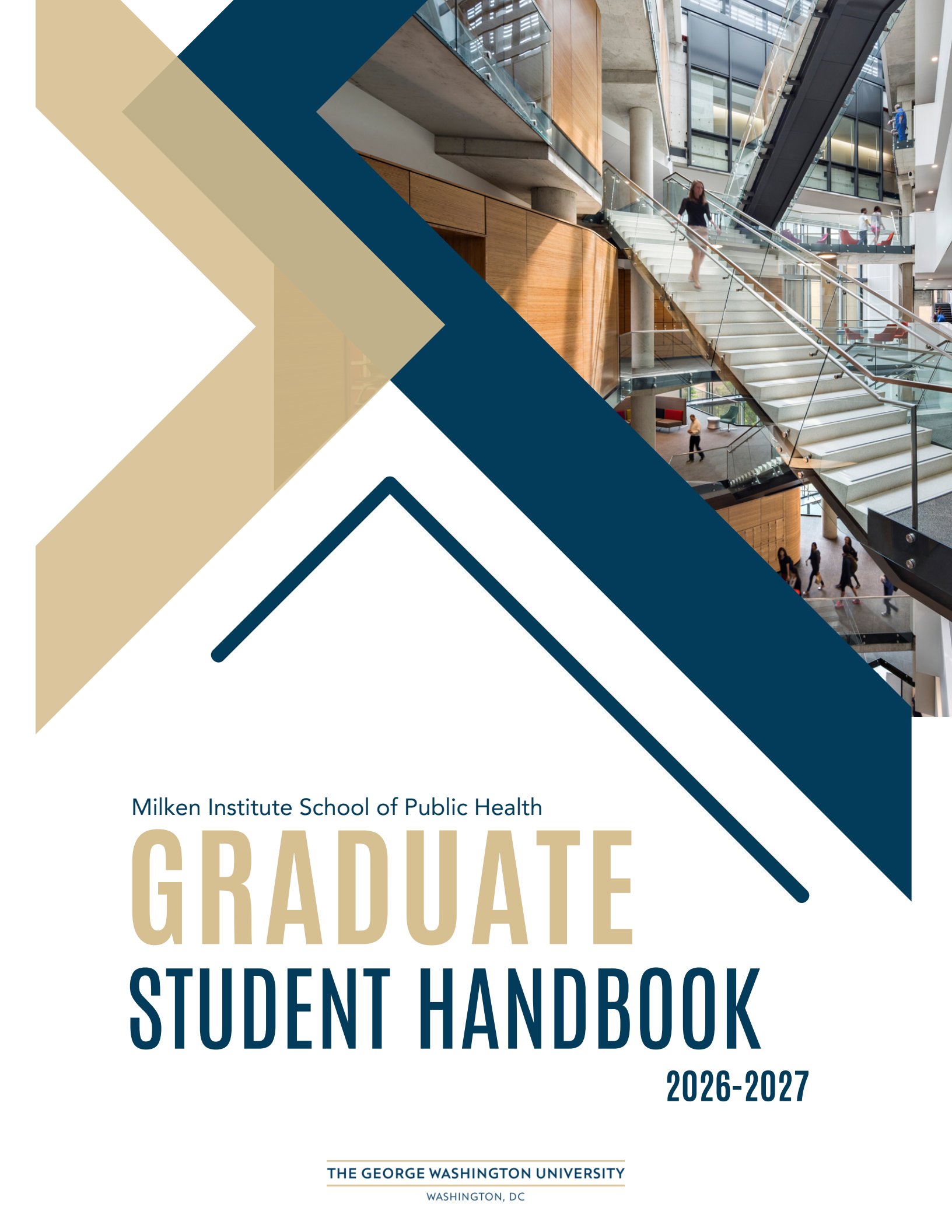




Milken Institute School of Public Health

# GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON, DC

# The GWSPH Graduate Student Handbook

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The Graduate Student Handbook serves as a repository for policies and procedures that govern The Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH) at The George Washington University (GW) and students' academic rights and responsibilities. This handbook applies to all of the doctoral, masters and graduate certificate programs in the school. Students are expected to be knowledgeable about these policies and procedures. In addition, the handbook provides information and references about GWSPH and its academic programs.

The Graduate Student Handbook contains policies not currently posted in the [University Bulletin](#) (including the GWSPH-specific section), a complete source of university-wide information. Students are responsible for ensuring they review and abide by the policies and procedures in both locations. Information in this handbook is accurate as of August 24, 2026. The university and GWSPH reserve the right to change courses, programs, and fees, or to make other administrative and policy/procedure changes deemed necessary or desirable, giving advance notice of these changes when possible.

This handbook is updated on an annual basis and can be found on the [Milken Institute School of Public Health website](#).

*The George Washington University does not unlawfully discriminate against any person on any basis prohibited by federal law, the District of Columbia Human Rights Act, or other applicable law, including without limitation, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, pregnancy, or familial or marital status. This policy covers all programs, services, policies, and procedures of the university, including admission to education programs and employment.*

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# Glossary

|         |                                                                 |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| APEx    | MPH Applied Practice Experience                                 |
| ASPPH   | Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health            |
| BA      | Bachelor of Arts                                                |
| BS      | Bachelor of Science                                             |
| CAP     | GW Counseling and Psychological Services                        |
| CAHME   | Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education  |
| CASCE   | Council on Accreditation of Strength and Conditioning Education |
| CE      | Culminating Experience                                          |
| CEPH    | Council on Education for Public Health                          |
| CESA    | Conflict Education and Student Accountability                   |
| CHES    | Certified Health Education Specialist                           |
| CITI    | Collaborative IRB Training Initiative                           |
| CPT     | Curricular Practical Training                                   |
| CR/NC   | Credit/No Credit                                                |
| CSCS    | Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist                  |
| CSPS    | Certified Special Population Specialist                         |
| CV      | Curriculum Vitae                                                |
| DAPEx   | DrPH Applied Practice Experience                                |
| DBB     | Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics                  |
| D.C.    | Washington, D.C.; District of Columbia                          |
| DrPH    | Doctor of Public Health                                         |
| DrPH@GW | Online Doctor of Public Health                                  |
| DSS     | Disability Support Services                                     |
| EOH     | Department of Environmental and Occupational Health             |
| EPI     | Department of Epidemiology                                      |
| EPR     | Expedited Portfolio Review                                      |
| ETD     | Electronic Thesis/Dissertation                                  |
| EXNS    | Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences                   |
| FACHCA  | Fellow of the American College of Health Care Administrators    |
| FACHE   | Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives         |
| FAQ     | Frequently Asked Questions                                      |
| FTC     | Full-Time Certification                                         |
| GA      | Graduate Assistant                                              |
| GAO     | United States Government Accountability Office                  |
| GH      | Department of Global Health                                     |
| GIA     | Graduate Instructional Assistant                                |
| GPA     | Grade-Point Average                                             |
| GSL     | Graduate Student Lecturer                                       |
| GTA     | Graduate Teaching Assistant                                     |

|             |                                                                            |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GTAP        | Graduate Teaching Assistantship Program                                    |
| GW or GWU   | The George Washington University                                           |
| GWPD        | The George Washington Police Department                                    |
| GWSPH       | The Milken Institute School of Public Health                               |
| HIPAA       | Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996                |
| HPM         | Department of Health Policy and Management                                 |
| HTC         | Half-Time Certification                                                    |
| I           | Incomplete grade                                                           |
| ILE         | Integrative Learning Experience                                            |
| IPG         | In Progress grade                                                          |
| IPE         | Interprofessional Experience                                               |
| IRB         | Institutional Review Board                                                 |
| ISO         | GW International Services Office                                           |
| LOA         | Leave of Absence                                                           |
| MCHES       | Master Certified Health Education Specialist                               |
| MHA         | Master of Health Administration                                            |
| MHA@GW      | Online Master of Health Administration                                     |
| MPH         | Master of Public Health                                                    |
| MPH@GW      | Online Master of Public Health                                             |
| MS          | Master of Science                                                          |
| MSCHE       | Middle States Commission on Higher Education                               |
| NADrPH      | National Association for Doctors of Public Health                          |
| NSCA-CPT    | Certified Personal Trainer                                                 |
| OAPH        | Office of Applied Public Health                                            |
| OIE         | Office of Inclusive Excellence                                             |
| OIP         | Office of International Programs                                           |
| ORE         | Office of Research Excellence                                              |
| OSA         | Office of Student Affairs                                                  |
| PCH         | Department of Prevention and Community Health                              |
| PE          | Professional Enhancement                                                   |
| PhD         | Doctor of Philosophy                                                       |
| PHSA        | Public Health Student Association                                          |
| QandA       | Question and Answer                                                        |
| RTF Classic | Registration Transaction Form-Classic                                      |
| SAP         | Satisfactory Academic Progress                                             |
| SELF        | Student Emergency Loan Fund                                                |
| SOPHAS      | Schools of Public Health Application Service (central application service) |
| UHP         | Urban Health Program                                                       |
| VTSC        | Virginia Science and Technology Campus                                     |
| Z           | Unauthorized withdrawal grade                                              |

# The Milken Institute School of Public Health

The Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH) is committed to excellence in scholarship to advance the health of the populations of our local, national, and global communities. Our mission is to advance population health, wellbeing, and social justice locally, nationally, and globally by applying public health knowledge to enhance policy, practice, and management; conducting rigorous, basic, applied, and translational research; and educating the next generation of public health leaders, policy makers, practitioners, scientists, advocates, and managers. Through our core values of scholarship, leadership, scientific rigor, and policy analysis, GWSPH aims to foster the next generation of thought leaders, practitioners, policy makers, and scientists who will transform public health worldwide, especially for underserved populations. To learn about the school's history, mission and vision visit the school's [website](#).

## Location

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | Washington, D.C. 20052  
Phone: 202-994-7400 | Fax: 202-994-3773

[Interactive Map](#) of GW Foggy Bottom Campus

## School Leadership

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 7th Floor | Washington, D.C. 20052  
Phone: 202-994-5179 | Fax: 202-994-3773

| School Leadership                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Kelly A. Gebo, MD, MPH</a><br>Michael and Lori Milken Dean of Public Health<br><a href="mailto:gwsphdean@gwu.edu">gwsphdean@gwu.edu</a>                                                                     | <a href="#">Jane Hyatt Thorpe, JD</a><br>Senior Associate Dean for Academic, Student, and Faculty Affairs<br><a href="mailto:jthorpe@gwu.edu">jthorpe@gwu.edu</a><br>202-994-4183 |
| <a href="#">Christopher Mores, ScD, SM</a><br>Interim Senior Associate Dean for Research and Innovation<br>Professor, Department of Global Health<br><a href="mailto:cmores@gwu.edu">cmores@gwu.edu</a><br>202-994-0981 | <a href="#">Gene Migliaccio, DrPH, MPH</a><br>Associate Dean for Applied Public Health<br><a href="mailto:geno@gwu.edu">geno@gwu.edu</a>                                          |

| School Leadership                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Sara Wilensky</a> , PhD, JD<br>Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs<br><a href="mailto:wilensky@gwu.edu">wilensky@gwu.edu</a><br>202-994-4126               | <a href="#">Lorien Abrams</a> , ScD, MA<br>Associate Dean for PhD/MS Programs<br><a href="mailto:lorien@gwu.edu">lorien@gwu.edu</a><br>202-994-3518                    |
| <a href="#">George Gray</a> , PhD, MS<br>Associate Dean for MPH Programs<br><a href="mailto:gmgrey@gwu.edu">gmgrey@gwu.edu</a><br>202-994-7793                               | <a href="#">Monica Partsch</a><br>Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs and Program Development<br><a href="mailto:mpartsch@gwu.edu">mpartsch@gwu.edu</a><br>202-994-7418 |
| <a href="#">Sarah Crozier</a> , MA<br>Executive Director of Communications and Marketing<br><a href="mailto:sarah.crozier@gwu.edu">sarah.crozier@gwu.edu</a><br>303-868-9600 | <a href="#">Heather Renault</a><br>Assistant Dean for Student Services<br><a href="mailto:hrenault@gwu.edu">hrenault@gwu.edu</a><br>202-994-0554                       |
| <a href="#">Diana Paulraj</a> , MAM<br>Managing Director of Finance and Administration<br><a href="mailto:dpaulraj@gwu.edu">dpaulraj@gwu.edu</a><br>202-994-2330             | <a href="#">Andrew Wiss</a> , PhD, EdM<br>Assistant Dean for Academic Innovation<br><a href="mailto:awiss@gwu.edu">awiss@gwu.edu</a>                                   |

Refer to the [leadership section](#) of the school's website for information on the GWSPH deans. Information regarding GWSPH [faculty biographies and contact information](#) is available online. Any GW student or employee can be looked up by name in the [GW directory](#).

## Academic Departments and Online Programs

GWSPH offers the following graduate degrees: Master of Public Health (MPH), Master of Science (MS), Master of Health Administration (MHA), Doctor of Public Health (DrPH), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Additionally, the school offers several graduate certificates and dual degree programs. The aforementioned academic degrees and programs are offered through the following:

- Academic departments
  - [Biostatistics and Bioinformatics](#)
  - [Environmental and Occupational Health](#)
  - [Epidemiology](#)
  - [Exercise and Nutrition Sciences](#)
  - [Global Health](#)

- [Health Policy and Management](#)
- [Prevention and Community Health](#)
- Schoolwide graduate programs
  - [MPH@GW](#) (online)
  - [MPH](#) (residential)
  - [DrPH@GW](#) (online)
  - [DrPH](#) (residential)

## Accreditation

GW is accredited by the [Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#) (MSCHE). Its accreditation was reaffirmed in 2018. The next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2026-2027. The school is accredited by the [Council on Education for Public Health](#) (CEPH) until 2031. The Masters of Health Administration programs are accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education](#) (CAHME). The Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science with a concentration in Strength and Conditioning received its inaugural accreditation from the [Council on Accreditation of Strength and Conditioning Education](#) (CASCE) in 2025. GWSPH is a member of the [Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health](#) (ASPPH). For more information, students should visit the school's [website](#).

## Administrative Offices

Visit [administrative offices](#) for more information.

### Student Affairs

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 2nd floor | Washington, D.C. 20052  
 Phone: 202-994-7400 | Email: [gwsphosa@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphosa@gwu.edu)

The [Office of Student Affairs](#) (OSA) provides information and services to GWSPH students. The OSA staff strives to promote quality services by being available, resourceful, respectful of students' needs, fair and consistent with GWSPH policies and procedures, culturally competent, and responsive to faculty and student feedback. Official petitions and other administrative activities are finalized in the OSA (including any administrative action indicating the need for "dean's office" sign-off). The OSA is the first stop for students needing support, assistance, and advice on GWSPH matters. The OSA includes Admissions, Career Development, Student Financial Services, and Student Records.

The OSA handles a variety of administrative functions for students including, but not limited to:

- Student services and advisement on GWSPH policies and procedures
- GWSPH forms and publications

- GWSPH international student forms and requirements
- Registration for restricted courses
- Course evaluations
- Questions regarding GWSPH special events (e.g., orientations, Public Health Week, career fairs, Commencement, and school celebration ceremony)
- GWSPH course schedules, course caps, rooms, etc.
- Student organizations' needs such as classroom reservations

## Admissions

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 2nd floor | Washington, D.C. 20052

Residential programs | Email: [gwsphadmit@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphadmit@gwu.edu) | Phone: 202-994-2160

MPH@GW | Email: [admissions@publichealthonline.gwu.edu](mailto:admissions@publichealthonline.gwu.edu) | Phone: 855-674-2849

DrPH@GW | Email: [drphadmin@email.gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@email.gwu.edu)

MHA@GW | Email: [admissions@mha.gwu.edu](mailto:admissions@mha.gwu.edu) | Phone: 855-642-2849

The [Office of Admissions and Enrollment](#) manages enrollment into the residential graduate programs at GWSPH. In addition, the office works with the university undergraduate admissions team who is responsible for the admissions process for the undergraduate programs (see the [Undergraduate Student Handbook](#)). The Office of Admissions and Enrollment also works closely with GWSPH's online partner for the MPH@GW, MHA@GW, and DrPH@GW programs regarding admissions. The policies to which the Office of Admissions and Enrollment adheres are set by the Admissions Committee, a faculty committee made up of one voting representative from each department and the online programs.

The Office of Admissions and Enrollment can assist graduate students with the following:

- Admissions and matriculation
- International student questions and preliminary visa processing
- General scholarship process and external funding information
- New student clearance for registration
- Petitioning for readmission<sup>1</sup> or changing programs

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<sup>1</sup> [Readmission procedures vary](#). Students should contact the GWSPH Office of Admissions and Enrollment with questions.

## Student Financial Services

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 2nd floor | Washington, D.C. 20052  
Phone: 202-994-1950 | Email: [gwsphfinaid@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphfinaid@gwu.edu)

[GWSPH Student Financial Services](#) is committed to assisting students in creating a financial plan to achieve their educational goals and resolving emergent issues that pertain to federal student aid, institutional resources such as scholarships and assistantships, and managing student accounts. Staff serve as a liaison for GWSPH students and the [GW Office of Student Financial Assistance](#) and [GW Student Accounts Office](#), assisting students when functions require direct contact with these offices. Online students can visit the [GW tuition, billing, and financial aid FAQ](#) for more information.

GWSPH Student Financial Services can assist students with the following:

- Counseling on federal student aid eligibility and the application process
- Management of institutionally funded grants and scholarships
- Identification of external scholarship resources
- Assistance in managing services offered through the [GW Office of Student Financial Assistance](#) and [GW Student Accounts Office](#)

The GW Office of Student Financial Assistance maintains policies related to financial assistance and can be found [here](#), including the policy related to federal [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\) requirements](#).

### **Emergency Loan Funding**

The [GWSPH Student Emergency Loan Fund](#) (SELF) is available to qualified students managing unexpected expenses. Funding from the GWSPH SELF has a zero percent interest rate if repaid within 45 days. Students may borrow only once per semester. For more information on qualifications and how to apply, students should reach out to a representative from the [GWSPH Student Financial Services](#).

## Graduate Career Services

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 2nd floor | Washington, D.C. 20052  
Phone: 202-994-5485 | Email: [gwsphcareer@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphcareer@gwu.edu)

[GWSPH Graduate Career Services](#) is dedicated to providing the tools, resources, and recommendations required to support students and alumni confidently navigate the career management life cycle.

