
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
AND HEALTH SERVICES

**Doctor of Public Health Handbook
Policies and Procedures***

*The George Washington University
School of Public Health and Health Services*

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**Dr. Marsha Regenstein
DrPH Program Director
2121 K Street, NW
Suite 210
Washington, DC 20037
202-994-8662
marshar@gwu.edu**

*University and School policies and procedures as outlined in the SPHHS Graduate Student Handbook apply to DrPH students.

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Environmental and Occupational Health Program Director	Health Behavior Program Director	Health Policy Co-Program Directors	Global Health Program Director
Dr. George Gray 2100 M Street, NW, Suite 203 Washington, DC 20052 202.994.7993 ggray@gwu.edu	Dr. Karen McDonnell 2175 K Street, NW, Suite 700 Washington, DC 20052 202.994.6823 kmcdonne@gwu.edu	Dr. Anne Markus & Dr. Paula Lantz 2021 K Street, NW, Suite 800 Washington, DC 20037 202.994.4139 (Markus) armarkus@gwu.edu 202.994.6568 (Lantz) plantz@gwu.edu	Dr. Sarah Baird 2175 K Street, NW, Suite 200 Washington DC 20037 202.994.1331 sbaird@gwu.edu

The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree offered by The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services (GWU SPHHS) prepares professionals to assume national and global leadership positions in environmental and occupational health, global health, health behavior, and health policy. The field of public health provides unique insights into the complex interrelationships between health, politics, and human development. It enables professionals to address public health issues by marshalling research and analytic skills to develop innovative approaches to understand health and to promote and advocate for improved health outcomes.

The DrPH degree is the terminal degree in the professional discipline of public health. Consistent with this advanced professional orientation, the DrPH degree prepares future public health leaders to apply critical thinking and rigorous research methods to the complex practical problems facing practitioners and policy-makers in public health practice.

The DrPH degree is designed to both follow and promote the principles of academic public health practice. As noted in a recent Association of Schools of Public Health publication, public health practice is "...the strategic, organized, and interdisciplinary application of knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to perform essential public health services and other activities to improve the population's health." Academic public health practice is "...the applied, interdisciplinary pursuit of scholarship in the field of public health." Recent events sharply illustrate the need for public health professionals who can provide the leadership to expand and strengthen the US and global public health systems. The DrPH degree is designed to prepare professionals with the necessary skills to provide this leadership.

University and School policies and procedures as outlined in the SPHHS Student Handbook apply to DrPH students.

Admissions Requirements

SPHHS offers DrPH degrees in four specialty fields: environmental and occupational health; global health, health behavior; and health policy. An important first step for all prospective applicants to the DrPH degree is to discuss their interests and goals with the respective department program directors, who serve as academic advisors for students entering the four DrPH specialty areas (see above).

The DrPH degree is open for admission fall semester of even-numbered years (e.g., 2012, 2014, 2016). The DrPH degree is designed as a part-time program for mid-career professionals who are seeking to become public health leaders. Applicants who have completed a master's degree (e.g., an MPH) from a program accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) are strongly preferred for admission to the DrPH program. Students accepted to the DrPH program who have not completed an MPH may be required to take additional courses beyond the 60-credit minimum requirement to satisfy pre-requisites associated with doctoral level public health studies.

Completed applications must be received **on or before January 15th in admitting years, (e.g., 2012, 2014, 2016)** to be considered for admission for the Fall cohort.

Only completed applications, with all supporting materials, will be considered for admission. All applicants complete one application through SOPHAS, the on-line, national application for CEPH accredited schools of public health (www.sophas.org). ***All applicants, without exception, must submit GRE scores (no older than 5 years) to SOPHAS.***

All international students asking for an F1 visa must prove English proficiency. There are a variety of ways to do this.

1. The applicant has received a degree (not enrolled in a program, but the degree is already conferred) in the United States. College or graduate programs are accepted.
2. The applicant has successfully passed the TOEFL. Generally, SPHHS requires that the applicant receive a minimum score of 600 on the paper-based exam or 100 on the internet-based exam.
3. The applicant is a citizen of a country where English is the official language.

If the student is international but does not require an F1 visa from GW (for example, the student is on an H1-B visa or is now a permanent resident), SPHHS does not require documentation of English proficiency as part of the admissions process. The program director, however, may request proof of English proficiency for consideration prior to admission.

Applicants are required to include a personal statement. The personal statement must be specific about the reasons for application and particular interest in attending SPHHS. Applicants must include their academic and career interests and professional and volunteer experiences as they relate to the specialty field. The statement should also

include a description of current skills and future goals related to research, leadership, and problem solving in public health.

Applicants must include the choice of one of the four DrPH specialty fields and address the reasons for their interest in the program. All completed applications will be reviewed by the respective program director who oversees the program at the departmental level; competitive applicants will be interviewed in-person or by telephone. Applicants will receive an admission decision by **March 15**. Once the Declaration of Intent has been signed and returned to our Admissions Department, accepted students will receive an email confirmation including the attachment “Next Steps for Enrolling Students” This document provides instructions on how to secure a GW email address and GW ID card (called GWorld), register for classes, and other important details to be completed before registration and orientation.

