthy environments; Student success

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

⁵ CEPH: <https://ceph.org/>

Applicants should see the SPH website for DrPH program admission criteria and procedures:
<https://publichealth.gsu.edu/academics-student-life/degrees-programs/drph/>

Degree Prerequisite Requirements

PREREQUISITES: PUBLIC HEALTH CORE KNOWLEDGE AREAS

For students admitted to the DrPH program who have not completed a CEPH-accredited bachelor's degree in public health or MPH degree, the following courses will be required as prerequisites:

- **PHPH 7010 Foundations of Public Health**
 - This course may be waived with a CEPH- accredited bachelor's degree
- **PHPH 7711 Epidemiologic Methods I or PHPH 7011 Epidemiology for Public Health**
 - DrPH students are encouraged to complete PHPH 7711 if they have not already completed PHPH 7011
- **PHPH 7150 Environmental Health**

These additional courses may be required upon review of the student's completed graduate coursework and/or professional experience by the Program Director including:

- **PHPH 7017 Fundamentals of Biostatistics I**
- **PHPB 7140 Health Promotion Planning, Administration, and Evaluation**
- **PHPB 7160 Fundamentals of Health Systems, Leadership, and Policy.**

The credit hours earned through these prerequisite courses do not count towards the minimum of fifty four (54) credit hours of doctoral coursework; likewise, any other course taken for the MPH or applied to any other degree program may not count towards the minimum of fifty four (54) credit hours of doctoral coursework.

Doctoral students may waive these MPH Core Courses if they:

- enter the DrPH program with a MPH degree and/or they
- have successfully completed a comparable course(s) with a grade of "B" or better, as documented by an official university transcript. Syllabi for courses may be requested.

Doctoral students who have not completed an MPH program must provide a **Petition for Waiver** form for each of the courses being requested for waiver. The Petition for Waiver is a written statement, along with any evidentiary documentation, that assures the School that the doctoral student has mastered one (or more) of the areas of core knowledge in public health through another manner (e.g. MPH degree, career experience, advanced or seminar coursework that included mastery of core knowledge in public health, etc.). This Petition must be approved by the DrPH Program Director.

Upon approval by the DrPH Program Director, the Petition is then forwarded to the Office of Academic Assistance and Career Services (OAA) for review and approval. OAA may request the input of the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs, the Senior Associate Dean for Academic and Strategic Initiatives, and/or the Academic Affairs Committee. Upon approval by OAA, the student's file and program of study is updated to note satisfaction of the required doctoral program prerequisite(s). Doctoral students are responsible for ensuring their program of study is updated to note satisfaction of the required doctoral program prerequisite courses.

DrPH Curriculum and Degree Requirements

SUMMARY OF DRPH DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: 54 CREDIT HOURS.

The DrPH degree requires completion of a minimum of fifty-four (54) credit hours of coursework, including 33 hours of core courses and 9 hours of elective courses. Students are also required to complete an applied practice experience (3 hours credit), a comprehensive exam, and an integrated learning experience /dissertation (9 hours credit).

1. COURSES REQUIRED FOR ALL DRPH STUDENTS.

Beyond the MPH foundational (core) course prerequisites, all students must complete the DrPH Foundational Core courses. Building on the MPH foundation, the DrPH Foundational Core ensures all students develop a more advanced knowledge-base in public health and public health leadership.

DrPH Foundational Core Courses, 33 credit hours required

COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT HOURS
PPH 8310	Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology	3
PPH 8721	Epidemiologic Methods II*	3
PHPB 9005	Doctoral Seminar: Public Health Policy, Analysis, and Advocacy for Leaders	3
PHPB 9010	Doctoral Seminar: Urban Health, Diversity, and Cultural Competency	3
PPH 9017	Applied Statistical Methods in Public Health*	3
PHPB 9130	Intervention and Evaluation of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention	3
PHPB 9140	Advanced Research Methods	3
PHPB 9150	Public Health Ethics	3
PHPB 9300	Public Health Leadership and Practice	3
PHPB 9310	Public Health Management and Finance	3
PHPB 9320	Public Health Education and Workforce Development	3

*Note: Students who have already completed equivalent coursework in Biostatistics and/or Epidemiology may petition to substitute an alternative advanced level course in the same content area.

2. ELECTIVE DRPH COURSES.

All students must complete nine (9) hours of elective courses, a maximum of two of which can be 7000 (Masters)-level courses. In addition to the public health courses listed below, students may also take other relevant graduate courses offered in the School of Public Health as well as other schools and departments at GSU, with approval of the DrPH Program Director.

DrPH Elective Courses, 9 credit hours required

COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT HOURS
PHPH 7265	Epidemiology and the Prevention of Violence	3
PHPH 7275	Chronic Disease Epidemiology	3
PHPH 7280	Infectious Disease Epidemiology	3
PHPH 7290	Case Studies in Epidemiology	3
PHPH 7365	Epidemiology of Adolescent and Young Adult Health Risk Behaviors	3
PHPB 7425	Foundations of Maternal and Child Health	3
PHPB 7535	Dissemination and Implementation Science	3
PHPB 8250	Health Economics and Policy	3
PHPB 8260	Spatial Population Health I	3
PHPB 8261	Spatial Population Health II	3
PHPB 8285	Social Determinants of Health	3
PHPB 8290	Population Health Informatics	3
PHPH 8320	Human Health and Global Environmental Change	3
PHPH 8330	Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology: Using Information and Data Systems	3
PHPB 8331	Implementation and Scale-Up of Evidence-based Practices for Maternal and Child Health Populations	3
PHPB 8332	Maternal and Child Health Advocacy: From Rights to Justice	3
PHPH 8340	Genetic Susceptibilities and Environmental Health	3
PHPB 8410	Economic Evaluation	3
PHPH 8690	Special Topics in Environmental Health	3
PHPH 8790	Special Topics in Epidemiology	3
PHPH 8830	Advanced Statistical Topics	3
PHPH 8885	Fundamentals of Clinical Trials	3
PHPH 8890	Special Topics in Biostatistics	3
PHPB 9095	Measurement and Outcomes in Social and Behavioral Health	3
PHPB 9120	Theory and Practice in Health and Prevention	3
PHPB 9220	Principles of Health Service Research I: Thematic Background	3
PHPB 9240	Principles of Health Service Research II: Basic Methods	3
PHPH 9270	Environmental Exposure Analysis	3
PHPH 9731	Epidemiologic Methods III	3
PHPH 9741	Advanced Topics in Epidemiologic Methods	3
PHPH 9810	Biostatistical Methods I	3
PHPH 9820	Biostatistical Methods II	3

3. DRPH COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Upon completion of the core DrPH curriculum, students will be required to pass a doctoral comprehensive exam where they demonstrate mastery of the DrPH foundational competencies and the ability to perform high-level applied public health problem solving. Successful completion

of the exam is required before moving forward with the integrated learning experience /dissertation. Additional information is provided later in the handbook.