Graduate Career Services provides the following support for both students and alumni:

- Immediate and long-term career goal setting
- Career exploration and assessment
- Professional branding
- Resume and cover letter revisions
- Personal statement revisions
- Job search and networking strategies
- Mock interviews (e.g., jobs, academic admissions)
- Compensation package negotiation
- Employer and alumni networking events

[Handshake](#) is GW's virtual career platform. On Handshake, students and alumni may schedule career counseling appointments, seek jobs, internships, fellowships and practicum opportunities, and register for career services events.

## Student Records

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 2nd floor | Washington, D.C. 20052  
Phone: 202-994-7400 | Email: [gwsphrecords@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphrecords@gwu.edu)

The essential role of the [GWSPH Office of Student Records](#) is to provide students and faculty with guidance and administrative support as it pertains to students' academic records. In addition, the GWSPH office acts as a liaison on behalf of students with offices across the university.

The Office of Student Records assists students with the following:

- Assisting with course registration (e.g., adding, dropping, withdrawing, restricted courses) and [GWeb Information System](#)
- Clearing students for graduation
- Filing a [records petition](#)
- Registering for a [leave of absence or Continuous Enrollment](#)
- Documenting the completion of [Academic Integrity Quiz](#), [CITI Training](#), and [Professional Enhancement hours](#)
- Processing [half-time/full-time certification](#) requests
- Updating [DegreeMAP](#)
- Processing [academic forms](#)

## Academic Advising

Upon admission to GWSPH, students are assigned an academic advisor appropriate to the program in which they enrolled. Graduate academic advisors are also listed on the [GWSPH website](#). Advisors assist not only with academic counseling, but also in areas ranging from

understanding university requirements to finding campus resources to help individual students connect with the GW community. Students should communicate regularly with their advisor to discuss:

- Curriculum changes
- Selection of electives
- Academic progress
- Preparation for graduation

[DegreeMAP](#) is GW's online advising tool for use by students, advisors, and the Office of the Registrar to clear students for graduation. Students are responsible for meeting all degree requirements and may use DegreeMAP for planning and verifying these graduation requirements. If a student's degree requirements are miscategorized on DegreeMAP, they may submit a [Graduate Petition](#) to GWSPH Office of Student Records. DegreeMAP is available through the [GWeb Information System](#).

### **Online Student Support**

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 2nd Floor | Washington, D.C. 20052

MPH@GW | Email: [mphadvising@gwu.edu](mailto:mphadvising@gwu.edu) | Phone: 855-494-6740

MHA@GW | Email: [studentsuccess@mha.gwu.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@mha.gwu.edu) | Phone: 844-642-2849

DrPH@GW | Email: [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu)

Online program staff assist GWSPH students enrolled in the MPH@GW, MHA@GW, DrPH@GW in conjunction with OSA and team members from Admissions, Student Records, and Career Services. Students in the online programs also receive support from the 2U Student Success team.

### **Office of Applied Public Health**

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 7th floor | Washington, D.C. 20052

Email: [sphprac@gwu.edu](mailto:sphprac@gwu.edu)

The [Office of Applied Public Health](#) (OAPH) is the central and dedicated resource that facilitates student access to practice-based education, research, and service to strategically enhance and develop professional skills and competencies in contribution to the public health workforce. The office supports academic public health practice by building mutually beneficial relationships with communities, non-profit organizations, and healthcare and government agencies. OAPH is dedicated to practice-based education that convenes faculty, staff, students, and communities to advance social justice through reciprocal partnerships to influence local, national, and global health practice.

Through student practicums and programs such as [Urban Health Fellowship Program](#), OAPH:

- Provides a dedicated environment for schoolwide public health practice where students enhance their skills and competencies through experiential-learning and community engagement, informing their sense of responsibility to contribute to the public health workforce.
- Trains students to be influential leaders through opportunities that enhance practice, scholarship and service-learning to address the public health needs of the local, national and global communities.
- Affords students the opportunity to translate skills learned in their coursework into real-world practice through meaningful and reciprocal service-learning partnerships with communities in the nation's capital.

## Office of Inclusive Excellence

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 7th floor | Washington, D.C. 20052

The [Office of Inclusive Excellence](#) (OIE) leads the charge in fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible community for students, faculty, and staff. At GWSPH, inclusion means creating a working and learning environment where each person can participate fully to achieve success and is valued for their distinctive skills and capabilities. OIE aims to create and nurture an environment in which all members of the school community are treated equitably, contribute fully to the mission, and embrace and model the school's values.

Grounded in a commitment to addressing health disparities and systemic inequities, OIE strives to create a culture of belonging where all voices are heard, respected, and valued. Building and sustaining healthier communities through a diverse public health workforce is crucial, and rigorous research and diverse perspectives create the next generation of public health leaders. Through education, advocacy, and innovation, GWSPH empowers individuals to thrive and equips public health leaders to advance equity on a global scale.

## Office of Research Excellence

950 New Hampshire Avenue NW | 7th floor | Washington, D.C. 20052

Email: [GWSPHResearch@gwu.edu](mailto:GWSPHResearch@gwu.edu)

The [Office of Research Excellence](#) (ORE) supports the research, scholarly, and professional-development activities of faculty, staff, and students across the Milken Institute School of Public Health. ORE provides strategic guidance, resources, training, and operational support to strengthen research quality, productivity, integrity, collaboration, visibility, and impact.

Students may engage with ORE through the Student Project Oversight System, which helps determine the appropriate ethical and regulatory pathway for projects completed for academic credit. ORE also provides research integrity and compliance guidance, coordinates GWSPH

Research Day, and connects students with selected research funding, professional-development, training, presentation, and scholarly dissemination opportunities.

Additional student resources include educational programs offered through the GW Bioethics Interest Group, research communications highlighting funding and training opportunities, and guidance for navigating relevant university policies, institutional resources, and research processes. Through these programs and services, ORE promotes an ethical, accessible, and collaborative research environment in which students can develop their skills, share their scholarship, connect with the broader research community, and contribute to meaningful public health discovery.

# Policies and Procedures

This section summarizes many important policies and procedures that will help students successfully navigate their way while enrolled in a GWSPH program. Please note that in some cases, clarifications are offered in the handbook and students are expected to read the corresponding policies in the Bulletin.

***For complete information on all policies, students should review the University Bulletin including the GWSPH policy section.***

## Academic Calendars

- Current [on-campus academic calendar](#) <sup>2</sup>
- Current [MPH@GW academic calendar](#)
- Current [MHA@GW academic calendar](#)

## Credits and Courses

### Adding, Dropping, and Withdrawing from Courses

The [GW Office of the Registrar](#) helps to facilitate the registration process by providing a variety of resources for students such as instructions on how to register for classes through the [GWeb Information System](#), the registration schedule for each upcoming semester, information on waitlists, instructions for resolving holds, withdrawal and refund information, and details on ROTC and Consortium registration.

Students should meet with their academic advisor or Student Success Specialist before registering. Students are encouraged to register as early as possible, as some courses fill quickly. A [Registration Step-by-Step guide](#) is available to assist students with the [GWeb Information System](#). Students should regularly check the [University Schedule of Classes](#) to ensure they have the most up-to-date list of available courses.

The Registrar sets [deadlines](#) by which students can add, drop, and withdraw from classes, which depends on the number of weeks in the course's term. Refund policies also vary by the number of weeks in the course. The [course refund policy](#) is available through the GW Student Accounts Office and applies to both online and residential courses.

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<sup>2</sup> The residential DrPH and DrPH@GW 12-week semesters are based on the on-campus academic calendar.

Some courses, like the Culminating Experience (CE), thesis, and dissertation, require advisor approval, and a [Registration Transaction Form](#) to register. If a student has difficulty contacting their advisor or has other questions prior to enrollment, they may contact the [OSA](#). Students may add, drop, or withdraw courses:

- Online through the [GWeb Information System](#)
- Using the [Registration Transaction Form-Classic](#) (RTF Classic) which requires the approval of an academic advisor
- Submitting a [petition](#), along with substantial supporting documentation, to their academic advisor for course withdrawal consideration. Submission of a petition does not guarantee approval

Students wishing to [withdraw from all courses](#) in a semester/term should see the policy and procedure on the [Student Accounts Office website](#).

## Continuous Enrollment and Continuing Research

Students should review the section on [Continuous Enrollment Status](#).

Graduate students generally enroll in UNIV 0982 Continuous Enrollment (0 credits) when they are engaged in and appropriately registered for activities (e.g., internship, practicum, completing incomplete work) pre-approved by their academic advisor.

Continuing Research<sup>3</sup> (1 credit) is generally used when additional credits are required to complete the degree, but the student cannot yet register for their next course for a specific reason or when the student needs more time to conduct their dissertation research. Generally, it is required when students need to maintain their status during a semester but cannot register for any program-required course. Continuing Research is charged at the prevailing tuition rate at the time of registration.

***Doctoral students should refer to the [DrPH Supplement](#) and [PhD Supplement](#) for additional guidance regarding continuous enrollment and continuing research.***

In limited circumstances, students may [petition](#) to register for Continuous Enrollment rather than Continuing Research. Each petition must be accompanied by an explanation and documentation of why the student should be eligible for Continuing Enrollment.

Documentation must include a detailed timeline and summary of progress to date and a timeline for finishing the project. Submission of this documentation does not guarantee the petition will be granted. Such petitions will be considered by the academic advisor on a case-by-

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<sup>3</sup> PUBH 0920 Continuing Research - Master's (1 credit) and PUBH 0940 Continuing Research – Doctoral (1 credit)

case basis, and for one term only. Work issues and financial reasons are not considered as meeting the threshold of “unusual circumstances.”

## Transferring Credits

Graduate students may be eligible to transfer graduate credits<sup>4</sup> from an accredited institution<sup>5</sup> if they have not been applied to a previously earned graduate degree.<sup>6</sup> Only courses with a B (3.0) or better are eligible to be transferred. Transfer approval is not guaranteed; advanced approval from an academic advisor is highly recommended, particularly prior to registering for any coursework outside of the student’s enrolled program. **Not all graduate programs accept transfer credits.** The chart below details transfer credit eligibility criteria.

| Degree                                    | Credit Maximum               | Timeframe                      |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Graduate Certificate                      | Up to 3 credits <sup>7</sup> | Earned within the last 3 years |
| Master’s <sup>8</sup>                     | Up to 12 credits             | Earned within the last 3 years |
| Doctoral (48 credit program) <sup>9</sup> | Up to 12 credits             | Earned within the last 6 years |
| Doctoral (72 credit program) <sup>9</sup> | Up to 24 credits             | Earned within the last 6 years |

To request a credit transfer, students should submit one petition for each course they wish to transfer. Each request should contain:

- A completed [Graduate Records Petition Form](#)
- Syllabus of the course being transferred
- An official, sealed transcript showing the final grade of the course being transferred <sup>10</sup>
- GWSPH course equivalent (students should speak with their academic advisor to identify an appropriate equivalent course)

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<sup>4</sup> Coursework must have been taken for a letter grade and be at least 1 credit. Open-access or MOOC courses do not qualify for transfer.

<sup>5</sup> Level of accreditation (e.g., regional, professional) varies depending on the program accepting transferred credits. For example, students wishing to transfer credits into the MHA program may only do so from CAHME-accredited programs.

<sup>6</sup> Earned graduate degrees do not include (graduate) certificates.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to a credit maximum, graduate certificate transfers are limited to a maximum of one course from outside GW.

<sup>8</sup> GWSPH graduate certificate students may be eligible to transfer as many credits as meet program requirements—up to 18 credits—to a master’s degree. GWSPH graduate certificate students wishing to transfer to a degree program may apply to do so via the online change of concentration [petition](#) after completion of three or more courses and a GPA of 3.0 or above.

<sup>9</sup> The [maximum time to degree](#) for doctoral students will be adjusted, commensurate with the number of graduate credits transferred. For example, if students transfer a semester’s worth of graduate credits, they will have one fewer semester to complete the PhD.

<sup>10</sup> Transcripts are not required if the transcript in question was already submitted as part of a SOPHAS application (and verified by SOPHAS) [or](#) the course was taken at GW.

If a student wishes to be concurrently [enrolled in another school or institution](#) with the intent to transfer credits, they are required to submit a petition before registering for courses and adhere to the policy described [here](#).

This transfer policy does not apply to coursework taken through the [Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area](#) while enrolled in a GWSPH program or through established dual degrees.

### Waiving and Replacing Required Credits

In particular circumstances, a GW student may waive a required course and replace that waived course with elective credits. If the GW professor teaching the required course that the student seeks to waive agrees that the student already possesses the requisite knowledge that the course provides (e.g., by having taken a similar course in another degree program), then the student may submit a [petition](#) and be granted permission to “waive and replace” the required GW course with an equivalent number of elective credits.

Doctoral students may [petition](#) to waive a required course listed in their program of study and replace the waived course with another course that better fits their training needs. Students interested in requesting such substitutions must seek the approval of their program director to ensure that replacement classes are at the appropriate level.

### Flexible Programming

GWSPH provides flexible academic program options for graduate students so they may customize their education to meet both professional and personal needs. Residential students may take up to 15 credits online, and online students may take up to 15 credits on-campus without requiring a petition. Doctoral students should speak to their advisor prior to registering.

## Degree Completion

The chart below outlines the maximum time to degree completion, during which time students must successfully complete a minimum number of credits.

| Degree        | Maximum Time to Degree | Minimum Credits Required <sup>11</sup> |
|---------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Bachelor (BS) | 6 years                | 120 credits                            |

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<sup>11</sup> For international students, the minimum credits required is also the maximum credits allowed.

|                                      |         |                      |
|--------------------------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Graduate Certificate <sup>12</sup>   | 2 years | 12, 15 or 18 credits |
| Masters (MS, MPH, MHA) <sup>13</sup> | 5 years | 36 or 45 credits     |
| Doctoral (DrPH, PhD) <sup>14</sup>   | 7 years | 48 or 72 credits     |

## Exceptions

A student who wishes to request an exception to university or school policies and procedures, or a change in program of study, must file a [petition](#) and be approved. Petitions and any necessary documentation should be submitted to the [GWSPH Student Records Office](#). The petition will be processed electronically by the appropriate faculty and/or staff before being returned to the student with a decision. These petitions may be used to:

- [Waive and replace](#) a required course
- Register for [Continuous Enrollment instead of Continuing Research](#)
- [Transfer credits](#)
- Extend the [time limit](#) for graduation<sup>15</sup>
- Request a [leave of absence](#)
- [Withdraw](#) from a course after the deadline

## Grades

*The graduate grading system and details on the implication of specific grades are available on the [University Bulletin](#).*

### Grade of I

To finalize the approval of the I (incomplete) grade, both the instructor and student must complete the [Incomplete Grade Contract](#) before the last day of the semester/term.<sup>16</sup> An

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<sup>12</sup> The Graduate Certificate in Healthcare Corporate Compliance requires a minimum of 12 credits. The Graduate Certificate in Public Health requires a minimum of 15 credits. The Graduate Certificates in Health Administration Generalist and Health Policy require a minimum of 18 credits.

<sup>13</sup> All MS degrees require a minimum of 36 credits. All MPH and MHA degrees require a minimum of 45 credits.

<sup>14</sup> The PhD in Health Data Science (both concentrations) requires a minimum of 72 credits; all others are 48 credits

<sup>15</sup> Extensions are not guaranteed. To be considered, students must provide the following documentation in their petition: (1) status of any required applied practice and culminating experiences (if applicable); (2) the circumstances under which the exception should be granted (e.g., serious illness, family emergencies, advisor changes, difficulty obtaining dissertation data); (3) a letter of support from an advisor; (4) a detailed completion plan identifying remaining degree requirements, anticipated dates to reach program milestones (e.g., dissertation defense), and a proposed graduation date.

<sup>16</sup> Incompletes are acceptable only when the student has completed the majority of the class.

incomplete that is not changed *by the deadline noted in the contract* will convert to the grade listed in the incomplete contract and the GPA and academic standing recalculated accordingly.

A grade of *I* cannot be changed by reregistering for the course at GW or by taking its equivalent elsewhere. Students should meet with their academic advisor to discuss registration while working to finish an incomplete.

### Grade of IPG

Upon satisfactory completion of coursework for dissertation research courses, DrPH students may receive an *IPG* (In Progress) until the dissertation is complete; PhD students will receive a grade of *CR* (Credit).

### Grade-Point Average

All courses taken for graduate credit after matriculation as a GWSPH degree candidate—including those accepted to transfer from non-degree status, but excluding those audited or taken for the grade of *CR/NC* (Credit/No Credit)—are used to calculate the GPA.

## Grievances

All students have the right to file a grievance. The process varies depending on the type of grievance:

- Accessibility – The university is committed to making its physical and digital spaces accessible and usable to everyone, including people with disabilities. Barriers experienced that affect someone's ability to access GW facilities, services, websites, or other digital content should be [reported](#)
- Disability Policy Grievance Procedure – The [procedures](#) for when an individual wishes to grieve any determination under the [disability policy](#)
- Discrimination or Harassment – Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against or harassed based on a protected characteristic(s) defined in and covered by the [Equal Opportunity, Nondiscrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Non-Retaliation Policy](#) may submit reports via a centralized [Discrimination and Harassment Reporting Form](#)
- Academic Decision (including grades) – Each school has an [appeal process](#). The GWSPH policy is described below
- Privacy – The GW Privacy Office provides online forms to report [data incidents](#) or [privacy concerns](#)
- Research Misconduct – Reports of observed, suspected, or apparent misconduct in research should be submitted to the [research integrity officer](#)

- Sexual Harassment – The [Title IX Office](#) responds to reports of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, dating and/or domestic violence, and provides supportive measures to individuals affected by these issues
- Student Behavior – [Reports of alleged student misconduct](#) (including academic dishonesty but excluding Title IX-related matters) can be submitted to Conflict Education and Student Accountability

## Academic Grievance

A student may appeal an academic decision if they have cause to believe there has been an error in grading, inequity in the application of policies stated in the course syllabus, or arbitrary or capricious academic evaluation. Dissatisfaction with a grade is not grounds for an appeal. Grades may only be appealed before degree conferral.