Registration Procedures

It is necessary to remain an active student in the DrPH program. More information and detail is available in the SPHHS Graduate Student Handbook- <http://sphhs.gwu.edu/academics/studentresources>:

- DrPH students **MUST** register *every* fall and spring semester until they have successfully completed all DrPH program requirements, including defense, final approval and submission of their dissertation. Registration must be consecutive or you will be considered out of status. DrPH students may register for classes during summer sessions, but are not required to do so to be in status
- DrPH students who fall out of status by not registering for each fall and spring semester will be withdrawn from the program and required to petition for re-admission through the SPHHS Office of Admissions.
- DrPH students are expected to be actively engaged in fulfilling the requirements for the DrPH degree. At a minimum, students must register for one credit hour in the fall and spring semesters. This minimum can be met through course enrollment or leadership credits, or through registration in Dissertation Research, Continuous Enrollment, or Continuous Research. The selection of the type of registration depends on the student’s progress in the program.
 - Dissertation Research: DrPH students who have successfully completed the dissertation proposal phase may register for up to 12 Dissertation Research credits. Only students who have successfully defended their dissertation proposal may register for Dissertation Research credits. Students may register for one or more Dissertation Research credits per semester. A minimum of 6 Dissertation Research credits is required to complete the DrPH program.

- Continuous Enrollment: DrPH students who have completed their requirements for Dissertation Research credits may register for “Continuous Enrollment.” Continuous Enrollment registration must be approved by the DrPH Program Director. The University charges a nominal fee for Continuous Enrollment. Once approved, students may continue to register for Continuous Enrollment throughout the remainder of their DrPH program, consistent with overall program requirements related to the 8-year time limit for the degree. Continuous Enrollment is most commonly used by students in their last semester or two of the program, as they complete the dissertation and prepare for the dissertation defense. To be eligible to register for Continuous Enrollment, the student must demonstrate he/she is making significant progress toward completing the degree.
- Continuous Research: DrPH students who have met the coursework and leadership credit requirements, but have not yet successfully defended their dissertation proposal, must register for one credit of Continuous Research, which requires a tuition payment of one full credit hour. Continuous Research credits cannot be used to satisfy any of the credit requirements for the DrPH; they do not substitute for the 6-12 Dissertation Research credits that are required for graduation.
- Students have the option of taking a Leave of Absence for up to 2 semesters while enrolled in the DrPH program. Students must apply for a Leave of Absence by completing a petition during the fall or spring registration period; the petition must be approved by the department program director and the DrPH Program Director. Each Leave of Absence must be separately approved and can be taken sequentially or at different times while in the program. Students must officially register for Leave of Absence to stay in status. The University charges a nominal registration fee to remain enrolled during a Leave of Absence.
- Students are responsible for completing and submitting all registration materials as necessary. Students are advised to periodically review their registration actions to make certain they are accurate and current. Students should retain copies of all registration materials and paperwork submitted to the Registrar’s office, SPHHS Office of Student Affairs, or their Advisor.

Professional Enhancement Activities

Doctoral degree students in the School of Public Health and Health Services are *required* to attend eight hours of professional enhancement activities during their program. Professional enhancement activities supplement the academic curriculum and help prepare students to participate actively in the professional community. Students can fulfill this requirement by attending workshops, seminars, or other relevant professional meetings, which are often held at SPHHS and in the metropolitan

Washington, DC area. The Professional Enhancement form is available at www.sphhs.gwu.edu/academics/studentresources/studentforms

Timeline for Completion of the Program

DrPH students **must** complete all requirements of the degree program within 8 years. Students are expected to be actively engaged in their course of study throughout their time in the DrPH program.

The program is designed for students, including those enrolled in the program on a part-time basis, to complete all requirements and graduate within four years. Students generally complete coursework over a two year period that includes a summer semester. Most students sit for comprehensive exams soon after completing coursework. Students use an additional 18-24 months to develop dissertation proposals, conduct doctoral research and defend their dissertations.

Students who cannot complete the program in a 4-year period should consider the following guidance in planning their course of study:

- Comprehensive exams must be successfully completed within 4 years of entering the program. (Most students will complete coursework within 2 years and take the comprehensive exam soon after).
- Students must successfully defend their dissertation proposal by the end of the 5th year. (Most students will defend their proposal within the third year in the program).

DrPH Core Competencies

Doctoral study is a multifaceted and complex challenge that begins with thoughtful planning and deliberate execution with the guidance of faculty members. The experience culminates with the awarding of the DrPH degree to candidates who successfully complete these requirements as outlined in this document. Progression through the DrPH degree requires dedication, commitment, and persistence.

Upon completion of the DrPH degree, students will demonstrate ability in the following core competencies:

- Analyze a public health problem and determine appropriate sources of data and methods for problem identification, program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Relevant courses: PubH 6249, 6260, 8417, 8419, 8422.
- Develop and analyze hypotheses that can be tested by appropriate quantitative or qualitative research designs and methodologies. Relevant courses: PubH 6247, 6252, 8416, 8417, 8422.

- Synthesize and evaluate research conducted by others. Relevant courses: PubH 8402, 8416, 8417, 8422.
- Design strategies to accurately and effectively describe public health, economic, administrative, legal, social, political, and cultural implications of different health policy options. Relevant courses: PubH 6247, 8402, 8417, 8419.
- Design grant proposals to address public health problems. Relevant courses: PubH 8416, 8422.
- Present public health data and research syntheses to scientific and professional audiences and the public. Relevant courses: PubH 8407, 8422.
- Defend the feasibility and expected outcomes of different policy options and transform them into organizations, plans, processes, and programs. Relevant courses: PubH 6247, 8402, 8417, 8422.
- Appraise the dynamic forces that contribute to cultural diversity and develop responsive plans and programs. Relevant courses: PubH 6247, 6252, 8402, 8417.
- Assess the determinants of health and illness, factors that contribute to health promotion and disease prevention, and factors that influence the use and cost of public health services in a population. Relevant courses: 6249, 6252, 6260, 8419, 8422.
- Develop and defend a budget statement that presents programmatic fiscal requirements to achieve stated objectives. Relevant courses: PubH 8402..
- Describe the theory of organizational structure and its relation to professional practice. Relevant courses: PubH 6001, 6247, 8416.
- Support a culture of ethical standards of conduct in the research process and within organizations and communities. Relevant courses: PubH 8402, 8416, 8422.
- Lead a team of diverse professionals reflecting shared values and vision to achieve specific objectives. Relevant courses: PubH 8402.