4. DRPH APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE AND INTEGRATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE/DISSERTATION

Regardless of the amount or level of prior experience, all DrPH students must complete an approved Applied Practice Experience (APE) in which students demonstrate a depth of public health competence that is meaningful for an organization and advances public health practice. All DrPH students must also complete an integrated learning experience/dissertation, intended to engage the doctoral student in a project that will significantly contribute to the existing public health practice knowledge base. These are both discussed later in this handbook.

COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT HOURS
PHPB 9970	Applied Practice Experience	3
PHPB 9980	DrPH Integrated Learning Experience/Dissertation	9

DrPH Foundational Public Health Knowledge

The SPH ensures that all DrPH graduates are grounded in foundational public health knowledge, as required by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). Grounding in foundational public health knowledge is measured by the student's achievement in the learning objectives listed below:

Profession & Science of Public Health

- Explain public health history, philosophy and values
- Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services
- Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health
- List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other community relevant to the school or program
- Discuss the science of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.
- Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge

Factors Related to Human Health

- Explain effects of environmental factors on a population's health
- Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population's health
- Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health
- Explain the social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities
- Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease

- Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health and ecosystem health (eg, One Health)

The SPH validates DrPH students' foundational public health knowledge through appropriate methods, which include the following:

- The SPH verifies students' previous completion of a CEPH-accredited degree (bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree)
- The SPH offers a course, *PHPH 7010 Foundations of Public Health*, that incorporates the learning objectives listed above

DrPH Foundational Competencies

As a doctoral program in applied public health, the DrPH program is designed to produce transformative public health leaders with expertise in evidence-based public health practice, policy, and research. Foundational competencies that must be achieved by all program graduates, as required by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), include:

Data & Analysis

- Explain qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods and policy analysis research and evaluation methods to address health issues at multiple (individual, group, organization, community and population) levels
- Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue
- Explain the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programs and to address a population's health

Leadership, Management & Governance

- Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders and other partners
- Communicate public health science to diverse stakeholders, including individuals at all levels of health literacy, for purposes of influencing behavior and policies
- Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values and potential contributions from multiple professions and systems in addressing public health problems
- Create a strategic plan
- Facilitate shared decision making through negotiation and consensus-building methods
- Create organizational change strategies
- Propose strategies to promote inclusion and equity within public health programs, policies and systems
- Assess one's own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities, including cultural proficiency
- Propose human, fiscal and other resources to achieve a strategic goal
- Cultivate new resources and revenue streams to achieve a strategic goal

Policy & Programs

- Design a system-level intervention to address a public health issue
- Integrate knowledge of cultural values and practices in the design of public health policies and programs
- Integrate scientific information, legal and regulatory approaches, ethical frameworks and varied stakeholder interests in policy development and analysis
- Propose interprofessional team approaches to improving public health

Education & Workforce Development

- Assess an audience's knowledge and learning needs
- Deliver training or educational experiences that promote learning in academic, organizational or community settings
- Use best practice modalities in pedagogical practices

DrPH Concentration Competencies

DrPH graduates attain concentration competencies in addition to the foundational competencies listed above. These competencies relate to the school's mission and to the generalist concentration:

- Critically review, synthesize, and evaluate the scientific literature and present appropriate implications for public health practice, public policy, and further research
- Establish culturally appropriate goals, policies, and communication strategies — recognizing that cultural differences affect all aspects of health and health systems — and infuse them throughout public health planning, operations, and interventions
- Develop expertise in research methods and the ethical conduct of research to address scientific questions regarding health promotion research and practice
- Demonstrate proficiency in epidemiological research by: (1) formulating a research question and/or corresponding hypotheses, (2) developing the study design, (3) participating in data collection, (4) conducting statistical analyses, and (5) interpreting scientific results
- Understand health effects of chemical, physical and biologic agents and the interrelationship of toxicity and dose in defining levels of risk

DrPH Comprehensive Exam

All DrPH students must take a comprehensive exam following successful completion of all foundational core courses with a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average. The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to demonstrate mastery of *many of* the DrPH foundational competencies delivered through the core curricular content and the ability to perform high-level applied public health problem solving. Successful completion of the exam is necessary before moving forward with the Integrated Learning Experience/Dissertation.

The exam will be offered twice yearly, once in late Spring and once in late Fall. The comprehensive exam is a take-home exam that students will be given two weeks to complete.

The exam covers content from PHPB 9300 Public Health Leadership and Practice, PHPB 9005 Public Health Policy, Analysis, and Advocacy for Leaders, PHPB 9010 Urban Health, Diversity, and Cultural Competency, & PHPB 9130 Intervention & Evaluation of Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, PHPB 9150 Public Health Ethics and draws from other courses critical to understanding complex public health issues, including identifying and interpreting relevant data and evidence. The exam will require applied public health problem solving and applying knowledge and skills from across the core curriculum.

To successfully pass the comprehensive exam, the student must demonstrate expertise in expressing ideas with clarity and depth, synthesizing knowledge from public health and related fields, and applying knowledge and critical thinking skills to contemporary complex problems and issues in public health.

A grading rubric will be provided together with the exam. A score of 80 or above (out of 100) is required for passing. Students receiving a score of 70 or above will be able to provide a revision and resubmission. Those scoring less than 70 will be required to retake the exam when it is offered the follow semester.

DrPH Applied Practice Experience (APE)

Regardless of the amount or level of prior experience, all DrPH students must engage in an approved Applied Practice Experience (APE) in which students demonstrate a depth of public health competence that is meaningful for an organization and advances public health practice. The APE must include a significant advanced-level practical experience collaborating with practitioners and providing opportunities to both develop leadership competencies and contribute to the field. The APE must take place in a site external to the school; relevant organizations may include governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial, and for-profit settings. Faculty and site supervisors will assess students on their application and demonstration of leadership competencies as well as additional DrPH program competencies. Students must successfully complete all core DrPH coursework prior to beginning the APE.

Students can identify potential APE sites based on the School of Public Health's existing partner agencies and organizations or their own networks. In either case, all APE sites must be pre-approved by the DrPH Program Director and must have a GSU Memorandum of Understanding in place prior to the start of the APE. Students may also be required to purchase liability insurance for the entire time they are completing the APE. While the APE may be completed at a student's current employer with approval of the DrPH Director, the project and scope of work must be demonstrably separate and distinct from the student's current work responsibilities and the student's current job supervisor cannot be the site supervisor for the APE. All APEs require both a faculty and site supervisor. Evaluations (self and from site supervisor) must be obtained, discussed, and signed off by both supervisors at the midpoint and end of the APE.

APEs require documentation of a minimum of 240 hours of applied work, with at least 120 on-site, direct contact hours. This may be completed over one or multiple semesters and requires the student

to be registered for PHPB 9970. If the APE includes more than one semester, students will receive an In Progress (IP) grade, pending completion of the APE. A scope of work document outlining the project, project deliverables, and associated CEPH competencies must be approved and signed off by faculty and site supervisors as well as the DrPH program director prior to starting the APE. These will be processed with the faculty supervisor at the midpoint and end of APE. All APEs must reinforce and/or assess DrPH foundational competency #11: *Assess one's own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities, including cultural proficiency*. Deliverables for competency #11 include a reflective component comprised of four journal entries, based on guided leadership questions. In addition, each student must select a minimum of four additional CEPH competencies with associated deliverables. See Appendix C for the APE Proposal & Scope of Work form.

