

Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The Department of Epidemiology Student Handbook

2020-2021





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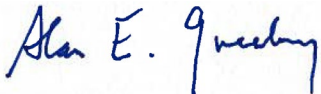
WELCOME FROM THE DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP

On behalf of the faculty and staff of the Department of Epidemiology, we would like to warmly welcome you as a new student in the Department. We are deeply committed to ensuring that you receive a world-class education during your time with us. We take great pride in the quality and breadth of our course offerings, the mentorship that we provide both in and outside of the classroom, the internships and work experiences that will serve as a bridge between your didactic training and your careers as public health professionals, and the extensive scholarly work of our faculty which provides you with extraordinary opportunities to participate in cutting-edge scientific research.

Whether you are enrolled in the MPH or MS program in Epidemiology, the MS program in Public Health Microbiology and Emerging Infectious Diseases or the PhD program in Epidemiology, we urge you to explore the numerous quantitative and topical courses that our Department offers. You will develop expertise in the core concepts of epidemiology and biostatistics, hone your skills in the critical computer programming tools of our profession such as SAS, R and GIS, and learn about a wide range of both infectious and non-communicable diseases.

The Department also serves as the academic home for a wide array of epidemiologic and laboratory research programs which offer students the opportunity to collaborate in “hands-on” research projects, and we urge you to consider engaging in one of these many activities.

Lastly, we encourage you to consult with your faculty advisors, program directors and program coordinators for guidance about course selection, internships and career opportunities. As Chair, Vice Chair and Associate Chair of the Department, you are always welcome to make an appointment to meet with us as well. We wish you the best of success as you embark on this next exciting stage of your academic journey.



Alan E. Greenberg, MD, MPH
Chair



Heather Young, PhD, MPH
Vice Chair for Educational Activities



Manya Magnus, PhD, MPH
Associate Chair

USEFUL UNIVERSITY LINKS

Epi Homepage	Milken Institute School of Public Health Homepage	The Source
University Calendar	GWSPH Student Records	Epi Student Resources
MPH/MSPHMEID Practice Activity	Student Practicum Guidebook	Epi Practice Page
SPH Career Center	University Registrar	Office of Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships

MPH COURSE REGISTRATION

What should I register for?

A full time course load is considered 9 credits; fewer than that is part-time. The length of time you anticipate being in the program should drive your decision about what to take, as should incorporation of other responsibilities (e.g., work, family). In general, a student taking 9 credits per semester would finish the 45 credit hour program in 5 semesters. Others may choose to take more or fewer credits per semester. There is no one “right” way to complete your MPH, although we strongly discourage students from trying to complete the program in fewer than two years. As adult learners the most important goal is for you to enjoy your education and acquire the competencies provided by the MPH. The faculty and staff of the department are here to help you along your road towards the degree.

You should plan your course load based upon your scheduling needs. In order to ensure proper sequencing, there are just a few things to know:

- 1 Take PubH 6002, PubH 6003 and PUBH 6021 as early as you can in your program. All MPH epidemiology candidates should take these courses in the first semester if possible.
- 2 The sequencing of the Epidemiology/Biostatistics methods courses is as follows:
 - Epidemiology: PubH 6003→6247→6252
 - Biostatistics: PubH 6002→6249→6260
 - Essentials of Public Health: PubH 6021→PubH 6022
 - Co-enrollment in these classes, and taking out of sequence is not allowed except with explicit course director approval
- 3 Wrap your public health core classes around your methods courses, but try to take them as early as you can in your program.

- 4 Nearly all electives in the department have either PubH 6002 or PubH 6003 as a prerequisite.
- 5 Our program electives are generous, allowing you a great deal of choice within the department, as well as SPH courses. If you opt to take more than the allowed number of credits outside of the Epidemiology/Biostatistics department, be sure to obtain written advisor approval in advance.
- 6 Our [MPH Planning Grid](#) contains a planning guide to help ensure that you are meeting all program requirements.
- 7 Refer to the sample schedules in the [Program Guide](#) to help you in the planning and sequencing of your coursework

MS PHMEID COURSE REGISTRATION

What should I register for?

A full time course load is considered 9 credits; fewer than that is part-time. The length of time you anticipate being in the program should drive your decision about what to take, as should incorporation of other responsibilities (e.g., work, family). In general, a student taking 9 credits per semester would finish the 45 credit hour program in 5 semesters. Others may choose to take more or fewer credits per semester. There is no one “right” way to complete your MS, although we strongly discourage students from trying to complete the program in fewer than two years. As adult learners, the most important goal is for you to enjoy your education and acquire the competencies provided by the MS. The faculty and staff of the department are here to help you along your road towards the degree.