DrPH Specialty Fields

The GWU SPHHS offers the DrPH degree in four specialty fields and each has specialty field competencies. See Program Guides for each program:

<http://sphhs.gwu.edu/academics/graduateprograms/doctoralprograms>.

1. Environmental and Occupational Health, offered by the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health
2. Global Health, offered by the Department of Global Health
3. Health Behavior, offered by the Department of Prevention and Community Health

4. Health Policy, offered by the Department of Health Policy

Role of DrPH Program Directors

Each DrPH specialty field has a director who provides doctoral students with guidance through the pre-candidacy phase. For most students the program director will serve as the primary academic advisor. The program director may also become the chair or serve as a member of the Dissertation Research Committee and provide further guidance throughout the dissertation.

The role of the program director is pivotal to the student's progression through the pre-candidacy phase. The program director role supports the School of Public Health and Health Services' commitment to student development by:

- Guiding the student in the development of a program of study that lists and sequences courses, including the selection of elective courses, and selection of professional leadership development work that enhances the dissertation research experience during the candidacy phase. The program of study is based upon the student's entry knowledge, skills, and experiences; his or her career objectives; and the expectations of the applicable field for scholarly professionals. Any variation from the program of study requires the approval of the program director.
- Mentoring the student in his or her development as a scholar and professional, including addressing interpersonal skills as necessary.
- Guiding the student in later semesters to consider the focus of the dissertation research, exploring various potential topics and questions, and weighing the feasibility, advantages, and disadvantages of each.
- Guiding the student's development in the core competencies for doctoral students: knowledge of foundations, critical literature reviews, inquiry and research methods, clarity of written and oral thought, professional development, technological skills, and knowledge of the specialty area.
- Setting clear expectations and guiding the student toward achieving a high level of quality in all written work.
- Guiding the student's preparation for the comprehensive examination.
- Serving as a resource as the student selects a dissertation committee chair and committee members.

DrPH Phases:

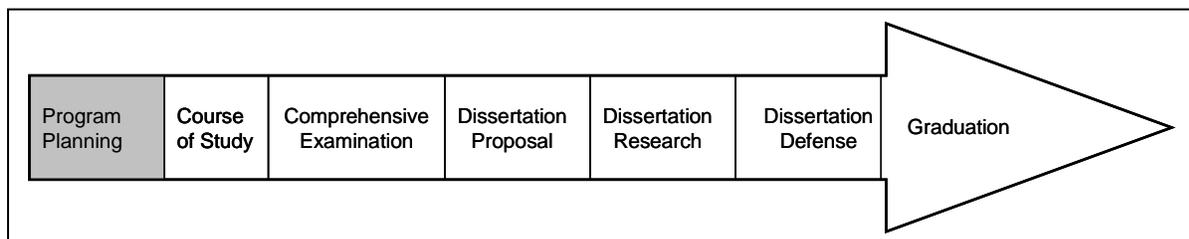
The Doctor of Public Health Degree is divided into two phases: pre-candidacy and candidacy. During pre-candidacy a student completes the requirements through the Comprehensive Examination. Upon satisfactory completion of the requirements associated with pre-candidacy, the student moves to the candidacy phase.

The DrPH Program is designed as a four-year program, enabling part-time and full-time students to complete all requirements of the program, including the pre-candidacy and candidacy phases, within a four-year period. Students must complete all requirements of the doctoral program within eight (8) years. Students are expected to make meaningful progress toward completion of the degree requirements throughout their time in the program.

DrPH students are expected to pursue opportunities to contribute knowledge to their field of study through peer-reviewed publications. DrPH students routinely collaborate with faculty as co-authors on publications and also sometimes use class assignments to conduct research and analysis for a publishable research report. These opportunities are available throughout all phases of the student's doctoral experience.

PRE-CANDIDACY PHASE:

1. Program Planning: The Program of Study



Careful program planning with the program director is the important first step. The student and program director will discuss the student's interests, goals and experiences, and prepare a Program of Study. The director must approve the Program of Study. All courses must be listed on the Program of Study Form and any deviation from this original plan requires the director's approval and signature. A time line for completion of coursework will also be discussed and agreed upon.

Each specialty field requires a minimum of 60 credits. Graduate credits may be transferred to the DrPH degree if applicable. This is done through petition which is processed through the Admissions & Recruitment Office and requires approval from the course instructors and the program director's. GWU SPHHS Graduate Petition forms can be accessed from:

<http://sphhs.gwu.edu/academics/studentresources/studentforms/index.html>

There are three categories of doctoral, didactic courses associated with the pre-candidacy phase:

1. Required foundational courses and research methods (20 credits)
2. Required specialty field courses (6-9 credits, depending on specialty field)
3. Specialty field elective courses (11-14 credits required, depending on specialty field)

Note- Additional elective coursework may be completed pre- or post-candidacy with approval of the Advisor. While the Dissertation phase requires a minimum of 6 credits, up to 12 credits may be taken. However many students will opt to take additional coursework and will not need more than 6 dissertation credits. For further information please consult with your Advisor/Program Director.