DrPH Integrated Learning Experience (ILE)/Dissertation

The dissertation process is intended to engage the doctoral student in a project that will significantly contribute to the existing public health practice knowledge base. The dissertation must present independent thinking, scholarly ability, and a systematic approach to addressing a contemporary public health issue. While the dissertation format will be determined in large part by the nature of the public health problem being addressed, it should reflect the variety of perspectives and approaches needed to analyze and ameliorate major public health problems and include assessment of both policy and practice implications. The DrPH dissertation must demonstrate meaningful synthesis and application of DrPH foundational competencies. For full details about the dissertation processes and procedures, please see Appendix G.

Procedural Matters

Doctoral students will be subject to all the doctoral program completion milestone requirements, details and policies distributed in the SPH Doctoral Student Handbooks. Failure to meet any of these doctoral program completion milestones may result in scholastic dismissal from the doctoral program.

FACULTY ADVISOR AND DOCTORAL DISSERTATION COMMITTEE REQUIREMENTS

As soon as possible after beginning the DrPH Program, students should schedule a meeting with the DrPH Program Director to receive guidance on selecting a Faculty Advisor from the SPH faculty as well as other potential mentors in and outside of GSU. The Faculty Advisor serves as the primary advisor, mentoring the student throughout the program and assisting the student in choosing courses, signing off on official documents, and with overall program and institutional navigation. In the majority of cases, the Faculty Advisor remains unchanged during the student's entire doctoral program; however, changes in the Faculty Advisor are occasionally necessary and are accommodated on an individual basis by the DrPH Program Director. Usually the Faculty Advisor serves as the chair of the dissertation committee, but students may choose a different faculty member as dissertation chair, based on their subject matter expertise, when appropriate.

DrPH students must establish a Doctoral Dissertation Committee following the completion of their comprehensive exam, but some establish the committee earlier in their program of study. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee primarily aids the student in the dissertation process. Additional criteria for the dissertation committee membership may be found in the Dissertation section of this Handbook.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS

DrPH students must meet with their Faculty Advisor for an annual evaluation, each year they are enrolled in the DrPH program. For the annual evaluation process, students are required to:

- Set up an appointment with the Faculty Advisor by June 1st each year.
- One week prior to the scheduled appointment students must submit an Annual Student Self and Faculty Evaluation Form that includes:
 - A summary of the courses and grades taken since beginning the program.
 - A summary of professional scholarship in the last year.
 - A course paper/assignment or another product that demonstrates the student's scientific writing and analysis skills

Faculty Advisors will use this evaluation to assess student progress in several areas: coursework progress and demonstrated mastery of doctoral competencies, professional scholarship, scientific writing, and overall professionalism. DrPH milestones and goals for the next academic year should also be discussed. All students will receive feedback from the DrPH Program Director or designated Faculty Advisor summing up the evaluation ratings and the student's standing with the program.

If progress is unsatisfactory, the student will plan a course of action with his or her advisor and the DrPH Program Director to improve his/her progress. If the student demonstrates unsatisfactory progress on the plan, or during more than one annual review, he or she may be scholastically dismissed from the doctoral program.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENT POLICY AND DEGREE COMPLETION

Students in all graduate programs, including doctoral programs, must maintain enrollment totaling six hours (or more) over three consecutive semesters, including summers. In other words, the total enrollment of the current term plus the two terms preceding it must add up to six hours or more. The status of all students will be checked by the midpoint of each term for compliance with the continuous enrollment requirement. Any student whose enrollment is noncompliant will receive a hold on their registration, which would prevent registering for all current and future classes. Those students will be notified by an e-mail message sent to their official GSU e-mail account. To resume their programs, students with continuous holds on their enrollment must file for re-entry by the published deadline and must enroll at a level sufficient to satisfy the continuous enrollment criterion. That is, their enrollment in the reentry term plus the two terms preceding it must total six hours or more. The maximum required enrollment level for the re-entry term is six hours. For more information on the reentry process, contact the Office of Academic Assistance and Career Services.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE AND COURSE GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

DrPH students must maintain a 3.0 or better institutional grade point average (GPA) to progress from one semester to the next, and must receive at least a grade of “B” or better for each School of Public Health-based course (courses with a prefix “PH” in front of the course number). Any doctoral student earning a grade of B- or below must repeat the public health course or not count the course towards their doctoral program of study. DrPH students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 at the end of a semester will receive a scholastic warning from the School. If at the end of the following six semester hours of enrollment, the student has not achieved a 3.0 cumulative GPA, he or she will be scholastically dismissed from the doctoral program.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS AND TIME LIMITATIONS

The purpose of requiring completion of all degree requirements within a fixed period is to ensure currency, continuity, and coherence in (or residency in) the academic experiences leading to the degree. DrPH students must complete all degree requirements within nine years of the students’ term of first matriculation.

Enrollment for a minimum of three semester hours of credit is required during at least two out of each three-term period following successful completion of the comprehensive exam until graduation. This enrollment must include a minimum of nine semester hours of dissertation (PHPB 9980) credit but may also include other coursework. The student must be enrolled in and successfully complete three semester hours of graduate credit (typically dissertation hours) during the academic term in which all degree requirements are completed. Additional information about time limits and expected doctoral program completion milestones may be distributed by the DrPH Program Director in writing or via email during the doctoral program.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM OF STUDY FORMS

This final Doctoral Program of Study form is completed following the successful completion of the student comprehensive exam and must be approved by the Faculty Advisor and be submitted to the DrPH Program Director and OAA when the student applies for admission to candidacy. OAA uses the form for degree-audit and final approval. The Doctoral Program of Study form must show all courses relevant to the doctoral program (including masters-level prerequisite courses and any courses approved as transfer-credit from other universities), in addition to GSU courses satisfying the minimum DrPH degree requirements. OAA notes the completed courses in the student’s electronic academic evaluation (in PAWS). Students may log in to PAWS, view, and confirm OAA’s to-date notations on their electronic program of study at any time.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

Admission to candidacy for a DrPH student is possible after the successful completion of the comprehensive exam. The following is a complete list of requirements for admission to candidacy:

1. The Faculty Advisor, the DrPH Program Director, and OAA have approved the final program of study.

2. A GPA of 3.0 has been maintained for all graduate courses taken and for all completed courses on the program of study (no course with a grade below B- may be placed on the final program of study).
3. The DrPH comprehensive exam has been passed, and passing scores have been reported to OAA.
4. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee, including any necessary changes in the membership, is confirmed and all its members have been notified of their appointment.
5. The residency requirement has been met.

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

This form must be submitted to OAA as soon as possible following the completion of admission to candidacy requirements. Candidacy begins on the date the form is received by the OAA. After admission to candidacy, a student must register for at least nine (9) hours of dissertation credit during the completion of the degree program. Students planning to graduate the same semester they enter candidacy must be admitted by the published deadline for candidacy during that semester and register for three (3) hours. The student must also meet all other deadlines for graduation in that semester. A student must register for a minimum of three (3) dissertation credit hours in any semester when using University facilities, and/or faculty or staff time. The School shall not accept a dissertation if the student has not been admitted to candidacy for the degree.