### **Phase I: Informal Resolution**

The student should first seek an acceptable resolution on an informal basis, prior to filing a formal appeal. This informal resolution discussion must occur within the first 30 calendar days of the start of the next term.

To begin the process, the student should seek an acceptable resolution with the instructor/course director or session leader (if applicable). If a satisfactory result has not been reached after the student has discussed the academic issue with the instructor/course director, the student should consult with the student's program director. If no resolution is reached with the program director, the student should contact the department chair. In cases where the course instructor is the program director or the program director is the department chair, the student may contact the next level in the program leadership, up to and including the senior associate dean for academic, student, and faculty affairs. If no resolution has been reached with the program director and/or department chair, the student may consult with the senior associate dean for academic, student, and faculty affairs (senior associate dean, *hereafter*).

If no resolution is reached as a result of these informal attempts, the student may consider filing a formal appeal with the senior associate dean.

### **Phase II: Initiating a Formal Appeal**

A formal academic appeal will trigger a thorough review and could result in the student's grade remaining the same, being raised, or being lowered in the event the review determines that an error benefited the student.

1. To initiate the appeal process, the student must submit, in writing, a formal appeal letter with the following information to the dean within the first 60 calendar days from the start of the next term:

- a. Description of the reason(s) for requesting an appeal
  - b. Detailed description of the timeline of events
  - c. Statement explaining the resolution sought by the student
  - d. The course syllabus and any documents relevant to the appeal
2. The senior associate dean will convene a group of three impartial faculty members from the GWSPH Student Academic Appeals Committee to review the student's appeal. This group will not include committee members from the instructor's department.
3. The senior associate dean must then notify the instructor of the appeal and provide a copy of the formal request. The committee will have two weeks to review the materials before meeting separately with the instructor and the student. The instructor and student will have the opportunity to make additional comments and answer questions from the committee.
4. The committee will deliberate and communicate its decision to the senior associate dean in a written report. The senior associate dean will convey the outcome to the student and the faculty member. **The committee's decision is final.**
5. If the committee finds in favor of the instructor's initial decision, there is no further appeal, except on procedural grounds. The student may request the senior associate dean to review the procedural aspects of the case, if applicable. Requests for review must be submitted in writing, including an explanation of the basis for the appeal, within 10 days after the committee report has been provided to the student.
6. If the senior associate dean concludes that procedural violations have occurred, then they may remand the case to the department or program for a re-hearing or may take other steps to afford the student an appropriate remedy.
7. All appeals must be resolved no later than the end of the term following the term in which the course was taken and the original grade was awarded. If the committee has not reported the outcome of the appeal process by the end of the semester/term, then the appeal will go directly to the senior associate dean to settle.

## Honors and Awards

Students may be eligible for honors or awards, such as:

- Distinguished Scholar for the Milken Institute School of Public Health – Each year, this award is given to a GWSPH graduate who has excelled academically and shown commitment to scholarship through participation in research or other academic leadership activities.

- Delta Omega – Public Health master’s and doctoral students<sup>17</sup> may be eligible for admission to [Delta Omega](#), the national honors society for studies in public health. Eligibility criteria and application instructions are available on the [GW chapter webpage](#).

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

[Conflict Education and Student Accountability](#) (CESA) engages across GW to foster equitable and restorative accountability to community standards through the promotion of individual rights and communal responsibilities, support of community members to identify and repair harm, and growth of community capacity for conflict management.

All students, upon enrolling in and while attending GW, are subject to the [Code of Student Conduct](#), which includes a Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities. This code is the primary document governing non-academic student behavior. It defines prohibited conduct for students and student organizations and sets up a conduct system to address reported violations and preserve student rights.

GWSPH takes academic integrity issues seriously. It is the student’s responsibility to review, understand, and comply with GW’s [Code of Academic Integrity](#). This code sets the minimum standards for academic student conduct, defines the rights of students charged with an academic disciplinary violation, lists the procedures for resolving academic disciplinary matters, provides guidance for academic disciplinary sanctions, and addresses other issues regarding academic student conduct.

Use of generative artificial intelligence may only be used in accordance with [university guidelines](#) and course-specific policies.

## Student Status

### Continuous Enrollment Status

All students must maintain their enrollment status until they have successfully completed all program requirements. For doctoral students, this includes the dissertation defense, final approval, and submission of the dissertation. Students scheduled to defend their dissertation proposal or finish their culminating experience during the summer term must be registered in the summer session.

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<sup>17</sup> Only MPH and DrPH students are eligible for Delta Omega.

Federal and institutional financial aid resources may have separate enrollment requirements. Students should contact [GWSPH Student Financial Services](#) if they have questions.

## Leave of Absence

Requests for [Leave of Absence](#) (LOA) are managed on a case-by-case basis.

While the university does not have an official parental leave policy for students, LOA requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Students seeking parental leave are encouraged to speak with their program directors and advisors prior to submitting such a LOA request.

In some cases, students may need to register for [UNIV 0982 Continuous Enrollment](#) (0 credits) in order to maintain their active enrollment status. Continuous Enrollment differs from LOA in that Continuous Enrollment implies that the student is still studying and making progress towards their degree completion while LOA means that the student is stepping away momentarily from their studies. Therefore, students on LOA do NOT have access to school resources (e.g., library, on-campus housing, student loan deferrals, financial aid). Students on LOA have had their [maximum time to degree completion](#) paused (delayed) until they return.

## Enrolling at Another School or Institution

Once enrolled at GWSPH, graduate students are expected to complete course requirements at GWSPH. However, under limited circumstances, it is permissible to [transfer in credits](#) for coursework completed at another institution. If a student wishes to register concurrently at GW and another institution from which they wish to apply credit toward their GW degree, they must receive approval from their academic advisor in advance and submit a [petition](#). The student and any courses completed are subject to the [GWSPH transfer credit policy](#). This policy does not apply to coursework taken through the [Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area](#) while enrolled in a GWSPH program or through established dual degrees.

## Half-Time and Full-Time Certification

Students who are registered for fewer than the requisite number of credit hours may be approved for [Half-Time or Full-Time Certification](#) (HTC or FTC, respectively) if they are working on their CEs, dissertations, residencies, internships, or practicums, or preparing for comprehensive exams. Certification for graduate student financial aid is based upon the total number of credit hours a student is registered for in a given semester. Students should speak to their advisors and the [GWSPH Student Records Office](#) for more information.

## Academic Standing

Students should maintain good academic standing. Alternatives to good academic standing may include provisional admission, academic warning, academic probation, suspension, dismissal, and insufficient progress towards degree, as detailed in the in the [University Bulletin](#).

### **Good Academic Standing**

Graduate students are considered in good academic standing if they have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in coursework counting toward their degree program, and are not suspended, on academic probation, or on provisional admission.

For doctoral students, after completing all coursework (i.e., conducting dissertation research), academic standing is determined by an annual review of progress towards the completion of the dissertation by the student's advisor. Examples of progress may include developing aims, writing a preliminary literature review on the dissertation topic, developing the dissertation proposal, defending the dissertation proposal, acquiring a dataset for the proposal, and/or conducting the dissertation research. Failure to make adequate progress in doctoral studies (doctoral students only) is grounds for dismissal.

Students who are not in good academic standing will be notified by email, typically at the end of each academic term. Any student seeking to appeal academic decisions with respect to maintenance of good academic standing may do so through the appropriate academic dean (e.g., associate dean for MPH programs, associate dean for PhD/MS programs). Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Academic Warning**

The academic warning period is the first 8 credits that a student attempts. Graduates students who violate GPA or grade minimums<sup>18</sup> are given an academic warning. At the end of the warning period (8 credits), the student's progress is reevaluated. If the student's progress is deemed unsatisfactory, the student may face an automatic suspension, probation, or continued warning.

### **Academic Probation**

After the first 8 credits, graduate students may be placed on academic probation for violating GPA or grade minimums<sup>18</sup> or receiving "unacceptable progress" on their annual review (doctoral students only). Students must complete a set of requirements agreed upon by the

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<sup>18</sup> Minimum of 3.0 GPA and B- grade

appropriate associate dean,<sup>19</sup> student, and academic advisor in order to return to good academic standing (and be taken off academic probation).

To appeal an academic probation, students should email a formal appeal letter to the senior associate dean for academic, student, and faculty affairs along with any supporting evidence and references.

### **Suspension**

Graduate students may be suspended for violating GPA or grade minimums<sup>18</sup> or failing to meet academic probation conditions. Students who are suspended are withdrawn from the school. Suspended students may apply for [readmission](#) to any GWSPH program after one full calendar year from the time of suspension. To appeal a suspension, students should email a formal appeal letter to the senior associate dean for academic, student, and faculty affairs along with any supporting evidence and references.

### **Dismissal**

A student who is dismissed is withdrawn from the school. Dismissed students may apply to GWSPH after one full calendar year from the time of dismissal, though not to the program from which they were dismissed. A student who has been suspended twice is dismissed.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Students receiving federal student aid are subject to federal [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#) (SAP) requirements.

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<sup>19</sup> associate dean of PhD/MS programs (for PhD, MS); associate dean for applied public health (for DrPH); associate dean for MPH programs (for MPH); senior associate dean for academic, student, and faculty affairs (for all others)

# GWSPH Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for a number of pre-and post-enrollment activities. The following items require action on the part of the student and should be considered essential in the orientation and acclimation process. To access GW systems, the student should set up their [GW Identity](#).

Once a student has access to the GW system, they should:

## Register for Classes

Prior to [registering for classes](#), students should reach out to their [academic advisor](#) and explore the [GWSPH website](#), paying particular attention to their program page and the school's [resource page](#).

## Complete Academic Integrity Requirements

All GWSPH students are required to complete the online [GW Academic Integrity Activity](#). This requirement must be completed **within two weeks of starting coursework** at GWSPH.

## Complete Human Subjects Research Training Requirements

All GWSPH students are required to complete training regarding human subjects protection regulation and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). To fulfill this requirement, a student must complete the [Collaborative IRB Training Initiative](#) (CITI) course in the protection of human research subjects. All GWSPH students are required to complete the Social and Behavioral Research or the Biomedical Investigator course, which can be found under Human Subjects Research Training. CITI coursework must be completed before the end of the student's first semester/term and is a requirement for graduation.

Documentation of completion (certificate) should be emailed to the [GWSPH Office of Student Records](#). Additional training requirements may be required for students who plan to conduct some types of research (e.g., clinical research).

## Read the Weekly Student Newsletter

All enrolled GWSPH students receive a weekly newsletter, sent to their @gwu.edu email address. The Monday newsletter compiles all the important deadlines, events, and announcements for the coming weeks. It is advised that all students read the student newsletter each week to be aware of current events, activities, and updates.

Students may receive additional newsletters from their program and/or department.

## **Complete Pathways to Public Health (if applicable)**

GWSPH students who enroll in any non-MPH graduate program (e.g., MHA, MS, PhD) without a prior degree from an CEPH-accredited school or program of public health or enroll in the DrPH program are required to successfully pass the zero-credit, self-paced, online course [PUBH 6080 Pathways to Public Health](#). There is no fee for this course. It is a required course for graduation and must be completed within the term the academic advisor recommends. This course provides content that complies with standard graduate learning objectives set by CEPH for all non-MPH programs.

All incoming DrPH students (regardless of prior degrees) are required to complete the PUBH 6080 Pathways to Public Health course by **September 15**.

## **Complete the Graduate Teaching Assistantship Program (if applicable)**

Students are required to take the [Graduate Teaching Assistantship Program](#) (GTAP) course in order to serve as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA), Graduate Instructional Assistant (GIA), or Graduate Student Lecturer (GSL). This zero-credit class is available online and must be completed prior to the semester in which the GTA/GIA/GSL is to occur (credits do not count towards degree requirements). Students in the PhD in Health Data Science program are required to complete the GTAP (optional for all other doctoral students). Students should consult with their doctoral advisor or program director to register.

## **Participate in Professional Enhancement Activities**

All degree-seeking students at GWSPH are required to attend a minimum of 8 hours of [professional enhancement](#) (PE) activities during their program. These activities supplement the academic curriculum and help prepare students to actively participate in the professional community. They also enhance practical knowledge and awareness of public health issues—either in general or in a student’s specific area of study.

Students fulfill this requirement by attending workshops, seminars, live webinars (recorded webinars or meetings do not fulfill this requirement), or other relevant professional meetings. If a student is unsure of whether an activity is appropriate as a PE activity, they should reach out to an advisor to obtain approval at least 48 hours prior to the PE activity. In the inquiry, the student should include information such as the name of the conference and objectives of the activity, so the advisor can determine if the activity is valid for PE credit. Once PE hours are

complete, the student should submit their [documentation](#) to the [GWSPH Office of Student Records](#).

## Plan for Applied Practice and Culminating Experiences

Most graduate students complete applied practice and/or culminating experiences as part of their degree requirements. These experiences may take on different names (e.g., APEx, DAPEX, practicum, internship, residency, fellowship, CE, Capstone, thesis, dissertation) but they all require advanced planning and preparation. For more information on these requirements, students should:

- Review their program guide
- Visit the [GWSPH Office of Applied Public Health](#) website, which offers resources for students preparing for an applied practice experience
- Discuss requirements with their program director, academic advisor and/or departmental practice teams
- Complete prerequisites, which may include coursework, orientations, [CITI training](#), and/or [Interprofessional Education Experience](#) (IPE)

## Prepare to Graduate

Degrees are awarded three times per year, at the end of spring, summer, and fall semesters. The formal commencement ceremonies occur annually in May and include the University Hooding Ceremony (specifically for doctoral graduates on campus), the Milken Institute School of Public Health Celebration (on campus), and University Commencement (on the National Mall).

Students are eligible to graduate after they have completed all degree and non-academic requirements (e.g., CITI training, PE hours), have no financial obligations to the university, and have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. The degree designation (i.e., BS, MS, MPH, MHA, DrPH, or PhD) can be used after the student's name when all degree requirements are completed.

To ensure a smooth graduation process, students should maintain regular communications with their academic advisors, review and complete program requirements in a timely manner, and be responsive to emailed alerts. For more information, students should visit the [GWSPH Graduation website](#). Students are required to complete the online [Application for Graduation](#) to be eligible for graduation.

## Become an Alum

Upon graduation, students join the ranks of accomplished GW alumni. Alumni are automatically granted membership to the [GWSPH Alumni Association](#) and [GW Alumni](#) (university association).

Alumni are encouraged to stay up-to-date on GWSPH events, job opportunities, featured alumni, and other information through the Alumni Newsletter and [GW Public Health LinkedIn page](#). To subscribe to the Alumni Newsletter, students should make sure their [preferred email address](#) is up-to-date. Students will automatically start receiving the Alumni Newsletter after graduation to their listed preferred email address.

GW alumni have lifetime access to career services, discounts and special offers, and learning opportunities. The [Alumni Course Audit Program](#) allows GW alumni the opportunity to attend a wide selection of GW residential courses on a not-for-credit basis for a reduced price. See all benefits and perks on the [university website](#).

## Earn Certifications (optional)

The table below highlights some of the accrediting bodies and recommended certifications that may complement students' academic degrees. Students interested in becoming members or certified are encouraged to speak with an academic advisor.

| Organization                                                                | Certifications                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">National Board of Public Health Examiners</a>                   | Certified Public Health (CPH)                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <a href="#">National Commission for Health Education Credentialing Inc.</a> | Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES)<br>Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES)                                                                                            |
| <a href="#">American College of Health Care Administrators</a>              | Fellow of the American College of Health Care Administrators (FACHCA)                                                                                                                           |
| <a href="#">American College of Healthcare Executives</a>                   | Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE)                                                                                                                                 |
| <a href="#">National Strength and Conditioning Association</a>              | Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS)<br>Certified Special Population Specialist (CSPS)<br>Certified Personal Trainer (NSCA-CPT)<br>Tactical Strength and Conditioning (TSAC-F) |
| <a href="#">American Council on Exercise</a>                                | Multiple                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <a href="#">International Society of Sports Nutrition</a>                   | Certified Sports Nutritionist from the International Society of Sports Nutrition (CISSN)                                                                                                        |

| Organization                                     | Certifications |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <u>American College of Sports Medicine</u>       | Multiple       |
| <u>National Environmental Health Association</u> | Multiple       |
| <u>Board of Certified Safety Professionals</u>   | Multiple       |

# Student Life and Other Resources

## Counseling and Psychological Services

University Student Center | 800 21st Street, NW | Ground Floor | Washington, D.C. 20052  
Phone: 202-994-5300 | Email: [counsel@gwu.edu](mailto:counsel@gwu.edu)

The [GW Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAP) works collaboratively with students to provide compassionate, comprehensive, and inclusive mental health services that foster emotional and personal development. Through counseling, outreach, campus partnerships, and education and training, CAP engages with the entire GW community to promote a campus culture of holistic well-being. CAP counselors provide a safe, non-judgmental and confidential environment for students to discuss concerns, and are committed to respecting and promoting the value of diversity at the university, as well as providing culturally sensitive counseling and psychological services to the GW community.

## Safety and Security

Academic Center | 801 22nd Street, NW | Washington, D.C. 20052  
Emergency Phone: 202-994-6111 | Non-Emergency Phone: 202-994-6110  
GWSPH Security Desk | Phone: 202-994-8800

The [GW Police Department](#) (GWPD) provides residential hall security and patrol services to the Foggy Bottom and Mount Vernon campuses and oversees security at the Virginia Science and Technology Campus (VTSC). GWPD also coordinates safety and security for a variety of on-campus special events, including Commencement, Alumni and Families Weekend, and dignitary visits.

For up-to-date safety, security, and university operating status, students should visit the [campus advisories website](#).

## Student Organizations

[Student organizations](#) provide students with an opportunity to explore interests, sharpen skills, and learn about themselves and others while enhancing the academic mission of the university. GW's 500+ student organizations offer students opportunities to get involved and create community.

## Public Health Student Association

The [GW Public Health Student Association](#) (PHSA) comprises current GWSPH graduate and undergraduate students. PHSA organizes community service, networking, social, educational, and professional events. Joining the PHSA is an excellent opportunity for students to develop their interests in public health and to get involved in the D.C. and GW public health communities.

## University Student Services Offices

Students have access to the following services offered by the university.

