Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**Doctor of Public Health
Student Supplement**

2024 - 2025

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Overview

The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) Student Supplement serves as a resource for all DrPH students in The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Heath (GWSPH). It includes information on policies and procedures for navigating through the DrPH program.

The DrPH Supplement is complimentary to the GWSPH Graduate Student Handbook. This Supplement and the GWSPH Graduate Student Handbook will be updated as needed and can be found on the GWSPH Student Services page.

GWSPH Mission, Vision, and Values

GWSPH Mission
We 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
- Educating the next generation of public health leaders, policy makers, practitioners, scientists, advocates, and managers

GWSPH Vision
Healthier and safer communities powered by public health

GWSPH Values
GWSPH shares the following core values:
- Achieving excellence in all of our endeavors
- Promoting a culture of service that respects the contributions of all members of our community
- Embracing social justice and diversity as we work to realize health equity for all individuals and communities, however they are identified
- Aspiring to innovative, ethical and evidence-based policy, research, practice, management, and pedagogy
- Engaging in sustainable practices that promote healthy environments

GWSPH Leadership

Name	Title	Contact Information
Lynn R. Goldman, MD, MS, MPH	Michael and Lori Milken Dean of Public Health	goldmanl@gwu.edu (202) 994-5179
Jane Hyatt Thorpe, JD	Senior Associate Dean for Academic, Student, & Faculty Affairs	jthorpe@gwu.edu (202)994-4183
Gene Migliaccio, DrPH	Associate Dean for Applied Public Health & Director DrPH Program	geno@gwu.edu (202)994-9412
Heather Renault, MS	Assistant Dean for Student Services	hrenault@gwu.edu (202)994-0554

GWSPH Administrative Offices

1. Student Affairs (OSA): The Office of Student Affairs is the first stop for students needing support, assistance, and advice on any GWSPH matters. The OSA handles the following areas:

   - Student Services and advisement on GWSPH Policies and Procedures
   - GWSPH Forms and Publications
   - GWSPH International Student Forms/Requirements
   - Registration for Restricted Courses
   - Course Evaluations
   - Questions regarding GWSPH Special Events, i.e. Orientations, GWSPH Multicultural Celebrations, Public Health Week, Career Fair, Commencement, and School Celebration Ceremony
   - Student Organization Classroom Reservations
   - GWSPH Course Schedules, Course Caps, Rooms, etc.
   - GWSPH Listserv Subscriptions and Questions
   - Student Organizations

2. Admissions: The Office of Admissions handles enrollment into the residential graduate programs for the GWSPH. This office can assist students with the following:
    - Admissions and matriculation
    - International student questions and external funding information
    - General scholarship process and external funding information
    - New student clearance for registration
    - Petitioning for readmission or changing programs

3. Financial Student Services: The GWSPH Student Financial Services is committed to assisting students in creating a financial plan to achieve their educational goals and in resolving emergent issues that pertain to federal student aid, institutional resources such as scholarships and assistantships, and managing their student accounts. Staff within this office serve as a liaison between GWSPH and the GW Office of Student Financial Assistance and student accounts at GW. This office H can assist students with the following:

    - Counseling on Federal Student Aid eligibility and the application process.
    - Management of institutionally funded grants and scholarships
    - Identifying and applying for Graduate Assistantship and Graduate Research Assistant positions.
    - Identification of external scholarship resources
    - Assistance in managing services through the primary Office of Student Financial Assistance and Student Accounts at GW.

4. Career Services: GWSPH Career Services provides the tools, resources, and recommendations needed to help students and alumni confidently navigate the career management lifecycle. Students may make a career counseling appointment on the career counseling page and may schedule a meeting by phone, in person or online. Career Services can assist students and alumni with the following:

    - Immediate and Long-Term Career Goal Setting
    - Resume; Cover Letter Revisions
    - Job Search and Networking Strategies
    - Mock Interviews; Interview Preparations
    - Offer and Salary Negotiations

    Handshake is GW's virtual career platform. On Handshake, students and alumni schedule career counseling appointments, seek jobs, internships, fellowships and practicum opportunities, and to register for career services events.