Program of Study- courses are listed below:

1. REQUIRED FOUNDATIONAL COURSES AND RESEARCH METHODS – IDENTICAL FOR ALL SPECIALTY FIELDS			
20 CREDITS			
<i>BEGIN PLANNING FOR YOUR DISSERTATION DURING YOUR FIRST SEMESTER</i>			
Course	Title	Credits	Semester Proposed
PubH 8401	Foundations of Public Health Leadership and Practice – Doctoral Seminar	3	Fall Year 1
PubH 8402	Leadership in Public Health Practice and Policy	2	Spring Year 2
PubH 8416	Doctoral Research Methods I: Study Design and Evaluation	3	Fall Year 1
PubH 8417	Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis Prereq: PubH 8416	3	Spring Year 1
PubH 8418	Doctoral Research Methods II: Statistical Analysis Prereq: PubH 8416	3	Summer Year 1
PubH 8419	Measurement in Public Health and Health Services Research Prereq: PubH 8418	3	Spring Year 2
PubH 8420	Doctoral Research Methods III: Advanced Analysis and Dissemination Prereq: PubH 8417, 8418	3	Fall Year 2
2. REQUIRED SPECIALTY FIELD COURSES			
EOH (6 CREDITS)			
Course	Title	Credits	Semester Proposed
PubH 8411	Advanced Topics – Principles of Environmental Health Risk Science – Doctoral Seminar Prereq: PubH 6121, 6123, 6126	3	Year 1 or Year 2
PubH 8412	Advanced Topics – Environmental and Occupational Health Research and Practice. Prereq: PubH 6122	3	Year 1 or Year 2
HEALTH BEHAVIOR (6 CREDITS: STUDENTS MUST CHOOSE TWO OF THESE COURSES)			
Course	Title	Credits	Semester

			Proposed
PubH 8408	Advanced Topics – Health Behavior Research and Practice Application – Doctoral Seminar OR	3	Year 1 or Year 2
PubH 8409	Advanced Topics – Health Communications Research – Doctoral Seminar OR	3	Year 1 or Year 2
PubH 8410	Advanced Topic – Social Marketing Research and Practice Application – Doctoral Seminar Prereq: PubH 6571, 6572	3	Year 1 or Year 2
HEALTH POLICY (9 CREDITS)			
Course	Title	Credits	Semester Proposed
PubH 6330 or PubH 6335	Health Services and Law or Public Health and Law	3	Year 1 or Year 2
PubH 8404	Advanced Topics- Health Systems and Health Policy Research – Doctoral Seminar (Prereq: PubH 6305 and 6315 or approval by instructor)	3	Year 1 or Year 2
PubH 8405	Advanced Topics –Advanced Health Economics Research – Doctoral Seminar (Basic microeconomics required; Prereq: PubH 6340 or approval by instructor)	3	Year 1 or Year 2
GLOBAL HEALTH (6 CREDITS)			
Course	Title	Credits	Semester Proposed
PubH 8406	Advanced Topics – Health Research in the Global Arena – Doctoral Seminar	3	Year 1 or Year 2
PubH 8407	Advanced Topics – Health Leadership in the International Setting – Doctoral Seminar	3	Year 1 or Year 2
3. REQUIRED SPECIALTY FIELD ELECTIVE COURSES			
EOH (14 CREDITS) HEALTH BEHAVIOR (14 CREDITS) HEALTH POLICY (11 CREDITS) GLOBAL HEALTH (14 CREDITS)			
Course	Title	Credits	Semester Proposed
TBD	Advisor Approval		TBD
4. PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP COURSES – ALL SPECIALTY FIELDS (6 CREDITS)			
Professional Leadership Course Form Required: http://sphhs.gwu.edu/staticfile/SPHHS/Academics/Graduate%20Programs/Doctoral/Leadership%20Credits%20Plan.Feb%202011.pdf			
	Title	Credits	Semester Proposed

PubH 8413	Research Leadership	Varies	TBD
PubH 8414	Policy/Management Leadership	Varies	TBD
PubH 8415	Instructional Leadership	Varies	TBD

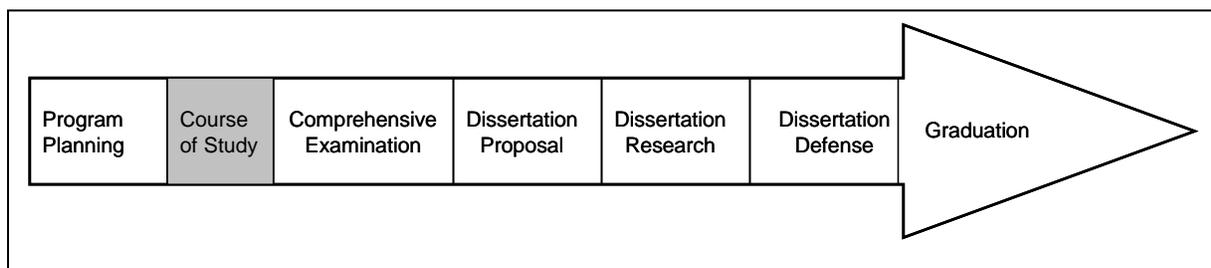
Professional Leadership- Students must complete 6 credits of professional leadership that can be completed before or after the pre-candidacy phase. Leadership credits are taken on a credit/no-credit basis. Faculty must submit a grade change form (obtained from Student Records) to indicate credit/no-credit for all professional leadership credits prior to being cleared for graduation. All leadership credits must be approved in advance with the Program Director agreeing on the number of credits expected to be awarded in advance. Along with registration, this form must be completed:

<http://sphhs.gwu.edu/staticfile/SPHHS/Academics/Graduate%20Programs/Dctoral/Leadership%20Credits%20Plan.Feb%202011.pdf>

Three categories of professional leadership may count toward fulfilling these requirements:

1. Research Leadership- Students may assist faculty or other professionals in the field on a defined research project.
2. Policy/Management Leadership-Students may fulfill professional leadership credits working on a specific project in the workplace that is outside the student’s ordinary job responsibilities.
3. Instructional Leadership- Students may serve as a Teaching Assistant for one or more courses.