You should plan your course load based upon your scheduling needs. In order to ensure proper sequencing, there are just a few things to know:

- 8 Take PubH 6002 and PubH 6003 as early as you can in your program. All MS candidates should take these courses in the first semester if possible.
- 9 All MSPHMEID Students are required to take PubH 6275 during their first summer
- 10 The sequencing of the Epidemiology/Biostatistics methods courses is as follows:
 - o Epidemiology: PubH 6003→6247→6252.
 - o Biostatistics: PubH 6002→6249→6260.
 - o Co-enrollment in these classes, and taking out of sequence is not allowed except with explicit course director approval.
- 11 Wrap your public health core classes around your methods and lab courses, but try to take them as early as you can in your program.
- 12 Nearly all electives in the department have either PubH 6002 or PubH 6003 as a prerequisite.
- 13 Our program electives are generous, allowing you a great deal of choice within the department, as well as SPH courses and many Microbiology courses. If you opt to take more than the allowed number of credits outside of the Epidemiology/Biostatistics department, be sure to obtain written advisor approval in advance.
- 14 The [MS PHMEID Program Guide](#) contains a planning guide to help ensure that you are meeting all program requirements.

- 15 Refer to the sample schedules on the [Program Website](#) to help you in the planning and sequencing of your coursework.

How do I find out where classes are located?

Be sure that you have joined the SPH and Epi listserves. All scheduling information, including classroom locations, is located in the schedules sent out routinely. This information is also located on the [Registrar's Website](#). Classroom information is often not updated until the week of classes so be sure to check back. Faculty will also provide course information on Blackboard.

How do I find out when classes are offered?

Be sure that you have joined the SPH and Epi and Biostats/Bioinformatics listserves. All scheduling information, including classroom locations, is located in the schedules that sent out routinely. This information is also located on the [Registrar's Website](#).

I can't register: there is a block on my registration. What should I do?

There are several reasons for a block on registration, including fiscal issues, need to meet with advisor (e.g., probationary status, failure to maintain ≥ 3.0 GPA). Please contact student records to find out the cause of the block; they will advise you regarding how to proceed. Contact your academic advisor as needed for assistance in registering.

The class I tried to register for is closed. What should I do?

Classes may be closed for one of several reasons:

- 1 Cap on class exceeded
- 2 Open only to specific students (e.g., doctoral students, specific departments)
- 3 Apparent conflict to Banner system (trying to register for two classes that take place at the same time).

In case of exceeded cap or limited students, it is worthwhile gently and politely inquiring of the professor, via email or phone, whether you might be able to add or join a waiting list. It may not be possible, but it is worth a polite inquiry. In case of apparent conflicts, contact student records. Registration transaction forms can be found here: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/forms>.

Where do I get my PIN in order to register?

You should have received your PIN in your welcoming packet. If you did not, please contact the Admissions Office.

How do I register for the Practicum and the Culminating Experience?

Registration for the Practicum PubH 6014 and the Culminating Experience PubH 6015 is done via a registration transaction form (RTF). Students in the MPH Epidemiology program register for

6014.13 and 6015.13, while the MPH Biostatistics students register for 6014.10 and 6015.10 by filling out an RTF and asking the PD they are working with to sign and process the form.

How do I request to be added to the SPH, Dept of Epi or DBB listservs?

SPH Listserv – This is the listserv for the entire school. Many important announcements about class schedules, registration, seminars, conferences, jobs, and internship opportunities are posted on this listserv.

To subscribe to the SPH listserv, send an e-mail to: LISTSERV@HERMES.GWU.EDU from the e-mail account through which you wish to subscribe. The message should just say **SUBSCRIBE SPHHS**. Do not include any other characters or e-mail signatures.

EPI Listserv - This is the listserv specifically for the Epidemiology Department. Track specific information is posted on this listserv. It is important to join both the SPH listserv and the Epi listserv so that you do not miss important information that may be posted to one, but not to the other.

To subscribe to the EPI listserv, send an e-mail to: LISTSERV@HERMES.GWU.EDU from the e-mail account through which you wish to subscribe. The message should just say **SUBSCRIBE EPI**. Do not include any other characters or e-mail signatures.

DBB-Students Listserv - This is the listserv specifically for the Biostatistics and Bioinformatics Department. Track specific information is posted on this listserv. It is important to join both SPH listserv and the DBB listserv so that you do not miss important information that may be posted to one, but not to the other.