TIME LIMIT ON CANDIDACY

All doctoral degree requirements must be successfully completed within nine (9) years of a student's first term of matriculation. The dissertation must be completed within four (4) years following admission to candidacy to qualify for graduation. If a doctoral student's candidacy expires after the first week of classes in the final semester, the student is granted the remainder of the semester to complete degree requirements without special permission of the School. Additional information about time limits and expected dissertation completion milestones may be distributed by the DrPH Program Director or a designated faculty member to candidacy eligible students immediately prior to their admission to candidacy. DrPH students will be subject to all the dissertation completion milestone requirements, details and policies distributed at that time. Failure to meet any of these dissertation completion milestones may result in scholastic dismissal from the doctoral program.

TRANSFER CREDITS FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION

A student may apply a maximum of nine (9) semester hours of approved course credit transferred from another sufficiently accredited institution toward fulfilling DrPH degree requirements. Transfer credits are processed by the School and must be approved by petition. Students requesting to petition for transfer of credits must work with the Graduate Advisor in the Office of Academic Assistance. Approval is at the discretion of the DrPH Program Director—approval is not guaranteed. All credits, including transfer credits, presented for the DrPH degree must have been earned within nine calendar years of the date of degree conferral. No previously taken course with a grade of "B-" or below may be transferred into the doctoral program. Courses transferred-in for the doctoral

degree may not be used in fulfilling the DrPH Public Health Core Course requirements or the doctoral credit-hour residency requirement. Courses taken that were applied to another degree program may *not* be applied to the DrPH degree, but may be transferred in to document completion of a prerequisite.

CREDITS EARNED AT GSU IN EITHER TRANSIENT, NON-DEGREE, OR OTHER-GSU-DEGREE STATUS

A student may apply a maximum of nine (9) semester hours of applicable GSU course credit earned prior to DrPH program admission (while taking public health courses as either transient, non-degree, or other-GSU-degree or program status) toward fulfilling DrPH degree requirements. Credits are processed by the School—petition is not required, but students should confirm their previously completed GSU courses are applicable. Students may work with the DrPH Program Director and the Graduate Advisor in the Office of Academic Assistance to confirm applicability. Approval is at the discretion of the DrPH Program Director—approval is not guaranteed. All GSU credits presented for the DrPH degree must have been earned within nine calendar years of the date of public health doctoral degree conferral. Courses taken at GSU that were applied to another GSU degree program may *not* be applied to the DrPH degree; instead, a student should seek a doctoral course waiver for these courses already applied to another GSU degree program.

DOCTORAL COURSE WAIVERS

Doctoral students may receive a course waiver for any doctoral course already completed as part of another GSU degree program (including the MPH degree program), or if the course content was already learned at another institution or training area, but was not eligible for transfer credit. Students are still expected to take the minimum number of credit hours expected for the DrPH degree at GSU (fifty-four credit hours), but when granted a course waiver, the student may substitute a different graduate level course in order to complete the total fifty-four credit hour requirement of the DrPH program.

No previously taken course with a grade of “B-” or below may be used for course waiver. Courses waived for the doctoral degree may not be used in fulfilling the DrPH Public Health Core Course requirements or the doctoral credit-hour residency requirement.

Students hoping to waive a course and substitute it with another should provide a Petition for Waiver noting each doctoral course they hope to waive, and which course they would like to substitute in its place. The Petition for Waiver is a written statement, along with any evidentiary documentation, that assures the School that the doctoral student has mastered the course material in the course to be waived through another manner (i.e. MPH degree, another GSU degree, etc.). This Petition must be approved by the student’s Faculty Advisor and the DrPH Program Director.

Upon approval by the student’s Faculty Advisor and the DrPH Program Division Director, the Petition is then forwarded to the OAA for their approval. OAA may request the input of the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs, the Senior Associate Dean for Academic and Strategic Initiatives, and/or the Academic Affairs Committee, but that is not required. Once the Director of OAA notes OAA’s

approval, the student's file and program of study is updated to note a waiver of the required course(s) and the substitution of another course taking its place. (MPH-Level Core Course prerequisite requirements for the doctoral program are exempt from this rule, since these prerequisite courses do not count toward the fifty-four (54) credit hour minimum requirement for the DrPH program).

REGISTRATION, ACADEMIC, AND HOLIDAY CALENDARS

The University publishes official calendars⁶ detailing registration times, course meeting dates, final exam times, student holidays, and university closure periods. These can be helpful for any student planning around their doctoral program commitments.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course descriptions for every GSU course, including SPH courses, may be found in the *GSU Graduate Catalog*⁷ and the *GSU Schedule of Classes*⁸, and the GSU Course Description search website⁹.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

If admitted into the [Maternal and Child Health \(MCH\) Graduate Certificate program](#), DrPH students may concurrently complete the MCH Graduate Certificate program requirements and earn the MCH Graduate Certificate while completing their DrPH program of study. DrPH students will be expected to fulfill all the requirements of the MCH Graduate certificate program, including its prerequisite, foundational public health, and MCH core courses. As determined by the DrPH program of study and faculty advisor to the DrPH students, *some* of the MCH graduate certificate core courses *may* count toward the DrPH program of study electives – students should confirm in the DrPH Student Handbook and with the DrPH program director exactly which MCH courses may count toward their DrPH program of study.

MCH Graduate Certificate students complete an applied practice experience (APE) within an MCH-focused organization or community-based setting. The APE learning contract required for APE course registration must identify exactly how MCH Graduate Certificate students will demonstrate the MCH Graduate Certificate competencies in their MCH-focused community-based setting. APE courses completed without an MCH Graduate Certificate-focused learning contract or experience will not count toward the MCH Graduate Certificate. Students earning the DrPH and MCH Graduate Certificate concurrently *may* be able to complete one DrPH-level APE (PHPB 9970) to satisfy both programs, but those students must:

1. Receive advanced permission to do so from both their faculty advisor and the DrPH program director.

⁶ GSU Calendars: <http://registrar.gsu.edu/registration/semester-calendars-exam-schedules/>

⁷ GSU Graduate Catalog: <http://www.gsu.edu/enrollment/catalogs.html>

⁸ GSU Schedule of Classes: https://www.gosolar.gsu.edu/bprod/bwckschd.p_disp_dyn_sched

⁹ GSU Course Description search website: https://www.gosolar.gsu.edu/bprod/bwckctlg.P_DisplaySubjects

2. Identify (in advance) on their APE learning contract how they will demonstrate **both** their MCH Graduate Certificate competencies and their DrPH competencies during their MCH focused APE.
3. Submit a doctoral programs petition formally asking the university to concurrently count their DrPH APE for both their DrPH and MCH Graduate Certificate programs.