2. Course Enrollment

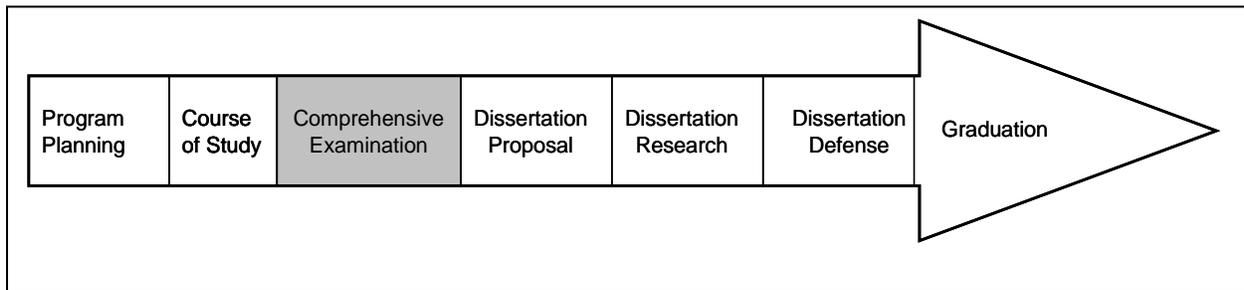


Once the Program of Study has been developed and approved/signed by program director, DrPH students must register for classes according to the procedures detailed in the Checklist and Resource Guide for Accepted Applicants (included in the DrPH Student Acceptance Packet).

Students should review their approved program of study each semester with the program director for accuracy and relevance. If changes are necessary, updates can be made using the Program of Study Form. Any changes to the Program of Study must be approved and signed by the program director. Approved Program of Study Forms must be submitted to SPHHS Student Records, 2175 K Street, NW, 5th floor.

DrPH students must maintain a 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing. For more information on academic standing, please see the SPHHS Graduate Student Handbook.

3. Comprehensive Examination



The comprehensive exam assesses the knowledge of general public health concepts and the student’s specialty area. The exam challenges students to synthesize theory, concepts, research, and practice in the student’s specialty area. Students take comprehensive exams once all core and specialty field required courses are completed. The exact date of the comprehensive exam is determined in consultation with the program director.

Once students pass the comprehensive exam, they are officially admitted into the candidacy phase. Students who fail to complete or pass comprehensive exams will be permitted to retake the exam only once. Failure to complete or pass the comprehensive exams will be grounds for termination from the DrPH program.

CANDIDACY PHASE:

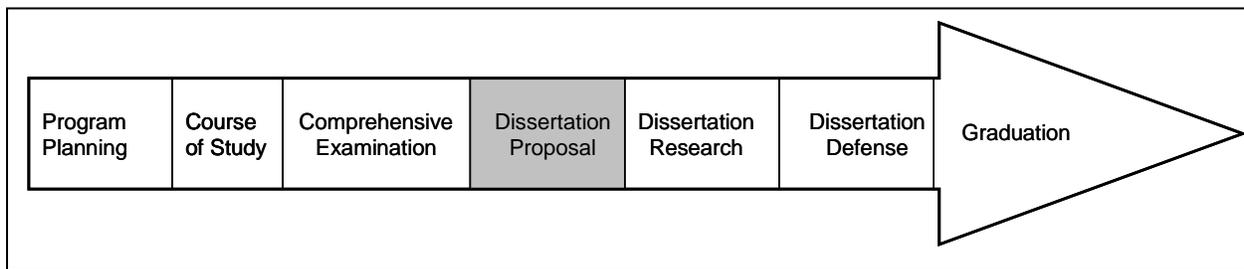
The objective of the dissertation is to demonstrate that the candidate has synthesized the knowledge gained during the pre-candidacy phase and is able to apply this knowledge to the resolution of a concrete and substantial applied research problem. The dissertation also demonstrates that the candidate has mastered research methods to successfully conduct scientific research.

The dissertation is a problem-based or issue-based inquiry that will involve empirical, applied research on a selected public health policy and practice issue as manifested in an actual community, public or private health care institution, organization or delivery system. Dissertation research will:

- Be guided by relevant and current theories or conceptual frameworks.
- Use appropriate and scientifically rigorous methods.
- Build on previous research.
- Contribute to public health policy and practice either domestically or internationally.

The research should result in the identification or assessment of feasible solutions or recommendations to the selected problem or issue, appropriate to the context in which they occur. Candidates are expected to demonstrate competencies in structured scientific inquiry, research design and analysis, and the primary methods of social research including qualitative methods and/or quantitative methods.

1. Dissertation Proposal



After passing the comprehensive exam all doctoral candidates register for and complete PubH 8422, “Advanced Health Care and Public Health Research Design” for two credits. Prior to registering for PubH 8422, students must:

- Identify a dissertation topic
- Select a chair of their Dissertation Research Committee
- Develop a one-page abstract on the research topic
- Receive approval in writing of the dissertation abstract from their Dissertation Research Committee chair.

Dissertation Preparation – All Specialty Fields			
Course	Title	Credits	Semester Proposed
PubH 8422	Advanced Health Care and Public Health Research Design Prerequisites: Passing Comprehensive Exams, Approval of the Program Director, and a page-long abstract that includes the following: Student Name, Program Director, Faculty Advisor if different from the Program Director, Title, Objective (including population), Research Methods and Analysis Methods, Anticipated Results/Hypotheses.	2	

A draft of the dissertation proposal is developed during PubH 8422. The dissertation proposal should provide a clear, concise, and thorough plan of proposed research. While enrolled in PubH 8422, students must identify and confirm their Dissertation Research Committee members and submit the Dissertation Research Committee Approval Form to SPHHS Student Records, 2175 K Street, NW, 5th floor. The Dissertation Research Committee Approval Form can be accessed at: <http://sphhs.gwu.edu/academics/graduateprograms/doctoralprograms/drphinformationandforms>.