- [Academic Resources for Athletes](#)
- [Academic Technologies](#)
- [Center for Interfaith and Spiritual Life](#)
- [GW Center for Career Services](#)
- [Disability Support Services](#)
- [First-Generation Students](#)
- [Gelman Library](#)
- [GW Bookstore](#)
- [GWorld Card Services](#)
- [Himmelfarb Library](#)
- [Information Technology Services](#)
- [International Services Office](#)
- [Multicultural Services](#)
- [Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service](#)
- [Office of Military and Veteran Student Services](#)
- [Printing Services](#)
- [GW Student Financial Assistance](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Writing Center](#)

# DrPH Supplement

The DrPH Supplement serves as a resource for all Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) students in GWSPH. It includes information on the policies and procedures for navigating through the DrPH program. This supplement augments information found elsewhere in the Graduate Student Handbook and also in the DrPH program guide. The Graduate Student Handbook will be updated as needed and can be found on the [GWSPH Student Resources](#) page.

*University and school policies and procedures, as outlined in the University Bulletin, Student Handbook, and GWSPH website, apply to DrPH students*

## Chapter 1 – Milken Institute School of Public Health

Students should review the appropriate sections in the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [The Milken Institute School of Public Health](#)
- [School Leadership](#)

The director of the DrPH program is:

**Marsha Regenstein, PhD**  
[marshar@gwu.edu](mailto:marshar@gwu.edu)  
202-994-8662

## Chapter 2 – DrPH Leadership and Administrative Overview

### DrPH Leadership and Faculty

#### Program Director

To provide oversight, the DrPH program director works with a DrPH committee to govern the operations of the program. The director of the DrPH program is responsible for all administrative affairs of the program, including administration of academic conduct, standards, and requirements, and serves as the chair of the DrPH governance committee. In addition, the director is responsible for oversight and recommendations for admissions and fellowship support, matching advisors with students, approving DrPH dissertation committee chairs and members, advising dissertation committees on interpretation of policies and requirements, and ruling on all petitions in accordance with GWSPH and university guidelines.

### DrPH Governance Committee

The DrPH governance committee provides governance of the schoolwide DrPH program. The committee is comprised of the DrPH program director, a faculty representative from every department of GWSPH, and up to three student representatives (two students in pre-candidacy and one student in post-candidacy).

The committee is responsible for advising and decision-making on a number of topics, including admissions, student funding, DAPEx, curriculum, student progress, dismissals, comprehensive exam, and dissertation. Sub-committees are formed as necessary.

| Current Members of the DrPH Governance Committee                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Marsha Regenstein</a> , PhD<br>Director, DrPH Program<br>Professor, Health Policy and Management<br><a href="mailto:marshar@gwu.edu">marshar@gwu.edu</a>               | <a href="#">Ricky Allen</a> , PhD, MHSA, MDiv<br>Adjunct Professor, Health Policy and Management<br><a href="mailto:rdallen@gwu.edu">rdallen@gwu.edu</a> |
| <a href="#">Adam Ciarleglio</a> , PhD, MS<br>Associate Professor, Biostatistics and Bioinformatics<br><a href="mailto:aciarleglio@gwu.edu">aciarleglio@gwu.edu</a>                 | <a href="#">Abigail Garvey Wilson</a> , PhD, MPH<br>Teaching Assistant Professor, Epidemiology<br><a href="mailto:algw@gwu.edu">algw@gwu.edu</a>         |
| <a href="#">George Gray</a> , PhD, MS<br>Associate Dean for MPH Programs<br>Professor, Environmental and Occupational Health<br><a href="mailto:gmgray@gwu.edu">gmgray@gwu.edu</a> | <a href="#">Feygele Jacobs</a> , DrPH, MS, MPH<br>Professor, Health Policy and Management<br><a href="mailto:feygelej@gwu.edu">feygelej@gwu.edu</a>      |
| <a href="#">Geraldyn Johnson</a> , DDS, MPH<br>Adjunct Professor, Global Health<br><a href="mailto:gsjohnson@gwu.edu">gsjohnson@gwu.edu</a>                                        | <a href="#">Derek Licina</a> , DrPH, MPH<br>Adjunct Professor, Global Health<br><a href="mailto:licinadj@gwu.edu">licinadj@gwu.edu</a>                   |
| <a href="#">Karen “Kam” McDonnell</a> , PhD<br>Associate Professor, Prevention and Community Health<br><a href="mailto:kmcdonne@gwu.edu">kmcdonne@gwu.edu</a>                      | <a href="#">Nino Paichadze</a> , MD, MPH<br>Associate Research Professor, Global Health<br><a href="mailto:npaichadze1@gwu.edu">npaichadze1@gwu.edu</a>  |
| <a href="#">Emily Peca</a> , DrPH, MA<br>Adjunct Professor, Global Health<br><a href="mailto:epeca@gwu.edu">epeca@gwu.edu</a>                                                      | <a href="#">Jack Sandberg</a> , PhD, MA<br>Professor, Global Health<br><a href="mailto:jsandber@gwu.edu">jsandber@gwu.edu</a>                            |

| Current Members of the DrPH Governance Committee                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Jen Skillicorn</a> , DrPH, MPH<br>Adjunct Professor, Health Policy and Management<br><a href="mailto:skilli_j@gwu.edu">skilli_j@gwu.edu</a> | <a href="#">Amita Vyas</a> , PhD, MHS<br>Professor, Prevention and Community Health<br><a href="mailto:avyas@gwu.edu">avyas@gwu.edu</a> |
| Nasreen Al-Quaid, MS<br>Student Representative, DrPH Cohort '24<br><a href="mailto:naa169@gwu.edu">naa169@gwu.edu</a>                                   | Steven Haden, MSW, MBA<br>Student Representative, DrPH Cohort '25<br><a href="mailto:steven.haden@gwu.edu">steven.haden@gwu.edu</a>     |
| TBD<br>Student Representative, DrPH Cohort '26                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                         |

### **Faculty**

Since the DrPH program is a schoolwide program, students have access to diverse faculty who cover various areas of public health. The faculty who teach in the DrPH program come from GWSPH, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the School of Law, federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations. To learn more about DrPH faculty, students should visit the [DrPH Faculty Directory](#).

### **Advising**

The DrPH program employs a three-stage approach to advising, supported by academic advisors, faculty advisors, and dissertation advisors.

#### ***Academic Advisor***

Academic advisors are the principal contact for students in their first semester of the program. They assist students with forms processing, course registration, university policy support, and general educational guidance. They also assist in guiding the student throughout the program providing support with sequencing, scheduling, and program administrative support (e.g., signing forms). Academic advisors can be contacted through the DrPH program office at [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu). Questions about any aspect of the program should be directed to academic advisors. These advisors are dedicated exclusively to the DrPH program, providing students with the most timely resource for their program-related questions. Any variation from the established program of study requires the approval of the academic advisor, on behalf of and in consultation with the DrPH program director. Academic advisors continue to support DrPH students throughout all phases of the program.

### ***Faculty Advisor***

DrPH faculty advisors are pivotal to the student's progression through the pre-candidacy phase. Students will have the chance to meet faculty members through classes and online "meet and greet" events throughout the fall semester. Students will be assigned a faculty advisor before the beginning of the spring semester. The DrPH faculty advisor role supports the school's commitment to student development by:

- Mentoring the student in their development as a scholar and professional, including addressing interpersonal and presentation skills as necessary.
- Guiding the student to consider the focus of their DAPEx and dissertation, 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 (e.g., knowledge of foundations, critical literature reviews, inquiry and research methods, clarity of written and oral thought, professional development, technological skills, 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, preceptor, and other committee members. The faculty advisor may help the student identify faculty members who have aligned academic and practice-based interests and may be suitable for sitting on the student's dissertation committee. DrPH faculty advisors may continue to work with the student through the dissertation project either in the role of committee chair or member; however, it is not presumed that the DrPH faculty advisor will serve as an advisor for the student's dissertation.

### ***Dissertation Chair***

The dissertation committee chair serves as the DAPEx and dissertation advisor when the student has identified their DAPEx project idea and selects their committee chair. At this point the chair also becomes the student's new faculty advisor and supports the student's dissertation work comprehensively. The chair must be a full-, part-time, or adjunct faculty at GWSPH. See additional details in [Chapter 5](#).

## **Registration**

Students should review the appropriate sections in the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [Adding, Dropping, and Withdrawing from Courses](#)
- [Continuous Enrollment Status](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Academic Advising \(DegreeMAP\)](#)

- [Complete Pathways to Public Health](#)<sup>20</sup>

DrPH students must register for specified core class(es) during summer one and summer two of their program of study. Students may register for additional classes during these summer sessions. In subsequent summer semesters, students may opt to register for one or more summer classes, but it is not required. Students scheduled to defend their dissertation or dissertation proposal during the summer term must be registered in the summer session.

International students and students receiving federal financial aid are responsible for ensuring they maintain the necessary enrollment requirements. Students are strongly encouraged to plan their sequencing and credit allocation well in advance.

Students are responsible for reviewing their academic progress via [DegreeMAP](#) and ensuring that the listed curriculum is accurate. They are also responsible for completing and submitting all required registration materials. Students should always retain copies of all registration transactions submitted to the university or GWSPH. Registration assistance may be needed for the following courses:

- [Dissertation Portfolio](#): Students must take several dissertation portfolio courses, in order: PUBH 8703, 8705, 8707, 8709, 8711, 8713, and 8715.
  - DrPH students receive credit for PUBH 8709 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Defense when they have successfully defended their proposal, as evidenced by the submission of a signed [Dissertation Proposal Defense Report Form](#) to the DrPH program office at [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu).
  - DrPH students receive credit for PUBH 8715 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense when they have successfully defended their final dissertation, as evidenced by the submission of a [Dissertation Defense Report Form](#) to the DrPH program office at [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu).
  - Students must be registered in PUBH 8715 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense or Continuous Enrollment (UNIV 0982) in the term in which the dissertation is defended, including the summer term, if that is when the defense is scheduled.
- [Continuous Enrollment \(UNIV 0982\)](#): If all other program requirements have been met and the program director approves, students **may** be eligible to register for Continuous Enrollment (UNIV 0982) for up to one academic year.
- [Continuing Research \(PUBH 0940\)](#): If a student requires more time to complete their dissertation after using their one year of Continuous Enrollment (UNIV 0982), the student must register for one credit of Continuing Research (PUBH 0940) in a fall and/or

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<sup>20</sup> All incoming DrPH students are required to complete the PUBH 6080 Pathways to Public Health course by **September 15**. Instructions were emailed to all incoming students by the DrPH program office prior to the start of the school year. For questions or assistance in registering, students should email [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu).

spring term. Continuing Research credits cannot be used to satisfy any of the credit requirements for the DrPH.

## Communications

Students should review the appropriate section in the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [Read the Weekly Student Newsletter](#)

In addition to the weekly student newsletter, all DrPH students receive a monthly newsletter from the DrPH program. This newsletter provides information on the DrPH community, lists opportunities for DAPEx, posts dissertation presentations, and features profiles on DrPH students and happenings of the [National Association for Doctors of Public Health](#) (NADrPH).

## Chapter 3 - DrPH Curriculum Overview

The mission of the interdisciplinary DrPH program is to educate and train public health thought leaders and practitioners ready to shape public health policy and practice discourse to lead organizational and societal change in the U.S. and worldwide. This program delivers a practice-based curriculum to equip public health leaders with skills for the development, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs and policies, and resolution of complex systematic problems.

The DrPH program training utilizes health policy and global health opportunities exclusive to Washington, D.C. to prepare students for senior-level public health leadership roles in the U.S. and globally. With a focus on leadership and practice, the DrPH program provides a well-rounded curriculum that meets the diverse needs of students and is taught by public health professionals with expertise in global health, environmental and occupational health, health policy and management, prevention and community health, exercise and nutrition, biostatistics, and epidemiology.

The DrPH degree is designed to promote the principles of academic public health practice. Longstanding and more recent challenges illustrate the need for public health professionals who can provide the leadership to expand and strengthen the U.S. and global public health systems. The DrPH degree is designed to prepare professionals with the necessary skills to provide this leadership.

In this 48-credit doctoral program, students will take:

- 38 credits of required foundational coursework
- 10 credits of dissertation portfolio coursework

For a full list of program competencies, required curricula, and sequencing schedules, students should refer to their [program guide](#).

## Chapter 4 - DrPH Phases

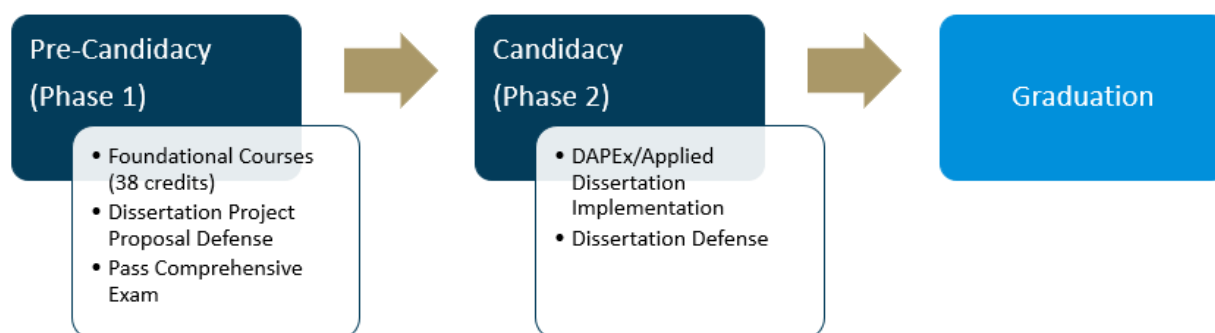
### Timeline for Completion of the Program

Students should review the appropriate section of the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [Degree Completion](#)

It is expected that most, if not all, students will successfully fulfill all requirements of the DrPH program in three to five years. The program is designed to enable full-time students to complete all requirements and graduate within three years. Part-time students are expected to complete the program within four years. Part-time students are expected to take a minimum of two courses each fall and spring semester and two courses each summer for the first two years and then complete the remaining requirements in their third and fourth years.

### Phases of the DrPH Program



The DrPH degree is divided into two phases: pre-candidacy and candidacy. Upon satisfactory completion of the requirements associated with pre-candidacy, including successfully completing the comprehensive exam and defending the dissertation proposal, the student moves to the candidacy phase and *only at this time can refer to themselves as a doctoral candidate*.

#### **Pre-Candidacy Phase**

##### ***1. Foundational Coursework***

Students should review the appropriate sections of the Graduate Student Handbook.

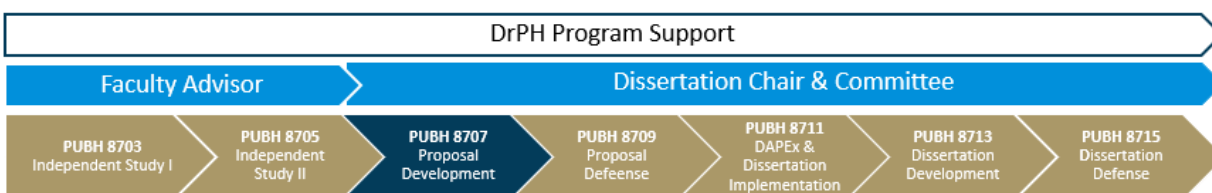
- [Adding, Dropping, and Withdrawing from Courses](#)

- [Continuous Enrollment Status](#)
- [Academic Standing](#)
- [Academic Advising](#)

Students should refer to their [program guide](#) for a complete list of foundational courses and expected sequencing. This will help students navigate their path of study and timeline. Foundational coursework must be completed prior to sitting for the comprehensive exam.

## **2. Dissertation Project Proposal Defense**

Students are required to take several courses related to the DrPH dissertation portfolio starting in the first semester and ending when the student successfully defends their dissertation. One of the foundation courses, PUBH 8700 DrPH Seminar and Introduction to DAPEx, introduces students to the dissertation portfolio and other program requirements. The dissertation portfolio courses support DrPH students as they navigate the dissertation process. The figure below shows the dissertation portfolio sequence. The course highlighted in dark blue, PUBH 8707 Proposal Development, is a didactic course. The other courses are either independent studies with support from the student's committee members or hybrid courses with a mix of independent work and live sessions with a course instructor.



*The dissertation portfolio courses completed in the pre-candidacy phase are PUBH 8703, PUBH 8705, PUBH 8707, and PUBH 8709.* During the pre-candidacy phase, students develop the DAPEx portion of their dissertation project in conjunction with an approved preceptor and site. Students also form a dissertation committee to help link the DAPEx to and guide the written portion of the applied dissertation. Once the dissertation proposal is developed and defended successfully, the student is approved to move forward with dissertation project implementation. More information can be found in [Chapter 5](#).

## **3. Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive exam assesses the knowledge of general public health concepts and attainment of the skills outlined in the DrPH competencies. The exam challenges students to synthesize theory, concepts, research, and practice. Students become eligible to sit for the comprehensive exam after all foundational coursework has been completed. Upon successful completion of the exam, students officially enter the doctoral candidacy phase of the program. The exam may be repeated, up to one time, upon approval.

The timeline for each student to take the comprehensive exam will be determined in consultation with the academic and faculty advisors, and the DrPH program office. GWSPH will administer the comprehensive exam twice a year in May and December (*exact dates to be determined*).

Students who do not pass the comprehensive exam in its entirety will be offered the opportunity to retake the exam one additional time. The second exam must be taken within one year of the initial exam. Additional coursework may be recommended to the student before a second attempt. Failure to complete or pass the comprehensive exam is grounds for dismissal from the DrPH program.

**Note:** Students are encouraged to download and save all course materials from the course platform (GW Blackboard and/or 2U Digital Campus) at the end of each term. Access to completed courses may be lost prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

### **Candidacy Phase**

#### ***4. DAPEx/Applied Dissertation Project Implementation***

The objective of the applied dissertation project implementation is to demonstrate that the candidate has synthesized the knowledge gained during the pre-candidacy phase and is able to apply this knowledge to addressing a concrete and substantial applied public health issue, opportunity, and/or problem. The DAPEx will serve as the foundation for the applied dissertation. The written dissertation is a problem- or issue-based inquiry that will involve applied research on a selected public health policy and practice issue. Details are available in [Chapter 5](#).

#### ***5. Dissertation Defense***

Once the candidate's dissertation chair and committee agree the candidate is ready, a defense date will be set. Details are available in [Chapter 5](#).