In other words, a DrPH APE (PHPB 9970) **cannot** count toward the MCH Graduate Certificate program, even those that were MCH focused, if it was:

1. completed before MCH Graduate Certificate program admission,
2. completed before the DrPH student receives permission to complete a MCH Graduate Certificate and DrPH APE concurrently from their faculty advisor and DrPH program director, and
3. completed before submitting an approved APE learning contract.
4. completed without submitting a doctoral programs petition formally asking the university to concurrently count their DrPH APE for both their DrPH and MCH Graduate Certificate programs.

DrPH students concurrently completing one DrPH-level APE (PHPB 9970) to satisfy both the DrPH and MCH Graduate Certificate program requirements may be asked to

- A) register (and pay) for the *PHPB 7960 MPH Applied Practice Experience* course in order to complete the MCH graduate certificate APE course content, or
- B) complete the *PHPB 7960 MPH Applied Practice Experience* course requirements and assignments related to the MCH graduate certificate as part of their DrPH APE course requirements.

Whether a DrPH student will be required to concurrently register for PHPB 7960 will be determined based on the availability of MCH-focused PHPB 7960 sections during the DrPH student's APE semester, the MCH-related qualifications of the DrPH APE faculty advisor (and their ability to deliver the MCH-related content), and the nature of MCH-related assignments required for APE that academic year (if they can be delivered through the DrPH course or not, e.g. if MCH group activities are required, then the DrPH student may need other MCH-focused students, etc.). The master's-level PHPB/PHPH 7960 cannot satisfy the DrPH-level PHPB 9970 required for the DrPH program of study.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCES OR WAIVER REQUESTS

The School provides avenues for student feedback and communication of student concerns following University policies, published in the section *1050.80 Student Complaints, Petitions for Policy Waivers and Variances, and Appeals* of the Graduate Catalog¹⁰ and in the section *Policy Procedures for Student Complaints, Petitions for Policy Waivers and Variances, and Appeals* of the GSU Student Code

¹⁰ GSU Graduate Catalog: <http://www.gsu.edu/enrollment/catalogs.html>

of Conduct¹¹. This policy outlines the different types of appeals and waivers, and the procedures to follow when making requests at the university-, college- and unit (division)-level. The appeals cover final course grades, admissions, financial aid, course loads, scholastic discipline, course substitutions, and academic regulations. The School assures all students the right to due process in the appeal of a performance evaluation. This due process provides a way of receiving a fair determination of the School of Public Health Appeals procedure.

Student Responsibilities: The student is responsible for stating the basis upon which the student evaluation or grade is questioned and for initiating and maintaining communication and compliance within the framework of the grievance process.

Faculty Responsibilities: Each faculty member is responsible for being aware of the student's right of grievance of an evaluation or grade and for providing the student with guidance to initiate the process. The faculty is responsible for maintaining evaluation materials and providing materials necessary to the grievance process.

Department and Program Responsibilities: The School of Public Health will ensure that the student's expected progression through the program is not interrupted during the grievance process.

Waiver Requests. Students are required to fill out a Student Petition form when requesting a waiver of an established policy and procedure. The form is electronic and is available on the SPH website: <https://publichealth.gsu.edu/office-academic-assistance/forms-resources/> . Please see Appendix B for more information.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FELLOWSHIPS

Conference Attendance. DrPH students interested in obtaining travel funds for professional conferences must receive pre-approval from the Director of OAA. If the Director of OAA is not available, please seek approval from the College Finance Officer (position vacant at time of Handbook publication). Students are allowed to request up to \$250 in assistance if the student is a lead presenter at a conference and \$150 if the student is simply attending a conference, but not presenting. Once a student receives approval to receive the funds for a conference, the student will get further instructions about how to receive the reimbursement.

GSU SPH Biostatistics Consulting Services. Statistical support is available for SPH students, including its doctoral students. This includes assistance with statistics-related aspects of grant proposals, dissertation research study design, data management, statistical modeling, data analysis and interpretation, and utilization of statistical software. Inquiries at any stage of a study are welcome. However, consultation during the planning stage is recommended. In order to request a consultation, students complete an online statistical consultation request form found on the SPH Biostatistics

¹¹ GSU Student Code of Conduct: <http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/>

Consulting Services website.¹² Once completed, students are contacted to schedule a meeting with the most appropriate faculty mentor match.

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning¹³ supports GSU doctoral Teaching Assistants in their role as educators. The center fosters the use of evidence-based learning pedagogies to promote teaching effectiveness, classroom practices and provide a forum for all instructors and TAs to discuss teaching successes and challenges. The CETL seminars, workshops and events are aimed at encouraging Georgia State instructors and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) to think deeply about their teaching, build community around educational innovations, explore new approaches to solving pedagogical problems, and identify tools that open new possibilities in face-to-face and online settings. Seminars are also designed to facilitate idea sharing, brainstorming, community building, and collaborative problem solving, while workshops are more technology focused and often include click-along style instructional approaches.

All CETL workshops and seminars are free to GSU instructors and Graduate Teaching Assistants. Most are catered events. Previous topics included: Teaching Assistants' Challenges in the Classroom I: How to explain content clearly; Developing a Teaching Philosophy; Internet Ethics: Preparing Your Student to Successfully Navigate, Reference, and Contribute to the Internet; The Class from Hell: How to Cope with Student Behaviors that Interfere with Learning.

The University Research Services and Administration Education and Training Program. The mission of the University Research Services and Administration (URSA) Education and Training Program¹⁴ is to provide educational support to the research community—including doctoral students—of GSU. Their main goal is to help researchers and research administrators smoothly navigate the world of research administration from beginning to end. They offer a variety of training opportunities designed to increase knowledge and skills in the areas of grants management, finding internal and external funding sources, research compliance and safety.

GSU Dissertation Grant Program and William Suttles Graduate Fellowship. The purpose of the Dissertation Grant Program¹⁵ is to support dissertation research of doctoral level graduate students at GSU, including those in the SPH. The grant program is designed to help full-time graduate students meet the cost associated with their dissertation work. There is a campus-wide competition for these awards each year.

¹² GSU SPH Biostatistics Consulting Services: <http://publichealth.gsu.edu/biostatistics-consulting-service/biostatistics-consulting/>

¹³ The GSU Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: <http://cetl.gsu.edu/>

¹⁴ GSU URSA Education and Training Program: <http://ursa.research.gsu.edu/ursa/resources/training/>

¹⁵ GSU Dissertation Grant Program and William Suttles Graduate Fellowship: <https://graduate.gsu.edu/fellowships/>

STUDENT HEALTH AND SERVICES

Doctoral students have access to various services around campus, including the Student Health Clinic,¹⁶ Student Health Insurance,¹⁷ mental health counseling and services,¹⁸ recreation center,¹⁹ and access and accommodations testing and services.²⁰

¹⁶ GSU Student Health Clinic: <http://health.gsu.edu/>

¹⁷ GSU Student Health Insurance: <http://sfs.gsu.edu/tuition-fees/student-health-insurance/>

¹⁸ GSU Counseling and Testing: <http://counselingcenter.gsu.edu/students/services/counseling-services/>