The candidate is expected to work closely with the Dissertation Research Committee (see below) during the development of the proposal. The proposal includes the first several chapters of what will become the dissertation including:

- Statement of the problem: describe the nature and history of the problem or issue being studied and the potential significance of the proposed research.
- Literature review: detail prior research in this area and provide a historical and conceptual framework.
- Research methods: specify the research question and/or hypotheses, methods and design, human subjects review, and limitations of the dissertation research.
- Data analysis plan: Provide a detailed discussion about how the data collected will be managed and analyzed to address the research question(s).
- A statement of the expected contributions.

The proposal will be finalized by the candidate in consultation with the Dissertation Research Committee and presented in a formal oral defense proceeding. Proposals should include sufficient detail to give the committee members confidence that the candidate can accomplish what is proposed, and that there is a good reason to believe that the findings will be valid and reliable, and make a valuable contribution to the field of study.

Three-Paper Option

All students must prepare a dissertation proposal for defense by the Dissertation Research Committee. Students have an option of preparing a traditional dissertation, which essentially builds upon the format of the dissertation proposal and adds chapters on results, discussion, implications and future areas for research. Alternatively, students may choose a “three-paper option” instead of the traditional dissertation. Regardless of whether the student chooses the three-paper option or the traditional dissertation, a dissertation proposal (described above) is developed for the purposes of the proposal defense. Students should discuss which dissertation option (traditional or three-paper) they will pursue with their Dissertation Research Committee as they develop and ultimately defend their proposal.

The three-paper option requires students to prepare three, peer-review quality manuscripts based on their dissertation research. At least one of these manuscripts must be under review by a peer-reviewed journal as a requirement for scheduling the dissertation defense. Three manuscripts, along with a dissertation report that

includes the dissertation proposal plus a summary chapter describing the scope of the completed research, its limitations, and the implications of the work, comprise the body of work that will be reviewed at the Dissertation Defense. The precise details of what needs to be included in the dissertation summary chapter, and the topics for the three papers, should be determined in consultation with the student and the Dissertation Research Committee. Students generally prepare a methods paper as one of the three papers; however, if the three papers do not include one on methods, then a detailed description of the methods used in the dissertation research must be included in the summary chapter.

2. Dissertation Research Committee

The doctoral candidate and his/her Dissertation Research Committee must have specific conversations to clarify and agree upon the procedures for committee review of and decision making about the dissertation research, and about the responsibilities among the committee members. The Dissertation Research Committee helps the student to define a research idea, provides feedback as it is developed, and ultimately approves the research proposal. As such, the committee plays a critical role in helping the student design and conduct high-quality, doctoral-level research.

The Dissertation Research Committee is comprised of three to five members; the chair and a minimum of two others. Committees must have no more than five (5) voting members. Most dissertation committees have a total of three members. At least one member of the Dissertation Research Committee should have an appointment as regular or research faculty in the GWU SPHHS. Committee members should not have a conflict of interest that would prevent them from objectively evaluating the quality of the dissertation. At a minimum, each member should have a terminal, doctoral-level degree or equivalent credentials in a field relevant to the dissertation topic. For the mentoring process to work optimally, the dissertation chair and as many committee members as possible should be active scholars in the field who are published and have the first-hand experience required to teach students methods of scholarship.

Membership on the Dissertation Research Committee:

- Chair – a faculty member of the GWU SPHHS, typically from the candidate’s specialty field department.
- Member from the GWU SPHHS or other University faculty. This member must be from the candidate’s specialty field department, if the chairperson is not.
- Member who is a qualified public health professional currently active in work related to the dissertation, and can be from outside of the GWU SPHHS.
- Up to two other members within or outside of GWU with content or methodological expertise of relevance to the student’s dissertation research.

3. Dissertation Readers

Two readers serve as “outside examiners” who participate in the dissertation review process, including the dissertation defense, but do not serve as part of the Dissertation Research Committee. Readers should be selected in consultation with the committee chair. The readers need not come from GWU SPHHS, but must have doctoral-level credentials or the equivalent. Readers must be approved by the Dissertation Research Committee Chair.

Readers may be selected at the time the Dissertation Research Committee is established. Alternatively, readers can be selected later in the process provided there is ample time prior to scheduling the dissertation defense. Readers must be available to attend the dissertation defense.

Readers do not participate in the proposal defense process and do not serve as mentors for the student during the dissertation research process. The two readers should not have any relationship with the candidate that might create a conflict of interest for the person or candidate in the process of evaluating the proposal or the dissertation.

4. Development of the Dissertation Proposal

The doctoral candidate works closely with the Dissertation Committee Chair and other members throughout the proposal development process. All committee members must review the dissertation proposal and provide written comments to the candidate. The version of the proposal that is sent to the Committee members prior to the proposal defense should reflect at least one full round of review by the full Committee and revision by the candidate. **The revised version of the proposal must be sent to the Dissertation Committee for review at least three calendar weeks prior to the scheduled proposal defense.** Candidates commonly meet with their Chair and Committee members several times as they develop the proposal. In some cases, committees meet as a group at least once prior to the defense to discuss the proposed research and the student’s approach and challenges. In other cases, the student meets individually with committee members and the committee does not convene as a group until the dissertation defense.

Doctoral candidates should work with the chair and committee members to identify and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the committee members and the student, as well as the expectations of all parties regarding review of the proposal, feedback, and overall communication through the proposal development and dissertation research phases.

