

Department of Public and Community Health
School of Public Health
University of Maryland College Park

Ph.D. Degree

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The University of Maryland at College Park (UMCP) is located in Prince George's County, eight miles from the National Capitol Building in downtown Washington, D. C., and thirty miles from Baltimore. It is located in the midst of one of the greatest concentrations of research facilities and intellectual talent in the nation.

Area resources of particular interest to graduate students of the Department of Public and Community Health include the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, the National Agricultural Library, the Health Services Research Library, specific libraries of the various National Institutes of Health, the libraries of five major Universities and three medical schools in Washington, as well as the libraries of the University of Maryland Medical School, the National Center for Health Statistics, and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

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I. The UMCP School of Public Health

The UMCP School of Public Health is one of 13 colleges and schools on the University of Maryland at College Park campus. The mission of the College is to promote and protect the health and well being of citizens of Maryland, the nation and the world through interdisciplinary education, research, public policy and practice. This mission is carried out through the different departments and institutes that compose the School of Public Health including: Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Family Studies, Health Services Administration, Kinesiology, Public and Community Health, and the Maryland Institute of Environmental Health. Additionally, the College has several centers and laboratories including the Center on Aging, the Gliner Center and the Family Service Center, the Cognitive Motor Behavior Lab, the Curriculum and Instruction Lab, the Exercise Physiology Lab, and the Sport Commerce and Culture Lab.

II. The Department of Public and Community Health

The Department of Public & Community Health is an autonomous department within the UMCP School of Public Health. The Department conducts professional preparation programs at both graduate and undergraduate levels, and a service program of classes open to the University at large and continuing education programs. The graduate programs are designed to prepare professional health educators with specific research skills and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical setting.

Resources within the Department include the Public Health Informatics Research Laboratory, the Center for Health Behavior Research, and the Health Behavior Assessment and Intervention Laboratory.

The faculty of the Department is made up of individuals from diverse disciplines with multi-faceted interests. This diversity is a unique strength of the Department and enhances the education graduate students receive. The Faculty supports course work, research and practice experiences in many areas, including public health, stress management, health behavior, health policy, adolescent health, women's health, and minority health.

III. Admission Requirements

To be considered for admission into the doctoral program in Public and Community Health applicants are reviewed with regard to the following criteria:

1. Quality of previous undergraduate and graduate course work (GPA)
2. Strength of GRE scores (taken within the previous five years)
3. Letters of recommendation from 3 persons competent to judge your probability of success in graduate school and that address your academic capabilities and potential

4. Congruence of professional goals with those of the program, as described in your statement of goals and interests
5. Relevance of work and research experience
6. Admission pre-requisites
 - Six (6) credits in Psychology, Sociology or Anthropology
 - Three (3) credits minimum Anatomy and Physiology

Submit on-line (www.gradschool.umd.edu) to the Graduate School. Choose the 4-letter Program Code: PCHL for the PhD degree in Public and Community Health. A **COMPLETE** application includes the following:

- On-line application for admission
- GRE scores, submitted electronically to UM code 5814
- Official undergraduate degree transcripts, with undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 and graduate GPA of at least 3.5
- Three letters of recommendation
- A statement of goals and interests
- A resume or curriculum vitae

Complete applications must be received by **January 15th** for fall admission; there is no spring admission.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Apply early! Applications not completed by January 15th will not be considered.

III. Degree Requirements

General Information

Doctoral students are required to demonstrate competence over material included in 24 credits of core courses, 7 credits of advanced theory and application, and 13 credits of advanced research methods and statistics. Students must successfully complete a written qualifying examination before taking 15 credits in an area of concentration, part of which includes mentored research, and beginning a minimum of 12 credits of independent research to culminate in a doctoral dissertation.

A student must advance to candidacy within five years of admission to the doctoral program and at least one year prior to graduating. To be advanced to candidacy the student must have completed all coursework and have successfully completed the qualifying examination. Doctoral Candidates must then complete the dissertation requirement within a four year period following admission to candidacy. Thus, a student admitted to candidacy any time in the fall semester should be prepared to graduate no later than December four years later.

Doctoral Program Courses

Students are expected to demonstrate competency in the areas covered by the following coursework, prerequisites, co-requisites, and the equivalent of the Department of Public & Community Health Core course work. If prior equivalent coursework has been taken, any combination of the Core courses and co-requisites may be waived without substitution. If Advanced Theory and Applications or Advanced Research Methods and Statistics courses are waived, they must be substituted. Waivers and substitutions must receive approval of the graduate faculty of the Department of Public & Community Health and be in accordance with University Graduate School requirements. The **Request for Waiver/Substitution** form is available on the Department website (www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section).