#### ***6. DrPH Degree Certification and Graduation***

Students should review the appropriate sections in the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [Prepare to Graduate](#)

Requirements, policies, and procedures to apply for graduation are detailed in the [University Bulletin](#) and on the [GWSPH graduation website](#). Students are encouraged to review and make sure they have completed the [Checklist for Graduation](#).

Students should review their [program guide](#) for a list of DrPH program requirements.

## Chapter 5 – The DrPH Dissertation Portfolio Guide

### A. Introduction

At GWSPH, the DrPH program's focus on practice goes beyond just addressing what is required by other public health degrees. Practicing DrPH competencies is how students learn what is necessary to move their own professional practice and leadership skills forward. This is the impetus for the practice experience dissertation project, where students participate in a major project from an academic-practice perspective. This integration of practice into the dissertation allows students to hone their attention to fully exploring a given public health problem, challenge, or opportunity that is of interest to them.

This alignment meets two CEPH accreditation requirements for practice and dissertation work: an integrated experience which includes the practice project, and an academic document that identifies, describes, and defends the scope of work. The term "dissertation" references the elements related to the DAPEx and the written dissertation document that are both essential components of the dissertation portfolio. The DAPEx project may also be referred to as the dissertation project. The two terms can be used interchangeably to refer to one and the same project.

To best support students as they move through the development and defense of their project and dissertation, the program has developed the dissertation portfolio to promote practice by integrating the DAPEx throughout the curriculum and linking it to the dissertation through a series of courses that build sequentially on one another. The DAPEx is the practice-based project and the dissertation is a written document describing and defending the project through an academic lens.

The objective of the dissertation is to demonstrate that the student has synthesized the knowledge and skills gained through their coursework and can apply this knowledge to addressing a concrete and substantial applied public health issue, opportunity, and/or problem. This program asks that students conduct a project with a partner site that addresses a public health problem and has public health outcome or impact in mind. It is the expectation that students will work independently, under the guidance of a dissertation committee, to plan and implement their project and prepare a written dissertation demonstrating the ability to analyze and solve a complex public health practice-based problem. A student's interpretation of the project and its results through their recommendations and/or product development must make a substantive, original contribution to the field of public health research and practice.

## B. Dissertation Portfolio Courses

Students are required to take several courses that provide tailored support as they navigate the dissertation process from idea generation during the first semester to the final dissertation defense at the end of the program.

Students should refer to their [program guide](#) for information on the dissertation portfolio classes. Course descriptions are in the [University Bulletin](#).

- PUBH 8703 Independent Study I
- PUBH 8705 Independent Study II
- PUBH 8707 Dissertation Proposal Development
- PUBH 8709 Proposal Defense
- PUBH 8711 DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation
- PUBH 8713 Dissertation Development
- PUBH 8715 Dissertation Defense

Students will reach specific milestones in each of the dissertation portfolio courses. Accompanying forms and deadlines are listed in the table below.

| Action                                                        | Form                                            | Deadline                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Practice plan approval                                        | <a href="#">DAPEx Practice Plan Template</a>    | Draft due prior to PUBH 8707                                     |
| Committee approval                                            | <a href="#">Dissertation Committee Approval</a> | Submitted when committee is finalized, prior to proposal defense |
| Request proposal defense date and submit copy of the proposal | <a href="#">Proposal Defense Request</a>        | Three weeks before proposal defense                              |
| Proposal defense outcome                                      | <a href="#">Proposal Defense Report</a>         | Five business days post-defense                                  |
| Request dissertation defense date and submit final draft      | <a href="#">Dissertation Defense Request</a>    | Five weeks before the dissertation defense                       |
| Dissertation defense outcome                                  | <a href="#">Dissertation Defense Report</a>     | Five business days post-defense                                  |

Reminder: A committee cannot be changed after the dissertation draft is circulated for final defense, *unless* unanimous written consent is obtained.

## C. Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee supplies intellectual depth, field perspective, and timely guidance. Dissertation committees must consist of at least three members, including the chair. The chair must be a full-time, part-time, or adjunct faculty at GWSPH. The preceptor serves as one of the committee members, given their support and effort in the work, as well as their knowledge of the field. The third member should complement the strengths of the other two members and fill in any gaps in terms of academic or practice experience (e.g., content or methods) to fully support the student and their project.

| Role               | Preferred Credentials                                                   | How the Role Usually Helps                                            |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair              | Full-time, part-time or adjunct GWSPH faculty; doctoral degree required | Guides scholarly direction; integration; readiness decisions          |
| Preceptor          | Senior professional at partner site; doctoral degree preferred          | Ongoing mentorship; support and linkages to practice-based components |
| Third Member       | GW faculty or external expert; doctoral degree preferred                | Adds methodological or topical depth                                  |
| Optional Reader(s) | Subject specialists; voting members                                     | Targeted feedback on specific sections                                |

Selecting dissertation committee members is an important decision. Students should select faculty who bring some combination of content knowledge, methodological expertise, prior experience mentoring students, and a willingness to work closely with the student as an advisor throughout the dissertation phase. Students should meet with faculty early in the dissertation portfolio sequence to learn about faculty interests and strengths, and to identify faculty who might serve as a dissertation chair. As students sharpen their interests and get to know faculty across the school, they will identify an individual to serve as their chair. Often, the student will seek guidance from the chair about other members who might serve on the committee. Faculty members may be asked to chair or sit on dissertation committees for multiple students, including PhD students. Faculty may not always have the time or an aligned interest with the student's topic. Students should consult with multiple faculty when seeking out dissertation committee members.

The timeline for selecting a dissertation committee chair and other committee members varies by student. Some students work closely with a faculty member throughout their coursework and begin discussing possible dissertation topics early in the DrPH program with that faculty member in mind as the chair. In other cases, students “shop around” for a dissertation chair

and other committee members through meetings with many different faculty, learning about the broad range of public health interests and capabilities of faculty within the school.

As a matter of practical advice, students should identify and work with a faculty mentor or potential chair as their dissertation topic evolves in order to receive feedback on feasibility, resource constraints, and public health impact. It is also important to identify a mentor (whether that person becomes a chair, a committee member, or an informal advisor) to discuss the evidence and/or data sources that will inform or be necessary to conduct the dissertation project. Sometimes, identifying the data sources needed to complete the project will clarify the question of who would be a helpful and appropriate dissertation committee chair.

Students are required to have a dissertation chair identified, as well as an abstract and approval of acceptance from course faculty, prior to enrolling in PUBH 8707 Dissertation Portfolio: Proposal Development. Full-time and part-time students following the recommended course sequencing should plan on taking PUBH 8707 during the fall semester or spring semester of their second or third year. This means that during PUBH 8703 (spring, first year) and 8705 (summer, first year), students will seek to identify their dissertation topic, identify a potential dissertation chair, and draft out their dissertation abstract.

Dissertation chairs must have a doctoral degree and commonly hold a PhD, DrPH, ScD, MD, JD, or other terminal degree. Ideally, all members of the dissertation committee should have doctoral level training, although exceptions to this rule can be made on a case-by-case basis by the DrPH program leadership.<sup>21</sup> The chair and other members have some combination of training, expertise, and mentoring experience to provide the necessary guidance and support during the student's dissertation phase. Members of the committee should be chosen because they have an appropriate combination of training, expertise, and mentoring experience to provide the student with the necessary guidance and support.

The [Dissertation Committee Approval Form](#) identifies the chair and committee members and is approved by the DrPH program leadership. The signed form is submitted to [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu) as soon as the committee is solidified. This form does not include the names of potential readers, which are optional.

Students who are working on dissertation proposals are responsible for maintaining ongoing and regular communication with the dissertation chair and committee members. Students are encouraged to discuss expectations about communication with the chair and committee members early in the process to facilitate progress and keep the project on track. The dissertation process works best when the student and dissertation committee have agreed upon a style and frequency of communication (e.g., bi-weekly or monthly meetings;

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<sup>21</sup> If a committee member does not have a doctoral degree, the student must submit a curriculum vitae (CV) for review and consideration to their committee and then to the DrPH program leadership.

memoranda from the student providing updates on the student's progress; online or in-person meetings). Additionally, agreements on deadlines for submission by the student and review by the committee should be clarified and respected.

### **Dissertation Chair**

Dissertation chairs help students develop a focused, rigorous, and manageable project that will meet the resource, data, and time constraints of the program. While the student is responsible for the formulation of the project, including specific aims or goals, design, hypotheses or research/practice questions, and technical approach, the chair is expected to provide constructive input and timely feedback to help the student develop their dissertation proposal.

The chair is an essential advisor who should have the expertise to guide the student throughout the project and dissertation. The chair may take on varying roles during the process, depending on the student, dissertation topic, project approach, and other factors. For example, chairs often serve as:

- **Advisor** - The dissertation committee chair is the principal advisor who works with the student on all or most chapters and likely will completely examine and approve the proposal draft chapters and materials prior to submitting them to the rest of the committee for review and comment. In this case, the chair is an expert in the field of study who can provide advice and mentoring on methodologies and analyses and has significant expertise in the dissertation topic. The chair may be a full-time, part-time, or adjunct faculty member.
- **Coordinator** - The chair serves as a leader or administrator of the committee to ensure that the student meets all requirements, conditions, and timelines. The chair may not necessarily have the expertise to review all chapters of the dissertation and consequently, the student will also rely on the other committee members and advisors as necessary for the initial review of specific areas or chapters. The chair will provide guidance on their areas of specific expertise, whether it is the topic, the methods used, the analysis, etc. Chairs who serve in a "coordinator" role are often more senior faculty members.
- **Director** - The chair will lead the student through each part of the dissertation as the dissertation is likely a piece of a larger body of work that they are currently working on. Here the chair is intimately involved with the student in the selection of the methods, direction of the analysis, and the ultimate outcome of the dissertation. Other committee members serve as more of a review board or provide targeted advice on components of the dissertation. The chair will lead committee decisions. In doing so, the chair will need to understand and take into consideration the needs and goals of the site partner and preceptor.

Chair roles and responsibilities vary based on expertise and preferred mentoring style, prior working relationship with the student, time constraints, availability, and many other factors.

In general, the chair is expected to regularly review student progress and serve as a mentor, assuring that the dissertation process moves forward smoothly in accordance with GWSPH guidelines. The chair will carefully review the dissertation proposal and provide detailed written comments to the student, be available to discuss these comments, and review a revised proposal prior to determining that the student is ready to defend the proposal before the full committee.

### **Dissertation Preceptor**

The dissertation project must be supervised and supported by a qualified preceptor who is able to mentor and support the student throughout the entire practice and dissertation experience, serve on the student's dissertation committee, and also help to evaluate the student's project and professional competence. The preceptor must be in a position related to the practice setting and able to ensure the quality of the practice experience. The preceptor will work closely with the student, provide guidance, and help facilitate the student's work with the partner site. The preceptor should serve in the role of being the point person at the partner site who helps the student integrate into and supports the student's implementation of the agreed upon scope of work at the partner site. The preceptor can provide background information, guidance, and feedback in relation to the agreed upon scope of work and pre-defined learning objectives.

### **Dissertation Committee Readers (Optional)**

In December 2023 the decision was made to make readers optional on a dissertation committee. Students may discuss this change with their dissertation chair. The role of a dissertation reader is to review the final dissertation draft prior to the final defense, participate in the final defense by asking questions, and serving as a voting member at the dissertation defense. Readers are not involved in the dissertation proposal process.

If students choose to have readers, the readers attend the final dissertation defense and actively participate as an examiner along with the dissertation committee members. Readers are not official members of the dissertation committee and do not review draft chapters of the dissertation. Readers do not provide written or oral feedback on the dissertation to the student or committee members prior to the dissertation defense. Readers receive the full dissertation draft for review prior to the dissertation defense along with the members of the dissertation committee, generally about four to five weeks prior to the dissertation defense date. Readers are voting members at the dissertation defense. Readers should have relevant expertise to provide a critical review of the dissertation and may be selected because of their expertise, content, or practice-related skills and experience. Readers may come from GW, local sites, government agencies, other universities, or other settings. Readers are required to have doctoral-level credentials or the equivalent, although exceptions can be made depending on the relevance to the student's topic.

Readers are selected in consultation with the chair. Often, students suggest individuals as readers to the chair after consultation with other faculty or outside expert researchers or practitioners. Readers must be approved by the dissertation chair and must agree to participate in the dissertation defense. Readers must be available to attend the dissertation defense. Readers can attend the dissertation defense remotely, if not available to attend in-person. Students and the committee chair may discuss the selection of readers when first developing a dissertation proposal; at other times, readers are not identified until a student is closer to finishing a draft dissertation.

#### D. Dissertation Project: DAPEx

The goal of the DAPEx is to advance the development of higher-level applied competencies and critical thinking relevant to the student's area(s) of specialization. The DAPEx is an opportunity to apply principles of leadership and management, and public health theories and methodologies learned through the program's coursework to real-life situations. Each student identifies at least five competencies, with at least one competency coming from the Leadership, Management and Governance category. Students must identify these competencies in their practice plan, discuss how they are addressing these competencies through their reflective report, and be prepared to describe the alignment of these competencies with their DAPEx during their proposal and final defenses.

The DAPEx must be a mutually agreed upon and beneficial scope of work between the student, preceptor, and partner site. This scope of work must be supported by the student's dissertation committee which will include the committee chair, preceptor, and one other committee member. All opportunities must be approved by the student's dissertation committee and will receive final confirmation and documentation after the student's proposal defense.

Full-time students usually undertake the DAPEx in the summer of their second year; part-time students may go at a slower pace. The dissertation project does not have a requirement for a minimum number of hours engaging with the partner site and completing their agreed upon scope of work. Rather, the practice plan and defense readiness drive the number of hours spent by the student in order to meet the agreed upon goals, deliverables, and competencies. Students should review their [program guide](#) for information on dissertation portfolio sequencing and suggested timelines.

Key components of the DAPEx include:

| Preceptor   |                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key Details | Site must benefit directly from student's work. Preceptor mentors the student and verifies competency mastery and work product completion. |

| Preceptor    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Requirements | <p>Preceptor must be able to mentor and support throughout the entire dissertation project experience, including serving on the student's committee. Preceptor must be in a position related to the practice setting, serve as point person, and ensure quality of the experience.</p> <p>Qualifications: Ideally have doctoral level training and hold a PhD, DrPH, ScD, MD, JD, or other relevant degree. Equivalent work experience may alternately be assessed given years of experience, seniority, leadership, or accomplishments. In this case, the committee chair in collaboration with DrPH program leadership can review their CV for consideration.</p> |

| Practice Site |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key Details   | Student is responsible for identifying an appropriate site and securing commitment from the preceptor. Students are advised to consider sites external to their school or program. <sup>22</sup> If the student is considering an opportunity at their place of employment, the scope of work must be distinct from their current role. |
| Requirements  | Work must benefit the site. There is no financial compensation for the work completed for the DAPEx site. The scope of work is distinct from current professional roles held by students.                                                                                                                                               |

| Practice Plan and Scope-of-Work |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key Details                     | The practice plan identifies the partner site, preceptor, project title, project summary, <sup>23</sup> five competencies to be addressed during the work, planned primary activities, timeline, and benefits for the partner site.                                                                                                                      |
| Requirements                    | The practice plan requires concurrence from committee chair and preceptor. The plan is first submitted to determine the student's readiness to take PUBH 8707 Proposal Development. A final version will be submitted during PUBH 8711 (if the exact scope of work shifts, the student, preceptor, and committee members must agree on a revised scope). |

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<sup>22</sup> There may be some appropriate opportunities for applied, practice-related work through centers and institutes at GWSPH which should be considered by students.

<sup>23</sup> Brief description of one to three paragraphs.

## **DAPEx Deliverables**

At the conclusion of the DAPEx/dissertation project, students are required to submit the following final products. All deliverables must be uploaded to PUBH 8711 DAPEx course platform.

### ***Deliverable 1: Illustrative Work Product***

Acceptable examples of work products for partner sites include, but are not limited to:

- Community health assessment
- Program logic model
- Monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan
- Impact evaluation report
- Policy analysis or brief
- Strategic communications toolkit
- Training curriculum and facilitator guide
- Data dashboard
- Mobile-app prototype
- Predictive-analytics script
- Grant proposal
- Technical guidance

### ***Deliverable 2: Reflective Report (3-6 pages, single-spaced)***

| Section                           | Guiding Prompts                                             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Background                     | Host organization, public-health issue, situational context |
| 2. Objectives and Scope           | Project goals, selected competencies, rationale             |
| 3. Activities and Methods         | Key tasks, data sources, collaboration                      |
| 4. Competency Demonstration       | How each competency was met with examples                   |
| 5. Leadership and Lessons Learned | Decision-making, stakeholder engagement, personal growth    |
| 6. Implications for Practice      | How work product will be used; recommendations              |
| 7. Abstract                       | 150–250-word public summary                                 |

## **International DAPEx Partner Sites**

Experiences will often be with sites in a student's geographic area but this is not a requirement. If the student plans to travel outside of the U.S. to conduct the DAPEx, additional advanced planning is required. Students considering an international DAPEx should consult with their dissertation chair early in the planning process to discuss the logistical and academic considerations of research and public health practice abroad.

Per GW policy, travelers must use [GW Passport](#) to register university-related travel (including DAPEX) and propose travel to high-risk destinations. The [GW Office of International Programs](#) provides information on completing a high-risk travel exception, which is typically needed for a destination with a [Department of State Advisory Level 4 for Graduate Students/Faculty/Staff Travelers](#).

Registering travel with the university ensures that students have the appropriate trip coverage and protections while abroad on university business. The policy pertaining to the university's travel insurance and coverage can be found [here](#). All requested student travel should be clearly described in their practice plan. The scope of work should be approved by the DrPH program and [ORE](#) prior to registering the trip through the [Office of International Programs](#) (OIP). If students are traveling to a Level 4 country, then the student's scope of work and travel documentation will need additional school-level approval that is incorporated into the OIP High Risk Destination review.

Approval for international travel can be a lengthy process so students are strongly encouraged to submit required documentation to the appropriate office at least three months prior to departure. At a minimum, all travels must be registered with OIP at least 30 days prior to departure.

### ***Students with F-1 Visas***

The [International Services Office](#) (ISO) and [GWSPH Career Services](#) are actively involved in the [Curricular Practical Training](#) (CPT) process. Students are encouraged to reach out to those offices for the latest information.