The chair and committee members must determine that the candidate is ready to move to the proposal defense phase before the defense can be scheduled. The program director also reviews the proposal to make certain that the student is ready for defense and that all committee members have reviewed the proposal. The program director may attend the proposal defense or may designate another representative to attend in his/her stead.

5. Proposal Meeting – Proposal Defense

The proposal defense is scheduled for two hours. During the first 20 minutes the candidate presents the research proposal. This requires that the candidate be prepared to present the entire proposal orally with sufficient detail about all of the relevant and fundamental elements such that someone attending the defense who has not read the proposal would have an understanding of the research proposed. The DrPH candidate and the Dissertation Research Committee should attend the proposal meeting. The candidate must:

- Provide a written dissertation proposal to the Dissertation Research Committee members at least three calendar weeks prior to the proposal meeting unless the Committee agrees to a tighter timetable.
- Defend the dissertation proposal to the Dissertation Research Committee.

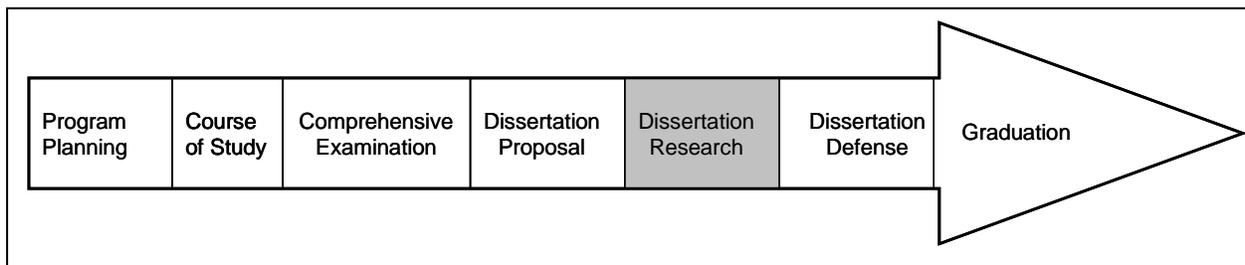
The Dissertation Research Committee will either approve or fail to approve the proposal. Approved proposals generally include suggestions for strengthening the work and may include stipulation of changes that must be made before the candidate can proceed with the dissertation research. If the committee rejects the proposal, the candidate has one additional opportunity to re-defend the proposed research after the candidate has addressed all of the outstanding issues raised by the committee. The same processes apply for a re-defense. Once the dissertation proposal has been approved by the committee and any required changes have been addressed and approved by the chair and committee members, the candidate moves to the dissertation research phase. Any significant changes to the proposed research require approval by the Dissertation Research Committee.

Dissertation Proposal Forms must be signed by the Dissertation Research Committee and submitted to SPHHS Student Records, 2175 K Street, NW, 5th floor. Students are advised to keep a copy of the form for their records.

Proposal Defense Report & Proposal Defense Request Form:

<http://sphhs.gwu.edu/academics/graduateprograms/doctoralprograms/drphinformationandforms>

6. Dissertation Research

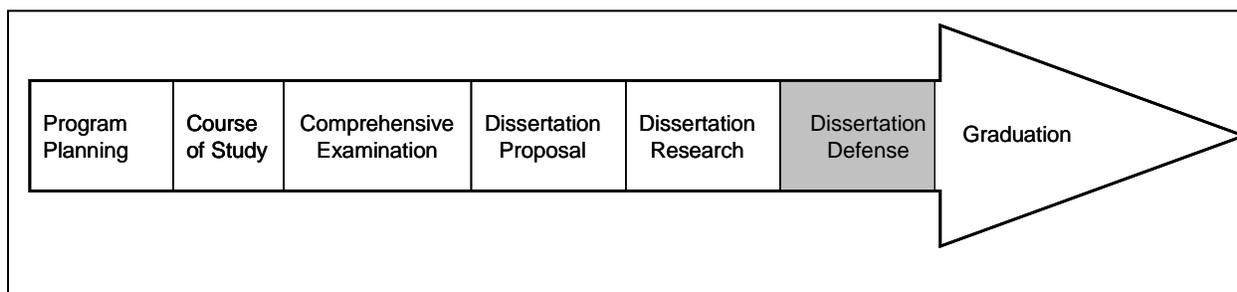


Once the proposal has been successfully defended, students should enroll in PubH 8423 Dissertation Research credits each semester. Candidates must take a minimum of 6 dissertation research credits and may take up to a maximum of 12 dissertation credits.

Once all coursework and dissertation research credit requirements are met, students may register for Continuous Enrollment (currently \$35/semester) each fall and spring semester until they complete and defend their dissertation. Registering for Continuous Enrollment requires the DrPH Program Director approval. Students may not enroll in Continuous Enrollment until they have satisfied all their requirements, including dissertation research credits.

Students may not enroll in PubH 8423 Dissertation Research until they have successfully defended their dissertation proposal. Students who are not eligible to enroll in PubH 8423 must register for other course offerings or enroll in one credit of Continuous Research (UNIV 0920). For additional information about registration requirements, see: <http://sphhs.gwu.edu/academics/coursesregistration>.

7. Dissertation Defense



The oral defense is scheduled for two hours and during the first 20 minutes the candidate presents the dissertation. This requires that the candidate be prepared to present the entire dissertation orally with sufficient detail about all of the relevant and fundamental elements such that someone attending the defense who has not read the dissertation would have a firm grasp of the entire dissertation research. In addition to the competencies/skills outlined above, the oral defense provides the opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate the ability to:

1. Synthesize and summarize lengthy and/or complex materials into the most salient points;
2. Communicate clearly, succinctly, precisely, and persuasively about the significance of the dissertation research and research findings.