To subscribe to the DBB listserv, send an e-mail to: LISTSERV@HERMES.GWU.EDU from the e-mail account through which you wish to subscribe. The message should just say **SUBSCRIBE DBB-Students**. Do not include any other characters or e-mail signatures.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

The Department of Epidemiology will offer academic advising sessions in the fall and spring semesters. The goal of these sessions is to provide an opportunity for those students on the MPH Epi track to receive information concerning the registration of courses for the upcoming semester. To better prepare for these sessions students are strongly encouraged to review the course offerings prior to the meeting and come with questions. In doing so, this will create an atmosphere where students and the academic advisors are engaged in open dialogue about the best way to progress forward in the curriculum. An announcement of these sessions will be made via the Epi listserv. You are encouraged to RSVP for these sessions.

I have questions about advising, registration, or schedule?

MPH: Dr. Magnus (manyadm@gwu.edu) advises students A-L. Dr. Young (younggh@gwu.edu) advises students M-Z.

MS PHMEID: Dr. Irene Kuo (ikuo@gwu.edu) advises A-M. Dr. Mimi Ghosh (mghosh@gwu.edu) advises N-Z.

MS & PhD Epi: Dr. Sean Cleary (sdcleary@gwu.edu)

Joseph Schmitthenner (jschmitthenner@gwu.edu) can also assist with general advising issues.

Dr. Ann Goldman-Hawes (Annieg@gwu.edu) works with both MS Epi and PhD students.

a) I have questions about course descriptions, transferring credits, waiving courses, substituting courses, etc?

MPH: Dr. Magnus (manyadm@gwu.edu) advises students A-L. Dr. Young (younggh@gwu.edu) advises students M-Z.

MS PHMEID: Dr. Irene Kuo (ikuo@gwu.edu) advises A-M. Dr. Mimi Ghosh (mghosh@gwu.edu) advises N-Z.

MS & PhD Epi: Dr. Sean Cleary (sdcleary@gwu.edu)

Joseph Schmitthenner (jschmitthenner@gwu.edu) can also assist with general advising issues.

Please consult the [SPH Student Handbook](#) and [The Source](#), and the [Academic Forms](#) page from Student Records for the appropriate forms.

b) I have questions about jobs (research and teaching assistantships)?

General career advice: [Career Center](#)

Departmental teaching positions: [Student Resources Page](#)

Department research positions: [Student Resources Page](#)

c) I have questions about financial aid, student accounts, or scholarships?

Contact Colonial Central with issues about financial aid or student accounts. Contact GWSPH Financial Aid (gwsphfinaid@gwu.edu) if you have questions about your GWSPH scholarship or other funding information.

MPH PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

The Practicum consists of an Applied Practice Experience (APEX) - defined as a planned, supervised, and evaluated experience in a public health organization. The Practice Experience can, for instance, consist of key elements of a primary research or surveillance project such as design, data collection and analysis, or a secondary analysis of an existing data base. The Practice Activity enables the student to apply new skills in the context of public health and must not be directly related to the student’s day-to-day work. If the student does conduct the Practice Experience at his/her place of employment, this must be a separate activity for which the student is not remunerated.

The semester before you plan to complete your Practice Activity you should complete the Dept of Epi Intake form which includes the following information. It can be found on the department’s webpage or you may e-mail the office for a copy. You must be registered for PubH 6000 in order to complete your Practice Activity.

Practicum prerequisites	What semester did you complete the course or when do you plan to take the course?
PubH 6002	
PubH 6003	
PubH 6021	
Practicum Co-requisites	What semester did you complete the course or when do you plan to take the course?
PubH 6022	
PubH 6247	
PubH 6249	
Practicum Recommended courses:	What semester did you complete the course or when do you plan to take the course?
PubH 6252	

Please complete the additional practicum requirements listed below before scheduling an appointment with your Practicum Director: Joseph Schmitthenner (A-L) or Professor Ann Goldman (M-Z). Please contact them via email: jschmitthenner@gwu.edu or annieg@gwu.edu.

Task	Link
Register on the Milken Institute SPH website for Practicum and complete the student profile.	Gworks for Public Health This will allow you to review the practicum database before meeting with your Practicum Director.

Complete CITI module: Social and Behavioral researchers.	http://www.citiprogram.org/
Epi Dept required Practicum/CE orientation	These dates will be announced at the beginning of each semester via the epi-bio listserves.
Visit our department's webpage for other resources: syllabi, FAQs, etc.	Practice Page

HOW TO COMPLETE THE PRACTICUM/PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Here is the department's new procedure to correctly complete the practice activity using the Exxat Practicum Tracking Website.

FIRST SET OF INSTRUCTIONS: Epi Department Intake Form and request for a meeting with your PD

1. Complete the revised Epi Department intake form and scan it back to the appropriate Practicum Director (PD).
2. Please complete ALL tasks noted on this form.
3. Send a copy of the CITI training form to us so that we can have it on file – this
4. Now please schedule an appointment to meet with your PD. We will meet with you when you have completed steps 1-3.