CPT is required before international (F-1) students can begin their DAPEX. CPT is permission granted to F-1 students to engage in off-campus employment or an internship (e.g., DAPEX) related to the degree program prior to degree completion. International students must be in active status for one academic year before they are eligible to apply for CPT. International DAPEX sites MUST have a U.S. office or address in order for the CPT to be approved for a student who is physically in the U.S. during the practicum. This means that even if the site is virtual, if the site does not have a U.S. address/location, then the student's CPT will not be approved. Students with an F-1 visa should discuss these requirements with their advisors. If a student with an F-1 visa is NOT within the U.S. for the DAPEX experience, then they do not need CPT nor a site that has a U.S. address.

## **E. Dissertation Project: Applied Dissertation**

The applied dissertation (written component) converts the insight and data generated during the DAPEX into a formal scholarly product. Students will write the first three chapters of their dissertation and will defend this content as part of their dissertation proposal defense. Below is guidance for the first three chapters. Students should have a conversation with their committee members as to what format they will choose for their final dissertation, either: the five-chapter

dissertation or the two-paper manuscript. More details about these two formats can be found below.

### **The Dissertation Proposal**

The dissertation proposal should provide a clear and thorough plan of the proposed research/practice. The dissertation proposal is sometimes referred to as the first three chapters of the dissertation, although this may vary by the scope of work. Generally, the dissertation proposal includes:

- **Chapter 1 (Introduction):** An introduction and a statement of the public health problem or issue, which describes the nature, magnitude, and history of the problem or issue being studied and the potential significance of the proposed research and the relevance to public health. The statement should answer the question: How is this topic and approach significant and/or original? Including a problem or opportunity statement can be a helpful way to frame this succinctly. This chapter should also serve as an introduction and roadmap for the rest of the dissertation. It may include research/practice questions or aims.
- **Chapter 2 (Literature Review):** A literature review which details prior research in this area and provides a historical and/or conceptual framework. The review includes relevant literature published to date on the topic and supporting theory, if applicable.
- **Chapter 3 (Methods):** The study approach or methods with clear, concise, and specific details explaining the practice and dissertation questions and/or hypotheses, methods or approach and design, human subjects review, and limitations of the work. This section describes the tools and analyses that will be used in the research or practice-based approach, the data sources, and analytical plan. The analysis plan provides a detailed discussion about how the data will be managed and analyzed to address the research question(s). This plan may be adapted for more practice-based approaches. The plan should include a timetable for the project that accounts for all phases of the dissertation study, a discussion of potential challenges to meeting that timetable, and ways to address the challenges. A statement should also be included on the expected contributions and a discussion of the limitations of the study.

### **Proposal Review Process and Proposal Request Form**

All committee members must **review** the entire dissertation proposal and provide **written feedback** prior to the decision to move forward with the student's dissertation proposal defense. The chair and committee members must assess the student's **readiness** to move to the proposal defense phase before the defense can be scheduled.

Prior to the defense, the [Dissertation Proposal Defense Request Form](#) should be completed and submitted to [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu). *This form should be sent at least three weeks prior to the scheduled proposal defense.*

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 student; in practice, more than one round of review is often required. The proposal must be sent to the dissertation committee for review *at least four calendar weeks prior to the scheduled proposal defense*. The **review period** prior to the defense should be agreed upon by all committee members, taking into account vacation periods or other considerations that could necessitate a longer review period.

Dissertation proposal committees may meet as a group prior to the dissertation proposal defense to address any issues that may arise. The student should discuss the meeting schedule or style with the chair and committee members.

### **The Dissertation Proposal Defense Format**

The dissertation proposal defense consists of a formal oral presentation to their committee in a closed session. Presentations should include sufficient detail to give the committee members confidence that the student can accomplish what is proposed, the dissertation project is methodologically rigorous, and the topic and approach will make a valuable contribution to the DAPEx site and broader field of study.

The proposal defense is scheduled for two hours. During the first 20 minutes the student presents an overview of the proposal. This requires that the student be prepared to present the entire proposal (with the use of a PowerPoint slide presentation and handouts, if appropriate) in sufficient detail to provide an overview of the project and identify key study objectives and methodological approach.

The members of the committee will then have the opportunity to question the student on any aspect of the proposal. The student must be prepared to explain the details of the proposed project and defend key decisions made in the design of the project. The student may also be asked to consider challenges to completing the project, the potential contribution of the work to the field, various assumptions included in the approach, or other aspects of the research or practice-based dissertation. All members of the dissertation committee must attend the proposal defense.

### **The Outcomes of the Dissertation Proposal Defense**

There are three possible outcomes of the proposal defense:

- Approval
- Approval with revisions
- Reject, re-defense required

If the dissertation committee approves the proposal, either no changes are required, or the changes are so minor as to not warrant additional review. If the committee approves the proposal with revisions, the student will be required to make moderate to substantial modifications to the proposal and perhaps to respond to a series of questions or suggestions from the committee. The terms of the revisions should be agreed upon immediately following the defense with the student and committee present. In cases where the proposal is approved with revisions, the dissertation chair provides a written memo to the student describing the required changes and specifying the review process required to approve the proposal. For example, the committee may decide that the chair can be the sole reviewer for purposes of the revised proposal or may prefer that committee members also review all or part of the proposal revisions. In most cases, the committee does not meet as a group but goes through the revision approval process electronically. If substantial changes are required, however, the committee may determine that it is necessary to meet by phone or in person to discuss the revisions.

If the committee rejects the proposal, the student has one additional opportunity to re-define the proposed project after the student has addressed all of the outstanding issues raised by the committee. This re-defense follows the same processes used in the initial 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 student moves to the final dissertation phase.

The signed [Dissertation Proposal Defense Report Form](#) must be signed by all dissertation committee members, indicating the committee's decision. The signed form must be submitted within a week following the proposal defense to [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu).

### **Dissertation Compliance and Institutional Review Board Requirements**

Students should review the appropriate section in the Graduate Student Handbook:

- [Complete Human Subjects Research Training Requirements](#)

In addition to the CITI training, students will have additional requirements if they are engaging in research involving human participants or their data. In these circumstances, students are required to articulate these research activities in their dissertation practice plan and complete research questionnaires prior to beginning the work. Students who are conducting research should work closely with their chair and review the [GWSPH research policy and procedure guidance website](#) as well as the [Human Subjects Determination Policy](#) for the school as their projects will be required to go through the GWSPH research oversight process and possibly the GW Institutional Review Board (IRB). This process can be lengthy.

Students should review the definition of a human subject, as defined by the [GW Office of Human Research](#). Because of the potential for conflict of interest, investigators do not have the authority to make an independent determination that human subjects research is exempt. For

student projects, only the student's academic institution, GW in this case, can make the determination.

Key points regarding human subjects research determination and the DAPEx proposal include:

- All student projects outside of activities limited to the classroom need to be entered into the [portal](#)
- This process allows the [ORE](#) to support the educational journey while ensuring compliance with GW policies
- This portal is managed by ORE. For general questions about the process, students should email [sphstudentirb@gwu.edu](mailto:sphstudentirb@gwu.edu)

In order to ensure full compliance with regulations and GW policies, ***students may not begin their DAPEx until they have received a determination*** by email that they are approved to do so. GWSPH's oversight team and the university's IRB will not approve studies retroactively.

### **Dissertation DAPEx Implementation**

Students should review the appropriate section in the Graduate Student Handbook:

- [Continuous Enrollment and Continuing Research](#)

Upon successful defense of their dissertation proposal during PUBH 8709, the student should enroll in PUBH 8711 DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation. Once the student has completed their DAPEx, they can enroll in PUBH 8713 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development. Upon successful completion of PUBH 8713, students enroll in PUBH 8715 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation.

### **Dissertation and Defense**

There are two formats for the dissertation. Students may prepare a five-chapter dissertation or a two-paper manuscript. This decision should be made in consultation with the dissertation committee chair and members. Regardless of which option the student chooses, all students must prepare a dissertation using one of the formats described below and defend the dissertation before the dissertation committee.

#### ***Option One: Five-Chapter Dissertation***

In this option, students may format their dissertation as either an applied practice dissertation or a research dissertation. Both formats are outlined below.

The applied practice dissertation essentially builds upon the format of the dissertation proposal, with revisions, as appropriate, to the first three chapters (introduction/background, literature review, methods). The applied practice dissertation also includes chapters on:

- **Chapter 4 (Results):** The applied practice chapter includes detailed findings and often includes numerous graphs, tables, or other visual displays describing the findings. It may also include a summary of a primary work project that was developed for the dissertation such as a strategic plan, organizational assessment, change management plan, program design, or policy analysis. This chapter should summarize the work that was done and include the work product.<sup>24</sup> Practice dissertations generally include all results in one chapter; in some cases, however, it may be preferred to provide findings and results based on different methods in separate chapters.
- **Chapter 5 (Discussion):** The dissertation must include a thorough and well-developed chapter with a discussion of the findings/results of the research, the implications of the results and/or approach for the field, and the context in which the findings/results may be interpreted. This chapter often ties together the previously discussed findings and addresses next steps for further development or research. This chapter may also include implications and recommendations.
- **Conclusions:** Some dissertations may include a final concluding chapter that summarizes the work, its value to the field, its limitations, next steps, and other relevant issues. In some dissertations, the discussion chapter is separate from the chapter on implications and conclusions. All applied and practice dissertations must include a full discussion of the findings and approach, implications of the work product, and conclusion. The precise format (number of chapters) should be addressed by the student and the dissertation committee.
- **Appendices:** Any questionnaires, data, and other materials from student research should be included as appendices to the dissertation.

The research dissertation essentially builds upon the format of the dissertation proposal, with revisions, as appropriate, to the first three chapters (introduction/background, literature review, methods). The research dissertation also includes chapters on:

- **Chapter 4 (Results):** The results chapter includes detailed findings and often includes numerous graphs, tables, or other visual displays describing the findings. Research dissertations generally include all results in one chapter; in some cases, however, it may be preferred to provide results based on different methods in separate chapters.
- **Chapter 5 (Discussion):** The dissertation must include a thorough and well-developed discussion of the findings/results of the research, the implications of the results and/or approach on the field, and the context in which the results may be interpreted. This chapter often ties together the previously discussed findings and addresses next steps for further research.
- **Conclusions:** Some dissertations may include a final concluding chapter that summarizes the work, its value to the field, its limitations, next steps, and other relevant issues. In

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<sup>24</sup> Depending on the length, students may want to put the actual work product in as an appendix.

some dissertations, the discussion chapter is separate from the chapter on implications and conclusions. All research dissertations must include a full discussion of the findings and approach, implications of the research, and conclusion. The precise format (number of chapters) should be addressed by the student and the dissertation committee.

- **Appendices:** Any questionnaires, data, and other materials from student research should be included as appendices to the dissertation.

### ***Option Two: Two-Paper Dissertation***

The two-paper dissertation option requires students to prepare two, peer-review quality manuscripts based on their dissertation research. The two publishable papers will each stand on their own merit although typically they are linked by a unifying theme. These two papers form the basis of the dissertation defense. Selection of paper topics, research approach, development of manuscripts, and submission of papers should take place with input and review by the dissertation committee. The two 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.

In consultation with the dissertation committee, the student will identify what needs to be included in the dissertation summary chapter and the topics for the two papers. Students often prepare a methods paper as one of the two papers; however, if the two 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 or as appendices.

While there is not a specified page length for these papers, it is expected that, collectively, the papers will contain as much substantive information as is usually expected in a dissertation and will comply with length-related requirements set by peer-reviewed publications.

Students who choose the two-paper option should have a discussion with their dissertation committee chair, members and others, as appropriate, to determine authorship of each of the papers developed as part of the dissertation. The student should be lead author on both papers, unless the work is an extension or byproduct of the chair's or a committee member's own research portfolio. In all cases, authorship (including order) should be discussed and determined prior to development of each manuscript.

### **Dissertation Review and Dissertation Defense Scheduling**

Students should review the appropriate section in the Graduate Student Handbook:

- [Continuous Enrollment and Continuing Research](#)
- [Prepare to Graduate](#)

Now in the candidacy stage, candidates must determine when to schedule a final dissertation defense. To do so, the members of the dissertation committee must assess the student's **readiness** to defend. The chair will take the lead in making this decision. The candidate should work closely with all members of the dissertation committee as they finalize their project and prepare manuscripts or traditional dissertation chapters. Candidates must submit the full dissertation draft to the dissertation committee for review and written comments at least once, allowing enough time for the student to respond to comments and make revisions for additional review by the dissertation committee. Usually, committee members review multiple drafts. A 30-day review period is generally required for feedback from dissertation committee members. After at least one full round of review with comments and revisions the committee may recommend that the candidate is ready to defend the dissertation. Students should take review periods into consideration when developing their dissertation plan and timetable.

As the time approaches to defend the dissertation, the candidate should work with the committee, outside readers (if any), and program administration to schedule a defense. This includes setting a date and time for the dissertation defense, and reserving a location and the necessary equipment/technology for presenting the dissertation slide deck and/or other materials (different locations may have different capabilities in terms of technology or technical support).

The request for scheduling a defense **must be made at least 30 days** from the planned defense and students **must** submit the final dissertation draft, including manuscripts for the two-paper option, to all committee members a **minimum of 30 days** before the dissertation defense date.

Candidates need to work with the DrPH program office to coordinate the logistics and advertisement of the dissertation defense. If the student is scheduling an in-person defense, the DrPH program office will help candidates reserve a room in GWSPH for their defense. Thirty days prior to the planned defense, candidates must send the following materials to [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu):

- Signed [Dissertation Defense Request Form](#) (if this form is submitted late, the defense will need to be rescheduled)
- Date and time of the dissertation defense
- Zoom link (if the defense is hybrid or remote)
- Copy of the dissertation abstract
- Copy of dissertation draft
- Preferred headshot

Candidates may defend their dissertation any time during the year. Students should plan to defend their dissertation at least two months before their planned spring, summer, or fall graduation. For example, a student is targeting a May graduation, they must be finished with the dissertation defense no later than the second week of March to allow for any revisions that may need to be made and still graduate in May.

Attendance of all dissertation committee members and any optional readers is required for the defense. The chair of the committee presides over the defense. The dissertation chair typically plays the role of advocate for the student. While chairs may participate in questioning the candidate, some chairs abstain. If the chair engages in questioning, then the questions should be clarifying, integrative, and/or forward-looking. The dissertation defense presentation is open to the public so other students, faculty, colleagues, guests, friends, and family may attend.

### ***The Format of the Dissertation Defense***

The defense begins with the student formally presenting the dissertation research, generally in a 20-minute presentation with handouts and/or slides. Following the student's presentation, the dissertation committee members and outside readers conduct several rounds of questions on any aspect of the candidate's study. The examiners engage the student in a rigorous and collegial fashion about the study. The candidate is expected to respond to these questions in a thoughtful and thorough manner. The oral defense provides the candidate with the opportunity to expand upon the salient characteristics of the dissertation. They identify areas for additional exploration, evaluate the methods, discuss their study's strengths and limitations, and place the work in a larger public health context.

Following the examination period, the dissertation committee goes into closed session to discuss the candidate's defense, decide on whether the candidate passed, and identify any required revisions to the dissertation. The oral dissertation defense is generally scheduled for two hours.

### ***The Outcomes of the Dissertation Defense***

There are three possible outcomes of the dissertation defense:

- Pass with no revisions
- Conditional pass
- Fail; must re-defend

Committee members and readers (if applicable) will determine whether the dissertation is approved in its current form, approved with modifications, or not approved. All members of the committee must participate in the oral examination.

If applicable, the student and the dissertation committee will identify a timetable and process for revisions as soon as deliberations are complete and the student is informed of the decision.

[The Dissertation Defense Report Form](#) must be signed by all voting members of the committee and the readers. It should be submitted to [drphadmin@gwu.edu](mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu).

Candidates must be registered throughout the time they are working on the dissertation. This includes the semester(s) in which the student defends, completes revisions, and submits this

final dissertation. Candidates cannot be cleared for graduation if they are not currently registered.

### ***Submitting the Dissertation***

The doctoral candidate must complete any revisions and receive final approval from the dissertation committee before submitting the dissertation electronically to ProQuest/UMI. The [Electronic Thesis/Dissertation](#) (ETD) replaces the bound dissertation, which is no longer accepted at GW. At the time of approval, the DrPH program leadership will concurrently issue credit for the student's dissertation research credits to Student Records.

All doctoral candidates are required to submit the final dissertation (with all approved changes) in the semester they apply for graduation. The deadline for submission in ETD for fall, spring, and summer graduations changes with each academic year, typically between two to four weeks prior to degree conferral dates. The submission deadlines can be found on the [ETD website](#). It is highly recommended that students upload their final document **at least 5 business days prior** to the ETD submission deadline.