Completed Dissertation Request and Dissertation Defense Forms should be submitted to SPHHS Student Records, 2175 K Street, NW, 5th floor. Students are advised to keep a copy of the form for their records.

Final Dissertation Request Form & Dissertation Defense Report

<http://sphhs.gwu.edu/academics/graduateprograms/doctoralprograms/drphinformationandforms>

Preparing for the Oral Defense

The oral dissertation defense is the culmination of rigorous academic training and represents an extraordinary achievement on the part of every DrPH candidate. In order to schedule a defense, the members of the Dissertation Research Committee must have approved the candidate's dissertation for defense. The candidate must submit the dissertation to the Dissertation Research Committee for their review.

The committee reviews the submitted manuscript carefully and must agree that the dissertation is ready to defend before the defense date is set. Before the defense, the candidate should ensure that the room *and* the necessary visual aid equipment, such as an overhead projector or computer, are reserved, and that the room is prepared for the defense (including enough seats for visitors).

The Oral Defense

The candidate must submit the dissertation to all members of the Dissertation Research Committee and outside examiners **a minimum of three weeks** before the oral defense date. The Dissertation Research Committee and outside examiners review the dissertation for quality and accuracy and must attend the oral defense. The duration of the oral defense is generally expected to be two hours. Following the student's 20-minute presentation, the Dissertation Research Committee and outside examiners question the candidate in a vigorous and collegial fashion about the research. The candidate is expected to respond to the questions in a thoughtful and thorough manner. Questions in the defense may address any aspects of the research presented or raise questions that arise as a result of the research. The oral defense provides the candidate with the opportunity to expand upon the salient characteristics of the dissertation research, to identify areas for additional research, to evaluate the research methods and their strengths and limitations, and to place the work in a larger public health context.

8. Oral Examination Committee

The Oral Examination Committee should consist of no fewer than five voting members—a minimum of three members of the Dissertation Research Committee and two readers. All members of the Committee must participate in the oral examination. There should be one individual who presides over the meeting who is not entitled to vote, e.g., a Dean's representative or doctoral specialty field representative who looks after due process and ensures that the student receives a fair examination. The dissertation chair typically plays the role of advocate for the student; while chairs may participate in questioning the candidate, it is often the case that the chair abstains from the rounds of questioning.

The oral defense is an open examination and visitors are welcome. For the student to successfully pass the oral defense, all but one of the examiners must vote to approve the dissertation. All members of the Dissertation Research Committee and the outside examiners, including the chair, vote on approval of the dissertation. The voting members will determine whether the dissertation is approved in its current form, approved with modifications, or not approved.

Dissertation Research Committee Approval Form

<http://sphhs.gwu.edu/academics/graduateprograms/doctoralprograms/drphinformationandforms>

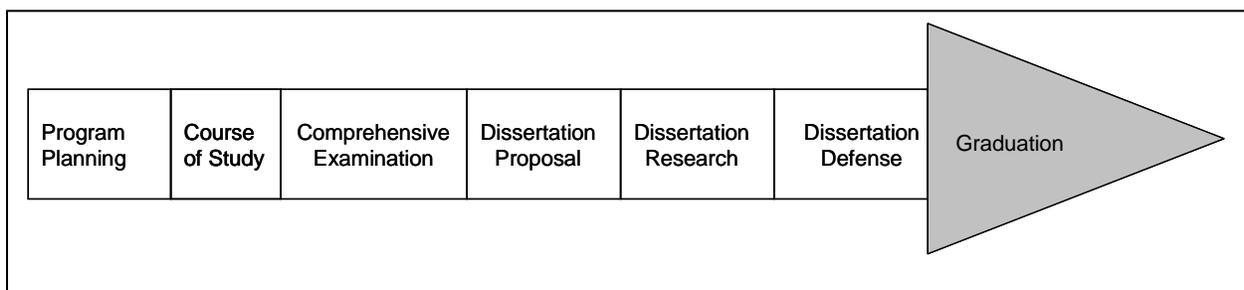
Disposition of the Dissertation

All doctoral dissertations are submitted electronically to Proquest/UMI. The Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) replaces the bound dissertation, which is no longer accepted at GWU. More information is found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~etds/>

The deadline for submission in ETD for spring graduation is April. (NOTE: It can take up to 2 weeks for approval from ETD. This approval must be obtained prior to April 1st, so give time for this process to be completed.) All doctoral candidates are required to submit the FINAL dissertation (with all the approved changes) to the above site in the year they apply for graduation. **It is strongly suggested that doctoral candidates review formatting guidelines PRIOR to submitting final dissertation to the Dissertation Committee. ETD has specific formatting requirements that are the responsibility of the doctoral candidate.**

After submission, the library will check the format before forwarding the ETD to the GWU SPHHS DrPH administrator. The DrPH administrator will review the ETD and confirm that all doctoral requirements have been met and submit the ETD to Proquest/UMI.

DrPH Degree Certification and Graduation



Requirements, policies, and procedures to apply for graduation are detailed in the SPHHS Graduate Student Handbook.

GW Application for Graduation

<http://www.gwu.edu/~regweb/web-content/onlineforms/applicationforgraduation.pdf>

The completed Application for Graduation should be submitted to SPHHS Student Records, 2175 K Street, NW, 5th floor. Students are advised to keep a copy of the form for their records.

- Deadlines for submission are noted on the Application for Graduation.
- **It is strongly recommended that students planning to submit an application for graduation contact their Advisor well in advance (prior semester) to review transcripts ensuring that all graduation requirements have been met.** This includes confirming program requirements have been completed and all grades have been submitted.
- Once the Application for Graduation has been submitted, students will be contacted by SPHHS Student Records with a checklist of items that need to be completed.

University and School policies and procedures as outlined in the SPHHS Graduate Student Handbook apply to DrPH students.