SECOND SET OF INSTRUCTIONS: Selection of the Practice Experience

1. Identify and secure a Practice Experience.
2. Ensure the site preceptor (SP) and the organization are registered in Exxat for Public Health
3. Submit your plan to both your SP and your PD for approval.

THIRD SET OF INSTRUCTIONS: Approval of the Practicum

1. Your APEx Plan will be reviewed by your SP and Practicum Director
2. Your SP and Practicum Director will approve your Plan
3. Please complete the required Student Oversight Forms and upload your plan for Oversight review.
4. The Practicum Director and Site Preceptor will approve the plan in Exxat
5. Once your Plan has been approved by the Oversight Team you are ready to start

Congratulations!
You have successfully registered for the practicum course.

HOW TO DEVELOP THE PRACTICUM/APEX PLAN

How do I start this process?

1. Choose 5 relevant competencies when developing your Practicum/APEX Plan
2. List the activities you will be doing to meet those competencies in the activities section

What is the definition for a core competency?

1. Applied skills and knowledge that enable people to successfully perform their work
2. Departmental specific competencies are listed on Epi Department and Milken Institute SPH websites and below

What are the core competencies?

1. Identify and define a public health issue
2. Develop a plan or proposal to apply the epidemiological principles needed to carry out the chosen public health Practice Experience
3. Identify the appropriate data analysis methods
4. Demonstrate competency in data collection
5. Demonstrate proficiency in constructing and managing databases for epidemiological studies using statistical software, e.g. The SAS®System a specific project or endeavor

What is an activity?

It is the task(s) that you will perform in order to make sure the objective is met.

Who is the SAS coach?

This is revolving, please consult your Practicum Director to be provided the SAS Coaches contact information.

FIELD/LABORATORY EXPERIENCE

The overall purpose of the **Field/Laboratory Experience** (PubH 6016.10) requirement is to introduce students in the MS PHMEID Program to a supervised practical experience to reinforce the classroom and laboratory work in their academic program. Experiences generally take place in one of the following areas:

- Infectious disease research;
- Public health laboratories; or
- Qualifying public health entities (local, state or federal public health department, multilateral health organization, private contractor, etc.) to introduce them to epidemiologic research, particularly, surveillance and its tie-in with laboratories either in the United States or in an international setting.

Students choosing a laboratory-focused experience will gain concrete experiences in key laboratory functions. This includes but is not limited to gaining experience in specimen collection, use of test kits, specimen storage and transport, chain of custody procedures, specimen processing in the laboratory, Good Laboratory Practices, general quality control issues, use of basic lab instrumentation, issues of biosafety, and exposure to one or more key laboratory test methods.

Students seeking a more epidemiology-focused experience will carry out the field placement in contexts where they will be exposed to epidemiologic research, surveillance, and the relationship between the laboratory and public health epidemiologists.

The semester before you plan to register for the F/LE you should complete the Intake form which includes the following information. It can be found on the department’s webpage or you may e-mail the office for a copy.

Completed F/LE prerequisites	What semester did you complete the course or when do you plan to take the course?
PubH 6002 Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	
PubH 6003 Principles and Practice of Epidemiology	
PubH 6245 Infectious Disease Epidemiology	

Please complete the following F/L Experience requirements below before scheduling an appointment with your Course Director: Joe Schmitthener (A-L) or Ann Goldman (M-Z).

Please contact them via email: jschmitthener@gwu.edu or annieg@gwu.edu

Task	Notes
Dept of Epi required MSPHMEID F/L Experience Orientation	These dates will be announced at the beginning of each semester via the Epi/Bio listserv.
Complete GWU Biosafety Course	These dates will be announced via the listserv.
Complete CITI module: Social and Behavioral researchers.	http://www.citiprogram.org/
Visit our department's webpage for other resources: syllabi, FAQs, etc.	PHMEID Practice Page

F/L EXPERIENCE PROCEDURE

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- Before beginning the field placement, students and Site Preceptors develop a contract that outlines the learning objectives that will be met and defines the project activities.
 - Site Preceptors are asked to certify the student's hours and evaluate the student (certification and evaluation documents can be sent via mail, fax, or email).
 - Students are required to produce a brief report on their experience.
 - Information and templates can be found at the [Department's MS PHMEID Practice Page](#)

DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY ORIENTATIONS

PRACTICUM/FIELD LABORATORY EXPERIENCE AND CULMINATING EXPERIENCE/ FINAL PROJECT

The Department of Epidemiology Faculty and Staff acknowledges the great potential in each of you regarding your progression in our program(s) and therefore implemented these sessions to serve as a valuable resource towards your timely completion of these course requirements. We are providing information concerning the Epi Department required orientations for both the Practicum/FLE courses and CE/Final Project courses.