Program Co-Requisites:

Nine (9) credits of coursework in a minimum of two different health topical areas (e.g., smoking, alcohol, nutrition, etc.) These courses may be completed either prior to or following admission and must be completed prior to qualifying examination. They do not count as doctoral curriculum credits, and do not have to be graduate level courses.

<u>Core Courses:</u> (27 credits)		<u>Credits</u>
HLTH 606*	Foundations of Public Health Education	3
HLTH 665*	Health Behavior I	3
HLTH 670*	Public Health Informatics & Communication	3
HLTH 710*	Methods and Techniques of Research	3
HLTH 775*	Health Education Program Planning & Evaluation	3
EPIB 610*	Foundations of Epidemiology	3
EPIB 650*	Biostatistics I	3
HLSA 601*	Introduction to Health Systems	3
MIEH 600*	Foundations of Environmental Health	3

PhD Advanced Theory & Applications: (7 credits)

HLTH 666 ^P	Health Behavior II	3
HLTH 781	Research Seminar in Public & Community Health	1
** , ***	Elective in Advanced Theory & Applications	3

PhD Advanced Research Methods & Statistics: (13 credits)

HLTH 652 ^P	Quantitative Research Methods I in Public Health	3
HLTH 653 ^P	Quantitative Research Methods II in Public Health	3
HLTH 711 ^P	Advanced Methods of Research	3
HLTH 782	Research Seminar in Public & Community Health	1
** , ***	Elective in Advanced Research Methods & Statistics	3

Key to Asterisk and Letter Codes:

*Core requirement that can be waived without substitution if this course or equivalent is already completed

** Maximum of 9 credits of independent study including mentored research experience

*** Maximum of two 400-level courses in program. All electives must be taken subsequent to admission.

P = Has a pre-requisite requirement

HLTH 665 is a pre-requisite for HLTH 666

EPIB 650 or equivalent is a pre-requisite for HLTH 652

EPIB 650 or equivalent and HLTH 652 are pre-requisites for HLTH 653

HLTH 710 is a pre-requisite for HLTH 711 and HLTH 775

Qualifying Examination

Must be taken either in the semester the student is completing her/his coursework or the next semester. Students must pass all sections of the In-School and Take-Home examination before beginning the 15 credits of individualized research, before advancement to candidacy, and before commencement of dissertation research. The Graduate Program Director must have approved a completed program of study before the Qualifying Examination. Refer to the Qualifying Examination Guidelines for additional information (available at www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section).

Individualized Research Plan: (minimum 15 credits)

HLTH 783	Research Seminar in Public and Community Health (1 credit)
HLTH 898	Independent Study/Mentored research experience (3-6 credits)
** , ***	Area of concentration (at least two 600+ level courses)

Advance to Candidacy

Once the Qualifying Examination and the individualized research plan are completed, doctoral students must apply for Advancement to Candidacy.

Independent Doctoral Dissertation Research: (minimum 12 credits)

HLTH 899	Doctoral Dissertation Research
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IV. Completing Coursework

Unless waivers or substitutions are granted in writing from the Department, it is expected that all required courses will be completed. All requests for a waiver or substitution will be evaluated by the Graduate Program Director.

Students who have had previous graduate coursework equivalent to a Core course may request a waiver without substitution for that course. Other required courses might also be waived, but require substitution with faculty approval. Electives cannot be waived. To request a waiver, complete the form titled REQUEST FOR WAIVER/SUBSTITUTION OF GRADUATE COURSE REQUIREMENT available from the Department website (www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section). All requests for waivers must be made no later than the semester in which the first 12 credits are completed.

Requests to substitute another course, either within or outside the Department, for a required course will be considered when a student can demonstrate that such a course is equivalent to the course in question and can provide a rationale to justify taking the alternative course. To request a substitution, complete the form titled REQUEST FOR WAIVER/SUBSTITUTION OF GRADUATE COURSE REQUIREMENT available from the Department website (www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section). Requests for substitutions may be made at any time during the program; however, plan ahead and make requests early.

Program Plan of Study

The PhD Program Plan is intended to help students work out a time line for completing the PhD degree. The PhD Program Plan template (www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section) should be filled out and/or updated by the advisor and the student during their pre-registration advising meetings. Once completed, the student will need to give a hard copy of the updated program plan to the Graduate Studies Director in order to obtain clearance to register for classes. **Students and their advisors are responsible for keeping the student's program plan up to date. If it is not up-to-date, students risk not graduating when planned or expected.**

In addition to maintaining an up-to-date program plan, students will also be required to meet annually each spring (until students pass qualifying exams) with their advisor, the Graduate Studies Director, the Chair, departmental faculty who have had the student in class, and any faculty who have served as mentors to the student. The primary purpose of these meetings is to make sure the student is making satisfactory progress. Faculty will provide an assessment of the student's progress and make recommendations for improvement, if needed. The meetings are intended to be somewhat formal so students should be prepared to discuss their progress in the program and goals for the following academic year. Additionally, students should feel free to bring up any issues, questions or concerns they have about the program and/or their progress in the program.