¹⁹ GSU Recreation: <http://recreation.gsu.edu/>

²⁰ GSU Access & Accommodatons Center: <https://access.gsu.edu/>

Appendix A

Sample DrPH Course Sequencing Plan

3-YEAR COMPLETION SEQUENCING

Fall, Year One	Spring, Year One	Summer, Year One
PHPB 9300 – PH Leadership & Practice	PHPB 9310 – PH Management & Finance	(Elective)
PHPB 9010 – Urban Health	PHPB 9320 – PH Ed & Workforce Dev.	
PHPH 8721 – Epi Methods II	PHPH 9017 – Applied Statistical Methods	
Fall, Year Two	Spring, Year Two	Summer, Year Two
PHPB 9130 – Intervention & Eval.	PHPB 9005 – PH Policy, Anal., & Advocacy	PHPB 9970 – Applied Practice Experience
PHPB 9140 – Adv. Research Methods	PHPB 9150 – Public Health Ethics	(Elective)
PHPH 8310 – Env. & Occupational Epi	(Elective)	
Fall, Year Three	Spring, Year Three	
PHPB 9980 – ILE/Dissertation	PHPB 9980 – ILE/Dissertation	

4-YEAR COMPLETION SEQUENCING

Fall, Year One	Spring, Year One	Summer, Year One
PHPB 9300 – PH Leadership & Practice	PHPB 9310 – PH Management & Finance	(Elective)
PHPB 9010 – Urban Health	PHPB 9320 – PH Ed & Workforce Dev.	
Fall, Year Two	Spring, Year Two	Summer, Year Two
PHPB 9130 – Intervention & Evaluation	PHPB 9005 – PH Policy, Anal., & Advocacy	(Elective)
PHPH 8721 – Epi Methods II	PHPH 9017 – Applied Statistical Methods	
Fall, Year Three	Spring, Year Three	Summer, Year Three
PHPB 9140 – Adv Research Methods	PHPB 9150 – Public Health Ethics	PHPB 9970 – Applied Practice Exp.
PHPH 8310 – Env. & Occupational Epi	(Elective)	
Fall, Year Four	Spring, Year Four	
PHPB 9980 – ILE/Dissertation	PHPB 9980 – ILE/Dissertation	

Appendix B

Georgia State University Procedures for Student Complaints, Petitions for Policy Waivers & Variances, and Appeals

**GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY PROCEDURES
FOR STUDENT COMPLAINTS, PETITIONS FOR POLICY WAIVERS AND VARIANCES, AND APPEALS**

Students should see the most recent version of the *Georgia State University Student Code of Conduct and Administrative Policies and Procedures* found here:

<https://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/>

Appendix C

Applied Practice Experience (APE) Proposal & Scope of Work

DrPH Applied Practice Experience (APE) Proposal & Scope of Work

Students must complete this form and submit it to the DrPH Program Director and both Faculty and Site Supervisors for approval prior to registering for the APE.

Student Name: [Click here to enter text.](#) GSU Email: [Click here to enter text.](#)
Panther ID: [Click here to enter text.](#) Phone number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Practicum Title: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Proposed Dates: from [Click here to enter text.](#) through [Click here to enter text.](#)

Organization/Agency: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

APE Site Supervisor:

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Title: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Email: [Click here to enter text.](#) Phone number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

APE Faculty Supervisor:

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Title: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Email: [Click here to enter text.](#) Phone number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

APE Description

Background of Organization/Agency: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Background and importance of public health problem to be addressed: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Objective(s) of APE, including key tasks and deliverables: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Demonstration of DrPH Competencies

In addition to the key APE tasks and deliverables outlined above, the APE must address five Core DrPH competencies, including DrPH Competency #11: *Assess one’s own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities, including cultural proficiency*. In the table below, list the Core DrPH Competencies that will be demonstrated over the course of the APE, as well as their associated activities and outputs.

Competency	Activities	Assessment/Outputs
#11: <i>Assess one’s own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities, including cultural proficiency</i>	Journal submissions (4) related to leadership exploration and self-reflection	Journal submissions
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

AGREEMENT

DrPH Student:

I have participated in the development of the APE proposal and agree to the conditions (e.g. learning goals, deliverables, etc.) as specified above. If it is necessary to modify any of the specified conditions, I agree to make the changes known to each of the persons whose signatures appear below. By signing, I also confirm that this APE is separate and distinct from my regular employment and supervisor, if completing at my place of employment.

APE Site Supervisor:

I approve the APE proposal and the associated scope of work, including key tasks, deliverables, and DrPH competencies as outlined above. I will provide on-site supervision and mentorship for the APE, including verification of hours and participation in both the midpoint and end of APE evaluations.

Student signature: _____

Date: _____

Site supervisor signature: _____

Date: _____

Faculty supervisor signature: _____

Date: _____

DrPH Program Director signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Admission to Candidacy Form

**Application for Admission to Candidacy
Georgia State University
School of Public Health**

This form must be submitted to the School as soon as possible following the completion of these requirements. Candidacy begins on the date the form is received by the School of Public Health OAA.

Student Name _____ Panther ID _____

Start Term _____ Expected Graduation Term _____

Degree Program _____ GSU Student Email _____

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

Certification and Recommendation of the School of Public Health: Please check all appropriate items.

- The Faculty Advisor, the DrPH Program Director, and OAA have approved the final program of study.
- The graduate record of the student named above has been examined. An average of 3.0 or greater GPA has been maintained on all completed graduate courses on the Program of Study. No course with a grade below C has been accepted as part of the Program of Study.
- The comprehensive exam has been passed as part of the Program of Study, and a passing score has been reported to the OAA.
- The residency requirement has been met.

We recommend that this student be admitted to candidacy for the degree indicated.

Faculty Advisor Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Doctoral Dissertation Committee Member (SPH Faculty) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

DrPH Program Director Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix E

**Integrated Practice Experience/Dissertation
Proposal Approval Form**



APPROVAL OF DRPH DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

TO: Dean, School of Public Health
 FROM: Dissertation Committee Chairperson

STUDENT'S NAME	PANTHER ID NUMBER
ADDRESS	HOME PHONE
CITY, STATE, ZIP	CELL PHONE
DATE ADMITTED	EMAIL ADDRESS

DISSERTATION TITLE:

The committee of the above-named graduate student has approved a dissertation proposal entitled (abstract attached):

APPROVALS: Signatures below indicate approval of the attached proposal

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON	DATE
COMMITTEE MEMBER	DATE
COMMITTEE MEMBER	DATE
COMMITTEE MEMBER (OPTIONAL*)	DATE
COMMITTEE MEMBER (OPTIONAL*)	DATE
DIRECTOR, DRPH PROGRAM	DATE

*Additional Dissertation Committee members are optional. All Committee members must approve the dissertation proposal

Appendix F

Dissertation Defense Approval Form



RESULTS OF DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Please return to The Office of Academic Assistance & Career Services immediately following the defense.