CULMINATING EXPERIENCE/FINAL PROJECT

The **Culminating Experience (CE)** is a credit/no credit course where students apply the epidemiologic methods and skills acquired in the program in the integration, analysis, interpretation and presentation of data. It consists of the following four products that stem from research and practice involving a specific public health issue: (a) Concept Paper, (b) Proposal, (c) Final Report or Manuscript, and (d) two Oral Presentations (one at the site, and a final presentation evaluated by GW Faculty). Although it is not mandatory, students often link the CE with the Practicum. This way, the CE serves as the integration of the application of the methods and the interpretation of results. However, if the Practicum and CE are not linked, the student should plan to do the Practicum first.

The **Final Project** is a graded course which consists of four elements that focus on the synthesis and summary of data acquired through epidemiologic and/or public health laboratory research. The four elements are: (a) Concept Paper, (b) Proposal, (c) Final Report, and (d) two Oral Presentations (one at the site, and a final presentation evaluated by GW Faculty). These elements are fully described in the Appendix – Guidelines for Final Project Elements. MSPHMEID students are required to demonstrate proficiency in the application of the skills they acquire during their academic programs through the **Field/Laboratory Experience** (PubH 6016.10) and the **Final Project** (PubH 6280.10). The two courses can be linked but this is not a program requirement. In addition, they can be taken simultaneously or sequentially, in which case the Field/Laboratory Experience would come first.

CE/Final Project Suggested Timeline:

You are responsible for ensuring that all of the components of the Student Checklist are satisfied in a timely manner (e.g., IRB approval, course completion, etc.). **The deadlines below should be modified depending on who serves as your GW Faculty Advisor and the nature of your project.** Each project is different, so each timeline will vary depending on the nature of the project. Completing a CE/Final Project is not like most class-based paper-writing requirements where you submit a single document for grading. As a rule, you should submit a first draft for all deliverables, for which your GWFA will review and provide feedback. You will then have the opportunity to review, improve, and resubmit each document. Students cannot move forward with their project until each deliverable is approved by their Advisor and Preceptor.

The final submission deadlines listed below for each deliverable should be discussed with your Advisor. If I have not submitted a document, you will not be able to schedule your CE/Final Project presentation until the next semester). We will not send out reminders, so it is imperative to manage your own time throughout the entire semester.

CE Deliverable		Fall Presentation Suggested Due Dates	Spring Presentation Suggested Due Dates	Summer Presentation Suggested Due Dates
Concept Paper	First Draft	7/10	11/10	3/20
	Final Submission	7/24	11/24	4/15
Proposal	First Draft	8/15	12/01	4/30
	Final Submission	8/30	12/10	5/15
	IRB Determination Submission	9/5	12/15	5/30
Analysis	Check In Meeting	10/20	3/19	6/30
Paper	First Draft	11/3	4/2	7/20
	Final Submission	11/17	4/16	8/3
Presentation	Draft of PPT Slides	11/24	4/23	8/10
	Draft Presentation to SP and/or GWFA	11/24	4/23	8/10
	Final PPT Slides	12/1	4/30	8/17
	Final Presentation	~12/4	~5/2	~8/22
<i>Publishable Manuscript* (*optional)</i>	<i>Draft for Submission</i>	1/19	6/18	10/5
	<i>Final Submission</i>	2/16	7/16	11/2

Publishing your CE/Final Project:

Beyond the general CE/Final Project criteria set forth by the Department of Epidemiology, we *strongly encourage* all students to consider publishing their CE/Final Project as a manuscript in a

peer-reviewed journal. Most importantly, being the first author on a published paper will be a tremendous learning opportunity for you and tangible evidence of your training in epidemiology. In addition, working on a manuscript together will allow your GWFA to spend more time with you to develop your epidemiologic analysis and writing skills. **At minimum, we ask that all final papers be formatted to reflect a standard journal article.** If you intend to submit your article for publication, plan to continue working on your paper for 6-10 weeks after submission.