V. Applying for Advancement to Candidacy

Once the Qualifying Examination and the individualized research plan are completed, doctoral students must apply to the Graduate School for advancement to Doctoral Candidacy. The form to be used for this is: APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY. The form is available on the Graduate School website (www.gradschool.umd.edu), click of Forms and Publications. Once completed, the form should be signed by your advisor and then submitted to the Department Graduate Studies Director for approval before sending it to the Graduate School.

VI. Dissertation Requirements

General Information

All Doctoral degree students are required to complete a dissertation [HLTH 899 Doctoral Dissertation Research (12 credits)]. All dissertation credits will be given an Incomplete Grade until the research is completed. The student should enroll under the section number of his /her dissertation advisor. No student may formally propose a dissertation topic until advancement to candidacy.

A. Designing the Dissertation Research Project

1. Selecting A Dissertation Topic: The Dissertation Research project begins with a question about some (any) aspect of health, health behavior, or health education. The purpose of the dissertation research study is to attempt to find the answer to that question.

2. Developing The Dissertation Proposal: After selecting a dissertation topic, a written proposal that details the research plan and exactly how it will be conducted is submitted. Guidelines for this proposal are available on this website under the GRADUATE section.

3. Requesting Approval Of The Dissertation Proposal: The proposal must be approved by a committee of five faculty members, at least three of whom must be Department of Public and Community Health faculty. All must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Maryland. One will be the dissertation advisor who will chair the committee. The Graduate Dean's Representative must be outside the Department of Public & Community Health and be a member of the University's Graduate Faculty.

Since this committee must approve the research, it is a good idea to determine the members early and seek advice in designing the research. Committee member selection should be done in consultation with the dissertation advisor.

When the proposal is ready for final review, schedule a meeting with the dissertation proposal committee. At this meeting the proposal may be approved as is, totally rejected, or require certain changes. In the latter two cases, the proposal would need to be

reworked for another review. (NOTE: The limit is two formal proposal meetings.) Schedule the proposal meeting at least ten working days in advance and post a **DEFENSE MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT FORM** (www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section). Also send an email announcement with abstract to the Graduate Studies Director for distribution to all Department faculty and graduate students, who may attend this meeting. At that time, provide a copy of the complete proposal to each member of the committee.

When the proposal is approved, the members of the committee will sign a **PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM** (www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section).

The dissertation advisor will then forward this and an approved copy of the proposal to the Department Graduate Studies Director to sign and place in your file.

If the research project involves human subjects, IRB approval must be obtained after it has been approved by the dissertation proposal committee. For complete details, see: **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO RESEARCH/PROJECTS INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS** available on the University of Maryland website (www.umd.edu – look under Research).

Soon after the proposal is approved and human subjects approval is obtained (and no later than 90 days prior to the final defense), students should request Graduate School approval of their dissertation examining committee. Ideally this should be the same committee that approved the dissertation proposal. Again, all must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Maryland. One of these five will be the dissertation advisor who will chair the committee. The Graduate Dean's Representative must be outside the Department of Public & Community Health and be a member of the University's Graduate Faculty. The form to be used for this purpose is titled **NOMINATION OF THESIS OR DISSERTATION EXAMINING COMMITTEE** and on the Graduate School website (www.gradschool.umd.edu – look under Forms and Publications).

B. Completing The Dissertation Research Project

After the dissertation research project has been approved, proceed with the research. It is expected that the conduct of the project will be according to what was approved by the committee. Before making any changes in the nature of the research, approval of your dissertation committee is required. Once the research is completed, the student is required to prepare a written report to cover all aspects of the project.

C. Defending The Dissertation

Once the committee has been approved by the Graduate School, schedule the oral defense meeting. (Note: No dissertation defense meetings can be scheduled during the last week before regular Graduate School deadlines for submitting all requirements.) A **DEFENSE MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT FORM** must be posted at least 10 working days in advance (available at www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section). Also send an email announcement with abstract to the Graduate Studies Director for

distribution to all Department faculty and graduate students, who may attend this meeting. At this time, be prepared to give each member of the committee and the Graduate Studies Director a finished copy of the dissertation manuscript to review. Any member of the faculty or any graduate student may attend this meeting.

Three things can happen at the oral defense:

- the dissertation can be accepted as is
- the dissertation can be rejected
- the dissertation can be accepted on the condition that certain changes be made within a specified time frame.

When final approval is granted, the committee will acknowledge this in writing and notify the Graduate School of the same.

The final dissertation must be submitted electronically (check for deadlines at www.gradschol.umd.edu) to the Graduate School at <http://dissertations.urni.com/umd>. A copy of the cover page and the abstract must be provided to the Department of Public and Community Health.