To: Dean
Dr. Rodney Lyn
From: Dissertation Committee Chairperson
 Click here to enter text.
RE: Results of Dissertation Defense

Student Name: [Click here to enter text.](#) **GSU Email:** [Click here to enter text.](#)
Panther ID: [Click here to enter text.](#) **Phone number:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

The above named candidate defended a dissertation entitled: [Click here to enter text.](#)

The following results are reported:

- Successfully presented
- Successfully presented pending revisions
- Unsuccessfully presented

Committee Comments:

All students are required to upload their dissertations to ScholarWorks to receive a final grade for PHPB 9980. Instructions for uploading will be sent by the Graduate Advisor.

Approvals:

Signatures below indicate acknowledgment of results reported above.

Signature	Date	Signature	Date
Committee Chair (SPH Faculty)		Student	
Committee Member (required)		Committee Member (required)	
Committee Member (optional*)		Committee Member (optional*)	

*Additional Dissertation Committee members are optional. All Committee members must approve the dissertation proposal

Appendix G

Integrated Learning Experience/Dissertation Manual

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The dissertation process is intended to engage the doctoral student in a project that will significantly contribute to the existing public health practice knowledge base. The dissertation must present independent thinking, scholarly ability, and a systematic approach to addressing a contemporary public health issue. While the dissertation format will be determined in large part by the nature of the public health problem being addressed, it should reflect the variety of perspectives and approaches needed to analyze and ameliorate major public health problems and include assessment of both policy and practice implications. The DrPH dissertation must demonstrate meaningful synthesis and application of DrPH foundational competencies. DrPH candidates generate field-based products consistent with advanced practice designed to influence programs, policies, or systems addressing public health.

In addition to primary and secondary research, dissertation formats may include:

- Applied public health research
- Development and analysis of new public health interventions
- Design and implementation of a public health program
- Comprehensive program evaluations
- Policy analyses

The student is ready to initiate the dissertation process after the successful completion of the comprehensive exam, though in most cases, a student will begin brainstorming dissertation topics and preparing for the topic of study prior to the comprehensive exam in partnership with their faculty advisor.

General phases of the dissertation process include:

- 1) Identify a dissertation topic and select the Doctoral Dissertation Committee (DDC)
- 2) Finalize topic and determine the dissertation format
- 3) Develop a written dissertation proposal
- 4) Complete a dissertation proposal meeting with full DDC
- 5) Conduct dissertation scope of work proposed and agreed upon in the proposal meeting
- 6) Develop a written version of the full dissertation document
- 7) Complete a dissertation defense meeting

Identification of a Dissertation Topic and Selection of a Doctoral Dissertation Committee (DDC)

Prior to beginning the dissertation process, the student must meet with their Dissertation chair (typically, but not always, the faculty advisor) to brainstorm dissertation topics and agree upon ideas or areas of focus for the dissertation. The Dissertation Chair must be in the School of Public Health and have Graduate Faculty Status.

Once a topic is identified, the student and Dissertation Chair should discuss the appropriate DDC committee members. Once DDC members are agreed upon, it is the student’s responsibility to seek out the additional DDC committee members to ask about their willingness to serve, and get their approval of the proposal topic. It is important that the persons who serve on the DDC be those faculty members most knowledgeable in the areas of the student’s research. The DDC will consist of a minimum of three members: Two members must be within the GSU SPH and hold graduate faculty status (list maintained by the SPH Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Affairs). The third member may be from the SPH or outside the School/GSU, but must have a DrPH, Ph.D., MD, or other terminal degree and must have demonstrated subject matter expertise in the content area or methodology used in the proposal. The terminal degree requirement may be waived in unique circumstances with a strong rationale provided by the student for consideration of such persons.

Individuals outside of GSU must receive approval from the Dissertation chair and the student will be required to submit the following to the DrPH Program Director:

- The Curriculum Vitae of the individual;
- A brief rationale for the appointment.

The general responsibilities of the DDC and the student are described below.

Responsibilities of DDC:	Student’s responsibilities in working with the DDC:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and provide feedback on the dissertation proposal and attend the proposal meeting • Advise on and regularly review dissertation progress • Provide expertise and constructive feedback on the full dissertation, beyond the specific parts in which the member has specialized expertise • Ensure quality of the final dissertation • Attend the dissertation defense meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate regularly with each member of the DDC, and assume responsibility for initiating these contacts. • Meet with Dissertation Chair at least bi-monthly. • In consultation with the Dissertation Chair, consider meeting with, or at a minimum provide progress updates to, the DDC every three months. • Provide drafts of the dissertation to members at least two weeks in advance of any review deadlines. • Keep in mind that the DDC must review and approve the full dissertation. Therefore, make an effort to keep all DDC members up-to-date on all aspects of the dissertation process

DDC Changes

Sometimes it will be appropriate for the membership of the DDC to change during the course of the dissertation process. When a change is necessary, it is the student's responsibility to update the dissertation contract, and notify the Dissertation Chair, the DrPH Program Director, and OAA.

Dissertation Format

Most DrPH dissertations will follow a "traditional" format, though this can be modified to meet the requirements of more applied research projects.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Statement of Purpose. Introduction should provide an overview of the area of study and a description of how the student's research or project can enhance the field of public health. Theoretical underpinnings should be discussed. This chapter should include the rationale for the proposed study or project and its expected contribution to the existing public health knowledge base.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Literature reviews should be thorough and systematic. The literature review should include a comprehensive review of the student's area of research or study and a discussion of limitations in this body of research.

Chapter 3: Methods. This chapter describes the planned research methodology and/or plan of study/analysis for applied research

Chapter 4: Data analysis and Results. This chapter describes the analytic strategies employed and the rationale for their use. Results are presented. Generally, interpretation of findings is reserved for Chapter 5, but it may be pertinent to highlight the most important findings both in the text and accompanying tables and to draw some simple conclusions in anticipation of more developed discussions in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations. This chapter should include a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and an assessment of both policy and practice implications.

Reference Section. GSU SPH does not prescribe any single style for dissertations as formats differ across content areas of focus in public health (e.g. American Psychological Association, AMA Manual of Style) Students should select a style manual established by their department or committee and consistently follow the guidelines of that manual throughout the entire manuscript (not only for the reference/bibliography sections).

Appendices Section. The Appendix should include protocols, questionnaires, intervention manuals or other relevant documents that facilitated implementation of the research.

Written Dissertation Proposal

Once a student has selected a committee and agreed upon a topic and dissertation format, it will be time to begin writing the dissertation proposal. This document will include Chapters 1 - 3.

The written dissertation proposal should be continuously discussed and shared with the Dissertation Chair throughout the development process, as the depth of the proposal and additional requirements for the proposal are at the discretion of the Dissertation Chair. When a version is approved by the Dissertation Chair, the student should share the proposal with the DDC members and begin to schedule a date for the Dissertation proposal meeting.