IRB/PROJECT OVERSIGHT PROCEDURE AND INFORMATION

Background

- All students participating in projects related to school requirements (dissertation, MPH Culminating Experience (CE), MPH Practicum, Biostatistics Consulting Practicum, Field Lab Experience, independent study, etc.) require oversight of their projects. This is not only for human protection / IRB reasons but also so the Department can monitor what types of projects are being conducted by students and ensure proper oversight.
- Before beginning any school project involving seeing or handling data derived from humans, students must complete the determination process and have a determination about next steps made.
- Student requirements for project oversight are not always the same as faculty requirements. For example, certain types of studies may be considered non-human subjects research (NHSR) for faculty but due to their sensitive subject area, exempt review is required for students.
- Approval for the project itself is not implied by the completion of the determination project; students still need to work with faculty and staff to ensure the project is approved and meets academic requirements.
- It is the faculty advisor's responsibility to ensure that students have a determination on file for projects that meet academic program requirements. Students cannot begin their projects until process is completed. Faculty advisors are ultimately responsible for each of the students that they advise on research projects.

Process

- Students should complete the REDCap form <https://is.gd/gwsphstudentprojectoversight> as soon as they have a project lined up, even if the proposal is not approved; this will expedite the process.
- The Practicum/CE Coordinators and the Associate Chair will be notified a determination is waiting. In the unlikely event that there is no response within 7 working days, please write to manyadm@gwu.edu to confirm receipt.
- The Associate Chair will review the submission and ask the student and faculty advisor (if applicable) for clarifying information by email. The faculty advisor will receive a copy

of the submission for their records so they can confirm accuracy of what the student has submitted. The email notes will be copied into REDCap for documentation.

- Final determinations will be sent to the student, faculty advisor, and Practicum/CE Coordinators.
- RTF forms for the Practicum, CE, Field Lab Experience, Final Project, or Independent Study, students will not be approved until this process is complete and the final determination is made. (This does not apply to Biostatistics Consulting Practicum projects.)

Types of Determinations by the Epidemiology Departmental Liaison

There are several possible outcomes of the determination process:

- **Please provide more information.** Research is complicated and when it comes to ensuring protection of research subjects, we must always be very cautious and thoughtful; many IRB issues are not cut and dry. You may be asked to provide more information to enable a determination about your project.
- **Not research.** Your study may be determined to not be research at all based on human subjects regulations. If this is the case, you will not need to pursue approval by the GW IRB. However, if you have any change to your proposed project, you should check again to ensure that the determination has not changed. Note that if you intend to present your findings outside of your department in any way, or in any publication, the project is considered to be research and this category will not apply.
- **Non-human subjects determination.** If you receive this designation it means that your proposed project is not considered human subjects research and you do not need to pursue approval by the GW IRB. However, if you have any change to your proposed project, you should check again to ensure that the determination has not changed.
- **Recommendation to refer to the IRB.** You may be advised to submit a new study application to the GW IRB. If this occurs, you must work with your faculty principal investigator to do so. At this point, the Departmental IRB Liaison will no longer be involved. Remember to keep comprehensive files of all of your submissions to, approvals from, and contact from the IRB. Submit the final IRB approval into REDCap.

Student Project Types

The following are the most common types of projects students work on. After each one, the type of documentation required before starting the project is described.

Existing Information

Scenario I:

- Student is working only with one or more of the following types of non-human data: 1) Literature Reviews and Reviews of Public Health Reports/Papers (such as for a meta-analysis), 2) Existing Aggregate Data, 3) laboratory data involving bacteria or viruses, but not human cell lines, tissue or samples, and 4) animal data.
- Required documentation: NHSR determination from Departmental IRB Liaison.

Secondary Data Analysis

Scenario II:

- Student is working with public access dataset covered under PHS law and publicly downloadable.
- Required documentation: NHSR determination from Departmental IRB Liaison or IRB.

Scenario III:

- Student is working with another (non-PHS) publicly downloadable dataset which appears to be NHSR.
- Required documentation: NHSR determination from Departmental IRB Liaison or IRB.

Scenario IV:

- Student is proposing analysis of more complex data that may involve sensitive topics or have identifiers
- Liaison collaborates with IRB regarding approval submission.
- Required documentation: IRB approval letter or letter from IRB indicating NHSR or exempt approval.

Scenario V:

- Student is participating on existing IRB approved study with NHSR or exempt status.
- Required documentation: IRB approval letter or letter from IRB indicating NHSR or exempt approval.

Scenario VI:

- Student will be receiving data that are stripped of direct and indirect identifiers.
- Required documentation: NHSR determination from Departmental IRB Liaison or IRB.

Primary data collection

Scenario VII:

- Student will be conducting or participating in primary data collection with GW faculty member as study PI.
- Departmental Liaison refers to GW IRB.

- Required documentation: IRB approval letter that indicates student is an approved study team member.

Working with other institutions and/or existing studies

Scenario VIII:

- Student will be conducting or participating in primary data collection with non-GW faculty member as study PI at another institution.
- Departmental Liaison refers to GW IRB in order to determine process. Potential options are: a) concurrence with their IRB determination; b) request to submit GW IRB application; c) determination of non-engaged research status. C
- Required documentation: IRB approval letter that indicates student is an approved study team member at other institution and documentation of approval from GW IRB.