*Doctoral candidates should review formatting guidelines prior to submitting the final dissertation to the dissertation committee.* ETD has specific formatting requirements that are the responsibility of the doctoral candidate. The final dissertation cannot be submitted to ETD unless it conforms to these requirements. Any submissions that do not meet these requirements will be returned to the student.

| Task                      | Deadline               | Notes                                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| ETD upload (PDF)          | One week post-defense  | Must follow GW ETD template                              |
| ProQuest deposit          | Same day as ETD upload | Choose embargo if journal submission pending             |
| Graduation Clearance Form | University deadline    | Verify Continuous Enrollment if edits extend beyond term |

## **DrPH Timelines for Submissions**

Students should review the appropriate sections in the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [Complete Academic Integrity Requirements](#)
- [Complete Human Subjects Research Training Requirements](#)
- [Complete Pathways to Public Health](#)
- [Participate in Professional Enhancement Activities](#)
- [Plan for Applied Practice and Culminating Experiences](#)
- [Prepare to Graduate](#)

The below chart details when students are expected to complete certain program requirements.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                      | Deadline                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DAPEx Planning and Implementation</b>                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| DAPEx Practice Plan Approval                                                                                                                                                     | <a href="#">DAPEx Practice Plan Template</a> due to the course instructor prior to starting PUBH 8707                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Dissertation Committee Approval                                                                                                                                                  | <a href="#">Dissertation Committee Approval Form</a> submitted to <a href="mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu">drphadmin@gwu.edu</a> when the committee is finalized, prior to the proposal defense                                                                                                 |
| Proposal Defense Request                                                                                                                                                         | <a href="#">Proposal Defense Request Form</a> submitted to <a href="mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu">drphadmin@gwu.edu</a> at least 3 weeks before the planned proposal defense date                                                                                                             |
| Proposal Defense Report                                                                                                                                                          | <a href="#">Proposal Defense Report Form</a> submitted to <a href="mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu">drphadmin@gwu.edu</a> no more than 5 days after the proposal defense                                                                                                                         |
| IRB Submission                                                                                                                                                                   | After the proposal has been successfully defended, but prior to DAPEx initiation                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| DAPEx Initiation                                                                                                                                                                 | After official IRB approval has been received                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| DAPEx Completion                                                                                                                                                                 | Prior to the dissertation defense, DAPEx deliverables should be submitted via the appropriate mechanism (either Handshake or <a href="mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu">drphadmin@gwu.edu</a> )                                                                                                   |
| <b>Comprehensive Exam</b>                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Exams are held annually in May and December. Specific dates TBA.</i>                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Comprehensive Exam                                                                                                                                                               | After all foundational coursework is complete, <sup>25</sup> prior to defending the final dissertation                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Dissertation Defense and Graduation</b>                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Students are expected to work closely with their dissertation chair and other committee members to ensure they are progressing as expected and meeting planned deadlines.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Dissertation Committee Draft Review                                                                                                                                              | After a complete draft of the dissertation is emailed to the chair three months before the planned defense and two months before to the other committee members                                                                                                                           |
| Dissertation Committee Final Review                                                                                                                                              | After the dissertation committee confirms the student is ready for the defense and alerts the program director and after a final version of the dissertation is emailed to all committee members at least four to six weeks before the planned defense                                    |
| Dissertation Defense Scheduled                                                                                                                                                   | After the <a href="#">Dissertation Defense Request Form</a> , complete copy of the dissertation, abstract, student headshot, and zoom link <sup>26</sup> have been emailed to <a href="mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu">drphadmin@gwu.edu</a> at least 30 days prior to the planned defense date |

<sup>25</sup> The list of foundational coursework is in the program guide.

<sup>26</sup> The zoom link will allow for a fully virtual or hybrid defense. A chair's zoom link is preferred.

| Requirement                              | Deadline                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dissertation Defense Advertised          | After the DrPH program office and student work to promote the dissertation defense and secure a classroom on campus                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Graduation Application                   | At least four to six weeks before <a href="#">ETD deadline</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Dissertation Defense                     | At least four weeks before ETD deadline to ensure ample time to complete revisions                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Dissertation Defense Report              | <a href="#">Dissertation Defense Report Form</a> submitted to <a href="mailto:drphadmin@gwu.edu">drphadmin@gwu.edu</a> no more than 5 days after the dissertation defense <sup>27</sup>                                                                                                     |
| <a href="#">ETD Access Approval Form</a> | After any outstanding revisions have been made (and new <a href="#">Dissertation Defense Report Form</a> submitted), at least one week before the ETD deadline, and before the dissertation has been uploaded to the <a href="#">ETD website</a>                                            |
| ETD Submission                           | After confirming the dissertation meets all <a href="#">formatting requirements</a> , at least one week before the ETD deadline                                                                                                                                                             |
| Check of Degree Requirements             | At least one week before the ETD deadline, the student should confirm (through DegreeMAP) that <a href="#">all degree requirements</a> and the dissertation <a href="#">checklist</a> have been met                                                                                         |
| Graduation                               | After the candidate is confirmed to have completed all academic requirements, successfully defended their dissertation and received confirmation of successful ETD submission, all by the deadlines for that specific semester, the school and university clears the student for graduation |

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<sup>27</sup> If revisions are required to the dissertation, a new Dissertation Defense *Report Form* must be resubmitted once those revisions have been accepted by the dissertation committee.

# PhD Supplement

The PhD Supplement serves as a resource for all Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students in GWSPH. It includes information on the policies and procedures for navigating through the PhD programs. This supplement augments information found elsewhere in the Graduate Student Handbook, as well as individual PhD program guides. The Graduate Student Handbook will be updated as needed and can be found on the [GWSPH Student Resources](#) page.

***University and school policies and procedures, as outlined in the University Bulletin, Student Handbook, and GWSPH website, apply to PhD students.***

## PhD Programs Overview

The PhD degree offered by GWSPH prepares students to assume roles as public health researchers and leaders in academia and other public health settings. The PhD degree is the terminal research degree in the professional discipline of public health. Consistent with this advanced professional orientation, the PhD degree prepares future public health researchers to apply critical thinking and rigorous research methods to a complex, wide range of practical public health problems.

The PhD degree is designed to train future researchers and scholars in the generation of knowledge in the applied, interdisciplinary field of public health. Current events consistently illustrate the need for public health researchers who can conduct research to improve U.S. and global public health. The PhD degree is designed to prepare professionals with the necessary skills to effectively address future research needs.

GWSPH currently offers 7 PhD programs in the following public health disciplines:

| Program Name                         | Department                                                                                                      | Program Director(s)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Environmental Health</a> | <a href="#">Environmental and Occupational Health</a><br><br>950 New Hampshire Ave<br>NW, 4 <sup>th</sup> floor | <a href="#">Kelvin Fong</a> , DSc, MS<br>Assistant Professor<br><a href="mailto:kelvin.fong@gwu.edu">kelvin.fong@gwu.edu</a><br><br><a href="#">Jordan R. Kuiper</a> , PhD, MS<br>Assistant Professor<br><a href="mailto:jordan.kuiper@gwu.edu">jordan.kuiper@gwu.edu</a> |

| Program Name                                                     | Department                                                                                                                                                                     | Program Director(s)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>Epidemiology</u></a>                              | <a href="#"><u>Epidemiology</u></a><br><br>950 New Hampshire Ave<br>NW, 5 <sup>th</sup> floor                                                                                  | <a href="#"><u>Heather Young</u></a> , PhD, MPH<br>Professor and Department Vice Chair<br><a href="mailto:youngh@gwu.edu">youngh@gwu.edu</a><br>202-994-6518                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <a href="#"><u>Exercise Physiology and Applied Nutrition</u></a> | <a href="#"><u>Exercise and Nutrition Sciences</u></a><br><br>950 New Hampshire Ave<br>NW, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor                                                               | <a href="#"><u>Rob van Dam</u></a> , PhD<br>Professor<br><a href="mailto:rvandam@gwu.edu">rvandam@gwu.edu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <a href="#"><u>Global Public Health Science</u></a>              | <a href="#"><u>Global Health</u></a><br><br>950 New Hampshire Ave<br>NW, 4 <sup>th</sup> floor                                                                                 | <a href="#"><u>Catherine Arsenault</u></a> , PhD<br>Assistant Professor<br>202-994-1011<br><a href="mailto:catherine.arsenault@gwu.edu">catherine.arsenault@gwu.edu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <a href="#"><u>Health Data Science</u></a>                       | <a href="#"><u>Biostatistics and Bioinformatics</u></a><br><br>800 22nd St NW, 7 <sup>th</sup> floor<br><br>Biostatistics Center<br>6110 Executive Blvd<br>Rockville, MD 20852 | <a href="#"><u>Bioinformatics</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>Keith A. Crandall</u></a> , PhD, MA<br>Professor<br>571-553-0107<br><a href="mailto:kcrandall@gwu.edu">kcrandall@gwu.edu</a><br><br><a href="#"><u>Biostatistics</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>Guoqing Diao</u></a> , PhD, MS<br>Professor<br><a href="mailto:gdiao@gwu.edu">gdiao@gwu.edu</a><br><br><a href="#"><u>Toshi Hamasaki</u></a> , PhD, MS<br>Professor<br><a href="mailto:thamasaki@gwu.edu">thamasaki@gwu.edu</a> |
| <a href="#"><u>Health Policy</u></a>                             | <a href="#"><u>Health Policy and Management</u></a><br><br>950 New Hampshire Ave<br>NW, 6 <sup>th</sup> floor                                                                  | <a href="#"><u>Avi Dor</u></a> , PhD<br>Professor<br>202-994-4202<br><a href="mailto:avidor@gwu.edu">avidor@gwu.edu</a><br><br><a href="#"><u>Leighton Ku</u></a> , PhD, MPH<br>Professor<br><a href="mailto:lku@gwu.edu">lku@gwu.edu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

| Program Name                                   | Department                                                                                                | Program Director(s)                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Social and Behavioral Sciences</a> | <a href="#">Prevention and Community Health</a><br><br>950 New Hampshire Ave<br>NW, 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor | <a href="#">Jeffrey “Bart” Bingenheimer</a> , PhD, MPH<br>Associate Professor<br>202-994-3610<br><a href="mailto:bartbing@gwu.edu">bartbing@gwu.edu</a> |

Students should review the appropriate section in the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [School Leadership](#)

## PhD Advising

### PhD Faculty Advisor

Doctoral study is a multifaceted and complex challenge that begins with thoughtful planning and deliberate execution of a timeline with the guidance of a faculty advisor. The experience culminates with the awarding of the PhD degree to candidates who successfully complete the program requirements. Progression through the PhD degree requires dedication, commitment, and persistence.

PhD students are assigned to a faculty advisor (advisor) following admission. Advisors guide the student in the selection of their coursework plan, research opportunities, professional and leadership development, dissertation research topics, and the selection of dissertation research committee members, among other topics. In addition to routine academic and research advising (with a minimum of one meeting per semester depending on stage in the PhD program), the advisor will meet with the student to set annual objectives, as well as a timeline for program completion, typically in the fall. Based on this meeting, the advisor will provide the PhD program director with an update on the student’s progress and goals for purposes of the annual review, including progress on objectives and timeline.

Students may change advisors during the program, but the advisor should be affiliated with the students’ PhD department. The advisor typically becomes the dissertation research committee chair or a member of the committee, but it is not required.

Advising roles include:

- Deciding on a timeline for the program, setting clear annual objectives, and guiding the student toward meeting those objectives.
- Guiding the student in the development of a program of study, including the selection of elective courses and professional research 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, their career

objectives, and the expectations of the applicable field for scholarly professionals. Any variation from the program of study outlined in the program guide requires the approval of the program director.

- Mentoring the student in their 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 preparation for the comprehensive examination.
- Serving as a resource as the student selects a dissertation research committee chair and committee members.

## Annual Review

An annual review is conducted at the beginning of every fall semester for doctoral students who have completed at least one year of their program. On the [Doctoral Annual Review Form](#), students indicate the progress they have made in the previous academic year and set objectives and timelines for the next year. Additionally, the student's advisor reviews the student's progress and determines whether acceptable progress has been made. Finally, the program director reviews and signs the form. The form is submitted to the Office of PhD/MS Programs at [officephdms@gwu.edu](mailto:officephdms@gwu.edu). Students can also choose to include the optional [PhD Advising Worksheet](#) as part of their annual review process with their advisors.

## Timeline for Completion

Students should review the appropriate sections of the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [Degree Completion](#)
- [Continuous Enrollment Status](#)
- [Continuous Enrollment and Continuing Research](#)
- [Academic Standing](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)

Typically, students complete most coursework over a two-year period. Most students take the comprehensive exam in the summer of the second year of the program and defend their dissertation proposal in their third year. A student who transfers into the PhD program with credits may be on a shorter timeline. While PhD programs allow for seven years, students are encouraged to maintain a schedule that will enable them to complete the program in less than five years. Progress towards completion will be monitored and an annual review will take place each year in order to ensure timely progress is being made against objectives set annually by the student and advisor. A graduate student who fails to make acceptable progress toward the PhD degree may be placed on probation or suspended from the program. For students in the

dissertation phase of the program (e.g., writing their dissertation proposal, conducting dissertation research), progress will be assessed annually by the advisor in regards to the student's progress towards the objectives set in previous year. Additionally, students entering their sixth year who have not yet defended their dissertation proposal may be placed on probation by the Office of PhD/MS Programs. Students should consult their program guide and advisor for developing a timeline. The timeline will vary by student depending on the background of the student and goals within the program. Approvals for degree completion extensions are limited to one extension per student and the extension timeframe shall not exceed one academic year. Extensions shall be granted only for the minimum period necessary to complete degree requirements.

## PhD Phases

The PhD degree is divided into two phases: pre-candidacy and candidacy. During pre-candidacy, a student completes the required didactic courses for the degree and then takes the comprehensive examination. Upon satisfactory completion of the degree course requirements, including successfully completing the comprehensive exam, the student moves to the candidacy phase.

PhD students are expected to pursue opportunities to contribute knowledge to their field of study through peer-reviewed publications. PhD 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 a student's doctoral experience.

### Pre-Candidacy Phase

#### Program Planning: The Program of Study



As a first step, the student should plan carefully with their advisor and program director. The student and the advisor will discuss the student's interests, goals, and experiences and prepare a program of study. A timeline for completion of coursework will also be discussed and agreed upon.

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

- Required core courses and research methods
- Required department and specialization specific courses

*Students should review their program guide for additional details on specific course requirements and electives.*

### **Coursework**



Students should review the appropriate sections in the Graduate Student Handbook:

- [Adding, Dropping, and Withdrawing from Courses](#)
- [Enrolling at Another School or Institution](#)
- [Waiving and Replacing Required Credits](#)
- [Exceptions](#)

Students are ready to register for classes once a program of study has been developed in consultation with the program guide and advisor. Students should review their program guide each semester with their advisor for accuracy and relevance. Any changes to the program guide must be approved by the advisor and/or program director.

### **Comprehensive Examination**



The comprehensive exam assesses the broader knowledge of general public health concepts and the ability to approach a research topic relevant to the student's specialty area. The exam challenges students to synthesize concepts, research, and practice in the student's specialty area. Students take the comprehensive exam once core and specialty field required courses are completed, as determined by the program guide. The exact date of the comprehensive exam is determined in consultation with the program director. Students should request accommodations associated with the comprehensive exam from the [Disability Support Services](#) (DSS). Accommodations must be requested in advance of the comprehensive exam and must be accompanied by documentation from DSS.

Once students complete all required courses (including PhD core and program-specific) and pass the comprehensive exam, they are officially admitted into the candidacy phase. Students who fail to complete or pass the comprehensive exam (including the subsections) will be offered the opportunity to retake the exam in accordance with their PhD program policies. The second attempt must be taken within 12 months of taking the initial exam, as determined by each department. Failure to complete or pass the comprehensive exam (either specific sections or the entirety) during the retake will be grounds for dismissal from the PhD program. The

program director should submit the [PhD Comprehensive Exam Pass Form](#) to [officephdms@gwu.edu](mailto:officephdms@gwu.edu) once they have the results of the student's comprehensive exam.

## Candidacy Phase

It is the expectation that doctoral candidates will work independently, under the guidance of their dissertation research committee, to prepare an oral and written dissertation. 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 public health research problem. The dissertation also demonstrates that the candidate has mastered research methods to successfully conduct scientific research.

The dissertation should uniquely contribute to the student's specialty area. Dissertation research will:

- Use appropriate and scientifically rigorous methods
- Propose new research and result in new knowledge acquisition
- Advance public health knowledge and/or contribute to public health policy and practice either domestically or internationally

The research should advance existing knowledge and, in some cases, the results may lead to identification or assessment of feasible solutions or recommendations to the selected public health problem, appropriate to the context in which they occur. Candidates are expected to demonstrate competencies in structured scientific inquiry, and research design and analysis, including qualitative and/or quantitative methods.

## Dissertation Proposal



Soon after passing the comprehensive exam (if not before) all doctoral candidates will identify a dissertation topic and write a proposal outlining the research plan. In conjunction with writing their dissertation proposal, they will select a chair for their dissertation research committee and select the members of their research committee. The committee consists of at least three but no more than five members. All members of the dissertation research committee must have completed doctoral level training (e.g., PhD, DrPH, ScD, MD, etc.), although exceptions to this rule can be made on a case-by-case basis by the program director. The committee chair must be a GWSPH faculty member and must be a full-time member of the student's home department. The committee chair serves in the role of advocate for the candidate during the proposal and dissertation defense.

Students must identify and confirm their dissertation research committee members and submit the [Dissertation Research Committee Approval Form](#) to [officephdms@gwu.edu](mailto:officephdms@gwu.edu). If a member of the proposed dissertation research committee is not a full-time GWSPH faculty member, students must provide their institutional affiliation, highest academic degree, and CV.

Students are required to have a potential committee chair identified, as well as a dissertation topic, and a general research approach, prior to enrolling in PUBH 8435 PhD Dissertation Proposal Development (2 credits). The proposal should provide a clear, concise, and thorough plan of the proposed research. If a student is not ready to defend the proposal immediately following PUBH 8435, they may enroll in PUBH 8999 Dissertation Research.

The format of the dissertation proposal should include a proposal for **at least three manuscripts** that are of publishable quality as agreed upon by all members of the student's committee. In some PhD programs, a traditional dissertation format is accepted as an alternative to the three papers.

The dissertation proposal should include, at minimum, the following content:

- Statement of the problem – describes the nature and history of the problem or issue being studied
- Specific aims
- A literature review/background – details prior research in this area and provides a historical and conceptual framework
- Research methods – clear, concise, and specific details explaining research questions and hypotheses, methods and designs, human subjects review, and limitations
- A statement of the expected contributions and a discussion of limitations of the research
- An anticipated timetable that accounts for all phases of the dissertation research, a discussion of potential challenges to meeting timetable and ways to address the challenges

The format of the dissertation proposal defense is approximately two hours in length, including a presentation and Q&A. The student's dissertation research committee attends the proposal defense. Other students, faculty, and/or family and friends can attend the proposal defense, though this depends on the custom of the PhD program. There will be an oral proposal presentation. This will be followed by an open Q&A and then a private examination from the student's dissertation research committee. Then the student's dissertation research committee deliberates without the student present. The decisions are as follows:

- Accept without modifications
- Accept with modifications
- Reject, re-defense required

Students should submit the [Dissertation Proposal Defense Request Form](#) at least three weeks before the requested proposal defense date. Upon completion of the proposal defense, students should submit the [Dissertation Proposal Defense Report Form](#).