D. Dissertation Proposal and Defense Meetings

Current Departmental regulations call for all dissertation research projects to comply with the following:

(1) A formal announcement containing the student's name, date and time of the meeting, title of the research study, an abstract and names of committee members must be posted on the Graduate Bulletin Board ten (10) working days prior to a proposal meeting and ten (10) working days prior to a final defense;

(2) All proposal and defense meetings take place in the Departmental Conference Room 2387 SPH;

(3) The guidelines for the general content of the proposal are available on the department website (available at www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section). The content of the final dissertation is determined by the nature of the study and the student's dissertation advisor.

VIII. Summary of PhD Regulations

General Program:

- Each student is expected to propose an overall program plan by completion of 12 hours of coursework.
- Courses taken at a consortium school (<http://www.consortium.org/main.asp>) are considered UMCP courses if taken for academic credit. (Contact the Consortium

Coordinator, Room 1113 Mitchell Building, 314-8239 to obtain "Permission to Enroll in the Consortium Program" form).

- Courses taken at a non-consortium school may be part of a Ph.D. program if: (1) the student has received prior approval to take the course; and (2) the course is taken for academic credit.
- A student has five years to be admitted to candidacy.
- A student has four years to complete the dissertation after admission to candidacy.
- Although the University has a time limit policy that allows for extensions, only those students making progress in the program (determined by the advisor and Director of Graduate Studies) will be supported for such a time limit extension.
- Any request for subsequent time limit extensions will require substantiation of the need and the reason for requiring such an extension; more than one extension is extremely rare.

Dissertation:

- Nomination of the dissertation examining committee must go to the Graduate School 90 days before the dissertation defense.
- A dissertation committee consists of five members, including the chair and at least 2 other members from the Department of Public & Community Health. The approved proposal format is available from the Department website (www.sph.umd.edu/dpch - look under the GRADUATE section).
- A three chapter format is required for the proposal, with complete versions of the introductory and methods chapters.
- There is no overall page limit for the full proposal.
- Complete reference lists for the materials submitted, and all instrumentation proposed must accompany the proposal.
- All meetings, proposal and defense, will be open to graduate students and faculty
- All dissertation meetings must occur with appropriate announcement 10 working days in advance, and take place in the Departmental Conference Room, 2387 SPH Building (or appropriate alternative location).
- To announce a meeting, an announcement must be on the graduate bulletin board at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Also 10 days in advance, email the Graduate Studies Director an announcement with abstract which will be forwarded to department faculty and graduate students listservs.
- All five committee members must be present at the final defense meeting.

IX. Program Checklist

Following is a checklist for the Ph.D. degree program which outlines, in sequence, a series of recommended steps for completing the degree program. This checklist may be used as a guide to help plan activities throughout the program. Each year, the Graduate School publishes a listing of key dates that a student is responsible for meeting (available at <www.gradschool.umd.edu>).

1. If eligible, submit a written request for waiver and/or substitution of any required course to the department Graduate Studies Director prior to completing 12 credit hours in the program.
2. Before completion of the first 12 credit hours, prepare a program plan to be signed by your advisor and submitted to the Graduate Studies Director for your student file.
3. Complete all coursework. (Note: Advising is mandatory every semester; to be cleared for registration requires a newly-approved copy of your proposed plan of study, each semester.)
4. Meet with the Graduate Studies Director to arrange for qualifying examination.
5. Complete qualifying examination.

6. Meet with faculty advisor to develop the individualized research plan.
7. After successfully passing qualifying examination and the 15 credits of individualized research, submit application for advancement to candidacy to the Graduate School, through the Department.
8. In consultation with dissertation advisor, develop dissertation proposal.
9. Establish dissertation proposal committee and submit dissertation proposal to committee for approval.
10. Hold proposal meeting.
11. If human subjects will be involved, obtain Department and University human subjects approval.
12. Establish dissertation examining committee and submit form requesting appointment of doctoral dissertation examining committee to Graduate School (at least 90 days prior to your defense).
13. Complete research and prepare dissertation manuscript. Then, submit manuscript to dissertation advisor for review and revise as necessary.
14. Apply for diploma. **THERE IS A SPECIFIC DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING THIS FORM.** Consult the Graduate School Deadlines at <www.gradschool.umd.edu>
15. Submit dissertation manuscript to other members of your dissertation committee for review and revise as necessary.
16. Schedule and complete oral defense of doctoral dissertation.
17. Revise dissertation as necessary.
18. Present dissertation topic and findings at Graduation Luncheon.
19. Submit your dissertation electronically (<http://dissertations.umi.com/umd/>) to the Graduate School, and an abstract and cover page to the Department of Public & Community Health Office. (Be sure to meet the Graduate School DEADLINE - look on www.gradschool.umd.edu).