Dissertation Proposal Meeting

When the Dissertation Chair certifies that the written proposal for the dissertation is satisfactory, the student should schedule a meeting with the DDC to present the proposal (prospectus meeting or prospectus defense), and receive approval from the committee before moving forward with dissertation development. Specifically:

- The student will provide a complete copy of the proposal (electronic) to all members of the DDC at least two weeks before the prospectus meeting. The proposal must be formatted according to the APA Manual of Style (latest addition) or alternative style approved by the Dissertation Chair.
- The proposal will include all elements below:
 - Chapter 1: Introduction and Statement of Purpose
 - Chapter 2: Literature Review
 - Chapter 3: Methods
 - Reference Section
 - Appendices Section

During the proposal meeting, the student should be prepared to provide a 30 to 60-minute presentation that will provide the DDC with the rationale of the dissertation, the theoretical framework applied (as appropriate), the statement and purpose of the project(s), research questions and hypotheses, and a detailed overview of the proposed methods. The presentation will be followed by an in-depth discussion of what is proposed between the student and DDC.

Please note that different applied approaches may require different and/or additional requirements for the student during the dissertation process, including at the time of the dissertation proposal meeting. This may include faculty posing questions to the student at the dissertation proposal meeting that extend beyond the dissertation proposal itself and include assessing the students' knowledge and skills related to relevant DrPH competencies, based on student coursework and learning experiences.

Approval of the proposal signifies that members of the DDC believe that the student has proposed a satisfactory dissertation plan and that if the student completes the plan as proposed, he/she should successfully pass the dissertation defense. Approval of the proposal requires the agreement of all members of the DDC, as endorsed by their signatures on the appropriate form that is filed with the

OAA (specifically, the Graduate Advisor). If the DDC requests further clarification in the proposal document, the student should submit this information to the DDC in writing. If this supplementary material clarifies the DDC concerns, then the DDC should sign the appropriate form and the Dissertation Chair should send this form to OAA. In rare circumstances, a second proposal meeting may be necessary. This should occur when significant changes to the proposal are required for approval (such as changing study topic, or methods).

Before starting the data collection for the dissertation, the student must receive approval from the GSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) if human subjects are involved in the research project.

It may be important to begin discussion of authorship for the dissertation studies at the proposal meeting. In most cases, the student should be the first author for papers submitted based on the dissertation, and the Dissertation Chair would be the second author. At times, there may be expected authorship for DDC members and other graduate students involved in the work. Early and continued discussions about authorship expectations are encouraged. The Dissertation Chair has the primary responsibility for guiding the dissertation, but the student should consult all members of the DDC to draw upon their expertise in relevant areas.

Conducting Dissertation Research

Institutional Review Board Approval (IRB). All research investigators are responsible for making the initial determination as to whether their research will involve human subjects. When it is not clear whether the research involves human subjects, research investigators must seek assistance from the GSU Office of Research. If it is determined that human subjects are involved, the investigator is responsible for applying for review by the appropriate IRB. This task is accomplished by research investigators preparing a protocol giving a complete description of the proposed research, a detailed application and, when appropriate, a sample of the proposed informed consent form. All forms can be found online: <http://ursa.research.gsu.edu/ursa/compliance/human-subjects/>.

Dissertation Progress

Student dissertation progress will be reviewed as part of the annual evaluation procedures, beginning in the student's third year of the doctoral program or as appropriate. If a student is not making expected progress on the dissertation, this will be noted on the student annual evaluation form. Enrollment for dissertation credit is permitted only after successful completion of the comprehensive exam. Students must register for at least nine cumulative credit hours of *PHPB 9980 DrPH Integrated Learning Experience/Dissertation* prior to graduation.

Final Dissertation Document/ Structure

Students should confer with their DDC about which formatting and style guide the student will adhere to throughout the written document.

The final document should include the following:

1. Title Page
2. Copyright Page
3. Abstract (should not exceed 350 words for a dissertation)
4. Dedication, Acknowledgements, and Preface (each optional)
5. Table of Contents, with page numbers
6. List of Tables, List of Figures, or List of Illustrations, with titles and page numbers (if applicable)
7. List of Abbreviations (if applicable)
8. List of Symbols (if applicable)
9. Chapters
10. References (For Chapter Based Dissertation)
11. Appendices (if applicable)

Dissertation Defense. The final dissertation document must conform to all format and content requirements specified by the SPH. When the Dissertation Chair is satisfied with the completed dissertation, he or she will certify that it has his or her approval and is ready to be read by members of the DDC. The student will then distribute copies of the dissertation to the remaining members of the DDC and will schedule a final oral defense and notify the school. Scheduling of the oral presentation of the dissertation is by mutual agreement of the student and the DDC.

The Dissertation Defense must take place no later than three weeks prior to the grade submission deadline for the semester in which the student plans to graduate—earlier dates are recommended so there is ample time for any necessary revisions. Once a date is determined, the student must schedule a room for the meeting and submit abstract and meeting details to OAA. Subsequently, the SPH will announce the time and place of the defense of the dissertation to the University community. The committee members will have at minimum three weeks to read and evaluate the completed dissertation. Written assent of all committee members is required before a dissertation is approved as ready for a final defense. The Dissertation Chair should send an email to DDC members prior to the defense meeting to determine if there are major concerns that should result in a rescheduling of the defense meeting. If the DDC declines to approve the dissertation as ready for the final defense, the Dissertation Chair will notify the student and the School in writing and the defense date will be cancelled.

The Dissertation Chair will lead the dissertation defense meeting. All members of the DDC are expected to be present at the defense. If they are unable to be present, committee members are expected to notify the chair and the candidate at least ten business days in advance and to make necessary arrangements for remote participation. All members of the DDC must approve the dissertation and the defense, and must certify their approval in writing via the Results of Dissertation Defense form. The chair must sign the Dissertation Defense Approval Form for any member who participates remotely. The SPH will only recommend the award of a doctoral degree when the student has demonstrated mastery of necessary theories, concepts and subject matter, and demonstrated competence in the knowledge and skills defined in the DrPH competencies.

Important Deadlines for Dissertation Defense

6 semester weeks before grades due	Submit final draft to DDC
4 semester weeks before grades due	Submit dissertation defense announcement to MPH Graduate Advisor /OAA
3 semester weeks before grades due	Dissertation defense and Results form submitted to OAA
3 working days before grades due	Upload dissertation to ScholarWorks to receive final grade for PHPB 9980

A student who misses any of these deadlines may have their doctoral graduation postponed to the following semester. Please note that holiday weeks (i.e. spring break, Thanksgiving break, etc.) do not count as semester weeks, and working days do not include weekends or university holidays.

Procedures Following Defense

Within 24 hours following the defense, the Results of Dissertation Defense form must be submitted to the Office of Academic Assistance & Career Services. Once OAA has received documentation that the student successfully passed, the Graduate Advisor will email directions for uploading the final dissertation to ScholarWorks, the university's digital library.

Although uploading to ScholarWorks is mandatory for a final grade, the student can choose to embargo his or her work for up to 2 years at a time, and can extend the embargo if necessary. Once the final document is uploaded, the DrPH Program Director will assign a final grade for PHPB 9980.

Other Considerations

Registering for dissertation hours. All students in the School of Public Health who are involved in writing a dissertation must register for at least three credit hours of PHPB 9980 each semester from the time they begin their dissertation until they have successfully defended. The DrPH Program Director must approve the student's request to register for PHPB 9980 for the first time. For all subsequent semesters, the student may email the Graduate Advisor to request authorization.