STUDENT RESEARCH AWARD

Student research awards are available from the Department of Epidemiology to support students' efforts in presenting their work at local and national public health and scientific conferences. All students enrolled in the Department of Epidemiology's MPH, MS, and PhD degree programs are eligible to receive these awards. Additionally, recent alumni may apply for Capital Connection Scholar Awards if the abstract is accepted within one year of graduation and the work was done while a student. Awards will be granted for work done as part of Departmental activities (academic work such as special project, culminating experiences or dissertations; or paid or unpaid research with Department faculty members). **Since these awards are meant to encourage participation in outside conferences GWU's and Children's National Medical Center's Research Day presentations are not eligible.** You may apply for this award anytime during the academic year.

There are three types of awards:

1. **Departmental Research Awards—to support poster printing**— The Department will reimburse poster printing costs, up to a maximum of \$100.00, for students accepted as a presenting author at a scientific conference. A maximum of ten Departmental Research Awards per semester will be supported each fall, spring, and summer semester.
2. **Chair's Research Excellence Award—to support conference registration fees**— Funds will be available each academic year to support registration fees for students with abstracts accepted at local or national conferences. A maximum of five Chair's Research Awards per semester will be supported. The maximum amount of the award is \$250.
3. **Founding Dean's Research Excellence Award**— Awards will be available each semester of the academic year to the most outstanding abstract accepted for presentation to a scientific conference by a Departmental student. Founding Dean's Research Excellence Awards may be used to support registration, travel, lodging, and food expenses incurred while attending the conference. The maximum size of the award will be \$500 per semester.

GWSPH GRADUATION CLEARANCE

- 1. I submitted my application for graduation on line before the deadline to apply, will I receive confirmation?**
 - Yes. The Office of Student Records will confirm receipt of your application no later than one week after the portal to apply on line closes.
- 2. Can I apply for graduation if I have a hold on my account?**
 - Yes. The hold will have to be removed and satisfied, before the Office of the Registrar will send your diploma.
- 3. I completed the paper application for graduation; can I have the late graduation application fee waived?**
 - Per the Office of the Registrar's policy on late applications, ALL paper applications will be charged a \$35 processing fee regardless of submission date. This policy is non-negotiable, as the GWSPH has no authority on removing the late fee.
- 4. How can I confirm all degree requirements have been met for my program?**
 - Prior to the Office of Student Records completing an audit on your record for graduation, please make an appointment to meet with your academic advisor to go over program requirements. This meeting should take place at least a semester prior to you applying for graduation, in the event you are missing any credits.
- 5. Are the three GWSPH School Requirements (Academic Integrity Quiz, CITI Training and 8 Hours of Professional Enhancement) required for all GWSPH degree programs?**
 - Yes. Please note: If you entered your degree program prior to summer 2014, you are not required to complete the Plagiarism Quiz.
- 6. How long will it take to receive my degree?**
 - The Office of Student Records will provide you with a deadline for graduation clearance prior to beginning your audit. After the graduation clearance deadline, you can expect your diploma to arrive within 8-12 weeks from the university's official award date for the semester in which you have applied. For a list of official award dates, please visit <http://registrar.gwu.edu/application-deadlines>. The Office of the Registrar is also responsible for sending all diplomas; please send an email to diploma@gwu.edu if you do not receive your diploma within the given timeframe.
- 7. When will my degree reflect on my transcript?**
 - After an audit is completed on your record for the semester in which you have applied for graduation, your transcript will reflect within 5-10 business days. This timeframe is solely based on all requirements being met.
- 8. Can I make changes to my name or address after my degree has been awarded?**
 - Yes. If your diploma has been processed and mailed prior to your request to

change, there will be a penalty to reprint your degree. For further details please visit <http://registrar.gwu.edu/diplomas>.

9. I initially registered for my special course requirements (Practicum/Culminating Experience/Internship/Residency/Final Project/Thesis) with the intent to finish in the fall semester. After several conversations with my program director, the work for the special course will not be finalized until the spring semester. Will I need to re-register for my special course?

- You will not need to re-register for your special course. The original course will remain on your transcript until the final grade is submitted. If you have no other course work to complete, you will be required to register for the status “Continuing Research”. This will allow you to remain in good standing with the university for another full semester. If you have applied for graduation, you should re-apply before the posted deadline for the next semester. For deadlines to apply for graduation, please visit: <http://registrar.gwu.edu/application-deadlines>.