*Students should review their program guide for additional details and guidance.*

### **Dissertation Research**



Students should review the appropriate sections in the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [Half-Time and Full-Time Status](#)
- [Continuous Enrollment and Continuing Research](#)

With their advisor's approval and after successfully passing the comprehensive exam, PhD students may enroll in PUBH 8999 each semester when they begin working on their dissertation proposal. Students who are conducting dissertation research may also enroll in PUBH 8999. Candidates should consult their program guides for the required number of dissertation research credits which are typically taken over the course of two to three years. There are sections for PUBH 8999 for each of the PhD programs. Once all coursework and dissertation research credit requirements are met, students should register for Continuing Research (PUBH 0940) each fall and spring semester until they complete and defend their dissertation. Note that students must be enrolled in at least one credit each semester, with the exception of the last semester where Continuous Enrollment (UNIV 0982) **may** be appropriate (see below for more details).

Students who are not eligible to enroll in PUBH 8999 must register for other course offerings or enroll in one credit of Continuing Research (PUBH 0940). Students must be registered for a course in the summer in order to defend their dissertation or dissertation proposal.

- [Dissertation Research](#): PhD candidates who are writing their dissertation proposal may register for PUBH 8999 Dissertation Research. Generally, students may register for one or more dissertation research credits per semester when they have entered candidacy. Students should consult their PhD program guide for program-specific details. **To ensure enrollment for the duration of the program, students may wish to register for one dissertation research credit per semester and then register for all remaining dissertation research credits in their last semester.**
- [Continuing Research](#): PhD students who have met the coursework requirements, but have not yet successfully defended their dissertation, must register for one credit of PUBH 0940 Continuing Research, which requires a tuition payment of one full credit hour. Enrollment is required to maintain active status as a student. PhD students

working on their dissertation research who enroll in PUBH 0940 can submit a request for FTC. Credit(s) earned from PUBH 0940 do not count towards the dissertation research credit requirement or any other curricular requirements for completion of the PhD degree.

- **Continuous Enrollment:** PhD students who have successfully defended their dissertation may register for UNIV 0982 Continuous Enrollment (0 credit) with approval from their PhD program director. Continuous Enrollment can only be used by students in their last semester, as they complete their final dissertation defense submission steps and prepare to graduate. UNIV 0982 Continuous Enrollment cannot be used to satisfy the requirements for FTC. Students should consult their PhD program guide for program-specific details.

Summary Table of Courses for the Dissertation Research Phase

| Course                          | Credits per semester | Count towards degree (Yes/No) | Can be used for FTC (Yes/No) | Reason to Enroll                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PUBH 8999 Dissertation Research | 1-3                  | Yes                           | Yes                          | Used for dissertation research. Maximum credits per semester are not limited to 3                                           |
| PUBH 0940 Continuing Research   | 1                    | No                            | Yes                          | Used to maintain student status once all other credit requirements are met                                                  |
| UNIV 0982 Continuous Enrollment | 0                    | No                            | No                           | Used to complete final submission and graduation steps if a student needs more time after a successful dissertation defense |

*Students should review their program guide for additional details and guidance on the development of written doctoral thesis.*

### **Dissertation Defense**



The dissertation defense is scheduled once the dissertation write-up is completed and has followed the [formatting requirements](#) for the final document. The student must provide a final full copy of the dissertation document to all dissertation research committee members at least four weeks prior to the scheduled dissertation oral defense.

Students should submit the [Dissertation Defense Request Form](#) at least four weeks prior to the requested dissertation defense date. Upon completion of the oral defense, students should submit the [Dissertation Defense Report Form](#).

For the dissertation defense, the dissertation research committee is made up of at least five members. At least three committee members follow the rules for the composition of the proposal defense. The other two members may be external readers. Like full committee members, external readers attend the defense and can vote on whether the student passes the dissertation. The dissertation defense is approximately two to three hours in length. The student's dissertation research committee, readers, and other students, faculty, and/or family and friends can attend the defense. During this time, there will be a dissertation presentation with the full audience present. This will be followed by an open Q&A and then a private examination by the student's dissertation research committee and readers. The student's dissertation research committee deliberates without the student present. The committee chair may participate in questioning the candidate, but it is often the case that the committee chair abstains from the rounds of questioning. The decisions are as follows:

- Pass with no revisions
- Conditional pass
- Fail, must re-defend

### ***Disposition of the Dissertation***

All doctoral candidates are required to submit the *final* dissertation (with all approved changes) in the semester they apply for graduation. The deadline for submission in [Electronic Thesis/Dissertation](#) (ETD) for fall, spring, and summer graduations changes with each academic year, typically between two to four weeks prior to degree conferral dates. The submission deadlines can be found on the [ETD website](#). It is highly recommended that students upload their final document **at least five business days prior** to the ETD submission deadline.

*Doctoral candidates should review formatting guidelines prior to submitting the final dissertation to the dissertation committee.* ETD has specific formatting requirements that are the responsibility of the doctoral candidate. The final dissertation cannot be submitted to ETD unless it conforms to these requirements. Any submissions that do not meet these requirements will be returned to the student.

### **PhD Degree Certification and Graduation**



Students should review the appropriate sections in the Graduate Student Handbook.

- [Prepare to Graduate](#)

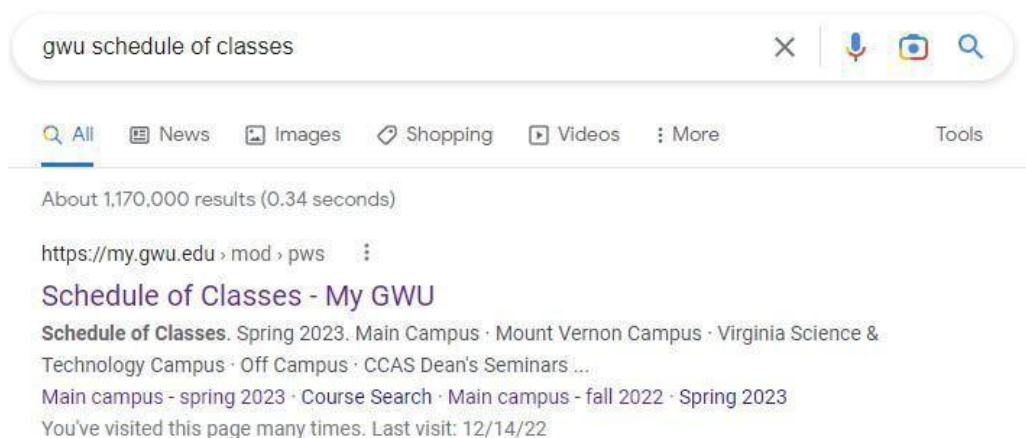
- [Become an Alum](#)

## PhD Frequently Asked Questions

### Courses

#### **What courses can I take as my PhD electives?**

GWSPH offers a variety of courses that can be counted as an elective for a PhD student. You can refer to your program guide by visiting your PhD program's website, or you can refer to this electives list. You can search for the availability of courses by going into [myGW](#) and using the Schedule of Classes quick link in "my portal" tab; or you can Google search "GW schedule of classes" and it should be the first result.



#### **How do I enroll in courses outside of my department as electives?**

If courses outside of your department are restricted on GWeb, you can submit a Registration Transaction Form (RTF) to the Office of the Registrar at [registrar@gwu.edu](mailto:registrar@gwu.edu). RTF is used for registration transactions for current or future terms that includes the following:

- Registration into closed courses (not exceeding classroom capacity)
- Courses that require permission of the instructor or department
- Major/Level/Class/Degree restrictions

For more information on registration forms, please visit the [Office of the Registrar](#).

## Financial Assistance

### **I have inquiries related to my fellowship package, who do I contact?**

For any inquiries related to payments (stipends, health insurance, summer funding, etc.), please contact the [Student Financial Services](#) at [GWSPHfinaid@gwu.edu](mailto:GWSPHfinaid@gwu.edu).

### **Where can I view my late fees and attendance cost?**

Log into [GWeb](#) with your GWID and associated password. Navigate to Student Records & Registration Menu → Student Accounts Menu → Student Account eBill. Navigate to My Account tab to view your Account Activity, Statements, and Payment History.

### **Where can I find financial assistance during the summer?**

GWSPH does not provide funding during the summer. However, you can utilize GW's Student Employment portal and/or Handshake portal to search for job opportunities. For those interested in working with academic departments during the summer and throughout the year, the [Student Employment Talent Management System](#) can be used to find all student employment positions.

GW Student Employment  
*Learning in Action*

Welcome to the Student Employment talent management portal! Student Employment at GW is an option for students to work in a part-time position in which the student earns an hourly wage. Positions include Federal Work-Study (FWS) positions with an on-campus department or approved off-campus organization, as well as Non-FWS positions with an on-campus department. Working in a student employment position during your college years can help you gain a variety of experiences and learn skills to help you succeed in future career endeavors.

Student Employment at GW does not refer to full-time, part-time, or internship opportunities at external organizations, or jobs through GW Human Resources or Graduate Student Assistantships & Fellowships. Please use the menu on the right side of the screen to learn more about those opportunities.

|         |               |                |                       |
|---------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Non-FWS | On-Campus FWS | Off-Campus FWS | All Student Positions |
|---------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|

By clicking on one of the four tabs shown above, filters for position type, department, school, location, etc. can be selected to narrow your search results.

Similarly, [Handshake](#) can be used with your GW sign-in information. By clicking on the Jobs tab on the top left corner, you can select the filters appropriate to you to narrow your search results.

**Handshake**

Jobs Events Employers

Jobs Saved

Search

Q

Location

On-site/remote

Full-time job

Internship

Part-time

All filters

Both portals are updated daily as employers post directly to them and the positions are available immediately.

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**I received a stipend last year. Is this considered taxable income to me?**

A fellowship payment used for expenses other than qualified expenses is a taxable fellowship, also referred to as a stipend. Examples include payments used for living and incidental expenses such as room and board, travel, non-required books and personal computers, etc. These payments are taxable income to the student or scholar. Students and scholars are responsible for reporting these payments and remitting any tax due with their personal income tax return (e.g. Form 1040 and the corresponding state forms).

**I received a tuition scholarship. Is this considered taxable income to me?**

A qualified scholarship that is one used by a degree seeking student for tuition and required fees, books, and equipment is not considered taxable income to you.

**I am covered through private insurance now, but will be in need of coverage during the academic year. How do I proceed?**

If a student requires health insurance coverage **after the enrollment period has closed**, a student can enroll in the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) if a **qualifying change of life event occurs** (i.e., marriage, birth/adoption of a child, termination of coverage from parent's plan/termination from another insurance provider).

You may enroll during the academic year **within 30 days** of a qualifying change of life event.

**What is tuition remission and am I eligible for it?**

Tuition remission is a benefit that pays a percentage of tuition costs at GW. Tuition remission is offered to GW employees, including benefits-eligible faculty, staff, and postdoc associates.

Full-time employees seeking a doctoral degree (except MD) can have 100% of their tuition covered by tuition remission, with no limits on credit hours per semester. Full-time employees seeking a graduate degree (Master's) can have 100% tuition covered for up to 6 credit hours per semester.

Part-time employees seeking a doctoral degree can have 100% of up to 3 credit hours; or, 50% of 4 or more credit hours including the first 3, each semester (fall, spring, and summer) covered.

The value of the tuition remission benefit may be taxable at the federal and/or state level. The IRS allows up to \$5,250 for graduate-level courses to be tax exempt per calendar year. Tuition remission benefits received in excess of \$5,250 are included in gross wages and are taxable.

For the full tuition remission benefit policy, such as how to apply, policies for dependents, and change in employment status, visit [here](#).

## International Student

### **I am an international student, where should I go for the latest information?**

International students are encouraged to contact their advisor at the [International Services Office](#) (ISO) for the latest information.

### **As an international student, what are my work hour restrictions?**

International students with F-1 visas and a valid I-20 issued by GW are eligible for on-campus employment. If you are unsure whether a job is considered on-campus employment, contact the [International Services Office](#) (ISO) or your ISO advisor.

Regulations for on-campus employment include:

- Employment is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session, inclusive of any work undertaken under a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship
- Hours may not be averaged (e.g., if 15 hours are performed in one week, 25 are not permitted the following week to average 20 hours in a two-week period)
- Students are responsible for keeping track of their own hours
- All on-campus employment must cease the day after you complete all program requirements
- Full-time on-campus employment is permitted during summer breaks for students registered for the subsequent academic term. Eligible students may also work full-time during winter and spring break
- Students who are GTA/GRA may work other on-campus employment as long as total work hours do not exceed 20 hours per week
- Students receiving tuition and stipend from GW must receive permission from the Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships before working on-campus

For a complete list of on-campus employment regulations, visit [here](#). If you have any questions or concerns regarding on-campus employment, please contact ISO or your ISO advisor.

### **What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?**

Read more about Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and how to apply [here](#). To apply for CPT, you must submit a number of documents through the “Apply on ISOGateway.”

### **What is Professional Praxis?**

Read more about Professional Praxis and important deadlines [here](#). The GWSPH-specific application form can be found [here](#).

### **Am I eligible for a tax exemption as an international student?**

Students from countries that have a tax treaty with the US that includes a scholarship/fellowship article may claim exemption or a reduction of tax withholding if the payment meets the requirements of the treaty and the student completes the required forms with the University's Tax Department. See the [list of countries](#) that have tax treaties with the US. The taxes covered under a treaty exemption include Federal, Virginia, and/or DC tax. Maryland does not recognize tax treaties.

Contact the university's [Tax Department](#) at tax@gwu.edu to inquire which forms you are required to complete. See [here](#) for more details and the [list of forms](#).

## **Research**

### **How do I get funding to support my research?**

The [Capital Connection Fund](#) (CCF) provides financial assistance for GWSPH students and recent alumni to engage in off-campus research and professional development activities such as attending a conference and presenting research. Award amounts are based on available funding and demand, and do not generally exceed \$2,500.00. CCF awards and accepts applications for three award periods throughout the year.

The [Doctoral Professional Development Award](#) is given to doctoral candidates who have **successfully completed their comprehensive exams** to support expenses associated with their dissertation research and dissemination of findings. Up to \$1,500 in funding can be awarded per applicant. Each application must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the student's dissertation committee chair. Individuals may only receive one Doctoral Professional Development Award.

In addition, research funding may be available through [external funding opportunities](#), two national research funding databases ([Grant Forward](#) and [Pivot](#)), as well as a [scholarships and fellowships database](#). These databases allow you to use specific terms/filters (e.g., grant/sponsor types, citizenships, organization sector) to narrow your search results.

### **How do I get IRB approval?**

You can submit an IRB application to the Office of Human Research (OHR) via the [GW Integrated Research Information Software](#) (iRIS). *Paper forms and submissions through email are not accepted.* Refer to this [list of requirements](#) when preparing your submissions. You should allow a minimum of four weeks prior to your anticipated research start date for review of your application and study materials.

If your research is student-initiated and it meets the definition of human subjects research, it is reviewed the same as any other type of human subjects research at GW. For frequently asked questions regarding student research, check [here](#).

If you are not the principal investigator (PI) and you are unsure whether you need IRB approval, you should first discuss your research with the PI before contacting OHR. You can submit a Human Subjects Research Determination Worksheet (available within GW iRIS) to OHR to determine whether your study requires IRB review.

### **How do I get a Redcap account from Research and Technology Services?**

You can access your REDCap account [here](#). Sign in using your GWID and the associated password. If you are a first-time user, you will be prompted to enter some basic information and verify your email. Once verified, you will need to complete the Account Agreement Form before using the REDCap features. You can view the guides for those features [here](#). There are also short training videos available within REDCap that cover its features.

### **Where can I print my research posters?**

The [CREATE Digital Studio](#), located on the first floor of Gelman Library, offers a large-format printer for printing research posters up to 42" wide. Additionally, there are two FDM 3-D printers that can print a maximum size of 6.9" x 6.9" x 6.9" (150 x 150 x 150 mm). **Both services are FREE of charge and on a first come, first serve basis.** Submit a printing request form found [here](#).

## **Miscellaneous**

### **I am interested in gaining more teaching experience, where can I find some opportunities?**

PhD students can engage in the classroom as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) or a Graduate Student Lecturer (GSL). A GTA assists faculty in a teaching-related capacity. A GTA is not the Instructor of Record (IOR), but they assist the course instructor as needed including but not limited to grading assignments, leading lab or discussion sections, and holding office hours.

A GSL is a doctoral student who serves as the IOR for a course and is expected to teach the course with minimal direction from faculty. Only students who passed their comprehensive exams can become GSL. Additionally, a student can only serve as GSL after they have served as GTA for at least one semester.

Reach out to your program director for opportunities to become GTA or GSL.

## How do I navigate DegreeMAP and address problems?

You can access your DegreeMAP through GWeb. Once logged in, navigate through Student Records and Registration → Student Records Information Menu → DegreeMAP → Launch DegreeMAP.

Refer to the symbols chart, below, to understand what requirements you have completed and what remains.

| Legend                                                                            |                                         |                                                                                     |                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|  | Complete                                |  | Not complete                  |
|  | Complete except for classes in-progress |  | Nearly complete - see advisor |
|  | Prerequisite                            |  | Any course number             |

The “credits applied” field comprises earned credits plus credits in progress. “Credits applied” is not equivalent to “earned credits”. To determine your earned credits, you can subtract any credits in progress from the “Credits applied” or obtain the information from your unofficial transcript.

### Master of Public Health

COMPLETE

Credits required: 45 Credits applied: 45 Academic year: 2020-2021

Students and advisors have the option to run a “What if” audit which applies their current academic history to a different set of requirements so they can discuss how adding or changing concentration will impact their progress toward completion.

Academic What-If

### What-If Analysis

☐ Use current curriculum ☒ In-progress classes ☒ Preregistered classes

When you have registered for your final semester of courses, the degree progress will display 98% in most cases. This means you have enrolled in the correct courses and DegreeMAP is awaiting successful completion of these courses.

Format: Student View

Degree progress

98% 100%

Requirements Credits

☒ In-progress classes ☒ Preregistered classes [Process](#)

If you have student-related issues or an issue with DegreeMAP, contact your academic advisor. Issues may include incorrect courses listed or questions regarding the information presented in DegreeMAP.

**What are some student associations I can join at Milken Institute School of Public Health?**

To get involved at GW, here is a [list of student organizations](#) at GWSPH.

**What is Leave of Absence.**

Read this [section](#) in the handbook.