10. I have been “Out of Status” for over a year and I only have my special course requirements (Practicum/Culminating Experience/Internship/Residency/Final Project/Thesis) to finalize, Will I have to reapply for admission?

- Yes. For further details on the readmission process, please visit: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/forms>

11. Why did I receive a letter indicating “I was not cleared to graduate”, but I have finished all of my program requirements?

- You received the letter for one or two reasons:
 - A **requirement** was not met by the stated deadline for the semester in which you have applied to graduate.
 - A **grade** was not submitted by the stated deadline for the semester in which you have applied to graduate.

12. I have accepted a job/internship/admission to medical school and I need my degree verified. Where do I go?

- The Office of Student Records can provide a “Letter of Completion” only after all degree requirements have been met. Before you make a request, please make sure you have met all degree/school requirements. Otherwise, the Office of Student Records will not supply official documentation. You can find the Request Form on their Website: <https://registrar.gwu.edu/certifications>

13. I applied for spring graduation to participate/walk in the annual May Commencement Ceremony but I will not finalize my program requirements until summer. What will I need to do?

- You will need to reapply as a summer graduate on line before the July 1 deadline and register for Continuous Enrollment. After the on line portal closes, ALL paper

applications will be charged a \$35 processing fee regardless of submission date.

PLEASE NOTE: The same rule will apply to any student finalizing your program requirements in the fall semester. Please consult your academic advisor regarding the appropriate registration.

14. I served as a Graduate Teaching Assistant; does the credit for UNIV 0250 count toward my graduation credits?

- If you are pursuing an undergraduate or master's degree, the Graduate Teaching Assistant course **WILL NOT** count toward your credits for graduation. Currently, only doctoral level students will receive credit for this course.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Graduate Credit Requirement: 45 graduate credits are required.
2. Course Requirements: Successful completion of the Core Courses and the Program-Specific Courses are required.
3. Grade Point Requirements: A 3.0 (B average) overall grade point average is required.
4. Time Limit Requirement: The degree must be completed within four years.
5. Transfer Credit Policy: Up to 12 graduate credits that have not been applied to a previous graduate degree may be transferred to the MPH. Credits must have been earned from an accredited institution in the last 3 years with a grade point average of a 3.0 or better.
6. CITI Training requirement: All students are required to complete training regarding human subject protection regulation and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability of 1996 Initiative (HIPPA). To fulfill this requirement, you must complete the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) Course in The Protection of Human Research Subjects.
7. Integrity Quiz and Plagiarism requirements: All students are required to review to review the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity and take the quiz within their first semester of study. The Code of Integrity and step-by-step instructions can be found here: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/integrity>.
8. Professional Enhancement requirements: Students must participate in 8 hours of professional enhancement hours. Professional Enhancement activities supplement the academic curriculum and help prepare students to participate actively in the professional community. Opportunities for these hours are regularly advertised via the Milken Institute SPH listserv and the department's listserv. This form should be submitted BEFORE you apply to graduate and can be found here: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/forms>.

USEFUL EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOSTATISTICS WEBSITES

- American Medical Association**
<http://www.ama-assn.org/>
- American Public Health Association**
www.apha.org
- Association of Schools of Public Health**
<http://www.asph.org/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention HIV/AIDS Prevention page**
http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/hiv_aids/dhap.htm
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
www.cdc.gov
- Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists**
<http://www.cste.org/>
- EpiMonitor**
<http://www.epimonitor.net/>
- GW handbook**
<http://publichealth.gwu.edu/pdf/Handbook.pdf>
- History of Epidemiology**
<http://www.epidemiology.ch/history/>
- John Snow website (UCLA)**
<http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html>
- Medscape Literature Searches**
<http://www.medscape.com/>
- Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association**
<http://dcmetropha.org/>
- National Center for Health Statistics**
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>
- National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey**
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm>
- National Health Interview Survey**
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>
- National Immunization Survey**
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nis.htm>
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development**
<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/Pages/index.aspx>
- National Survey of Family Growth**
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg.htm>
- Pan American Health Organization**
<http://www.paho.org/>
- Emory Public Health employment site**
<http://cfusion.sph.emory.edu/PHEC/phec.cfm>
- Roper Center for Public Opinion Research**
<http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/>
- Society of Epidemiologic Research - they are launching a student caucus group, too**
<http://www.epiresearch.org/index.php>
- Statistical help “movies”**
<http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/seminars/>
- The National Institutes of Health**
www.nih.gov
- UN AIDS (Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS)**
<http://www.unaids.org/>
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**
<http://www.usaid.gov/>
- US Census Bureau**
<http://www.census.gov/>
- World Health Organization**
<http://www.who.int/>
- Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System**
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>
- And many, many, more*