5. <u>Student Records:</u> The primary role of the GWSPH Office of Student Records (gwsphrecords@gwu.edu) is to provide all students and Faculty with administrative support related to their academic record. Student Records can assist with the following:

   - Registering for restricted courses with a Registration Transaction Form
   - Filing a Petition
   - Graduation Clearance
   - CITI Documentation
   - Submission of documentation for Professional Enhancement Activities
   - Submission of required Dissertation Forms
   - Half-time/Full-time Certification Requests
   - Academic Integrity Quiz verification
   - Assistance with locating academic advising
   - DegreeMAP

6. <u>Disability Support Services (DSS)</u>: Disability Support Services (dss@gwu.edu) works collaboratively with students, faculty, and staff across the campus to foster a climate of universal academic excellence while promoting disability culture and GW's broader diversity and inclusion initiatives. During the Summer of 2023, DSS offers virtual meetings for current and prospective students.

Office Name	Location	Contact Information
GWSPH Student Affairs	950 New Hampshire Ave, 2nd Floor Washington, DC 20052	gwsphosa@gwu.edu (202) 994-7400
GWSPH Admissions	950 New Hampshire Ave, 2nd Floor Washington, DC 20052	gwsphadmit@gwu.edu (202) 994-2160
GWSPH Student Financial Services	950 New Hampshire Ave, 2nd Floor Washington, DC 20052	gwsphfinaid@gwu.edu (202) 994-3601
GWSPH Career Services	950 New Hampshire Ave, 2nd Floor Washington, DC 20052	gwsphcareer@gwu.edu (202) 994-3601
GWSPH Student Records	950 New Hampshire Ave, 2nd Floor Washington, DC 20052	gwsphrecords@gwu.edu (202) 994-0822
GW Disability Support Services	801 22nd Street, NW Suite 102 Washington, DC 20052	dss@gwu.edu (202) 994-8250

GWSPH Directories

[SPH Faculty Bios and Contact Information](#)
Students should access the GWSPH's Faculty Directory for current faculty members' contact information and their professional bibliographical information, education, and research,

[Administrative Offices Information](#)
To get a full list of the GWSPH administrative offices, student should visit this site.

[GW Directory](#)
This portal allows students to search for other students, faculty, and staff that are present in the George Washington University community.

Academic Calendar

The university-wide calendar can be found [here](#). This page includes current and future academic calendars for the Fall, Spring, and Summer terms. This includes, but is not limited to, what dates classes will begin, what days there are no classes, final exam schedule, etc.

DrPH Program Overview

The mission of the school-wide, 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 is an interdisciplinary, public health leadership training program that delivers a practice-based curriculum to equip public health leaders with skills for the development, implementation, and evaluation of efficient public health programs and policies and resolve complex systematic problems.

The DrPH program training utilizes health policy and global health opportunities exclusive to Washington, D.C. to prepare our students for senior-level public health leadership roles in the U.S. and globally.

Focusing on leadership and practice, we provide some curriculum flexibility to meet the diverse needs of our students through rigorous coursework in global health; environmental & occupational health; health policy & management; prevention & community health; exercise & nutrition; biostatistics; and epidemiology.

The DrPH degree is designed to promote the principles of academic public health practice. Longstanding and recent challenges (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic, racism, violence, and less than adequate national public health infrastructure) 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.

Curriculum Requirements

In this 48-credit doctoral program, students will take

- 35 credits of required foundational coursework
- 13 credits of Dissertation Portfolio coursework

Competencies

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

The DrPH curriculum aligns with the current Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) criteria, including 20 foundational DrPH competencies. In addition to these, the GWSPH DrPH program has identified five program-specific competencies. The five GW-specific competencies listed below are identified with an asterisk (*).

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

Data & Analysis
1. Explain qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods and policy analysis research and evaluation methods to address health issues at multiple (individual, group, organization, community and population) levels

2. Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue

3. Explain the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programs and to address a population's health

4. Apply implementation science approaches to improve uptake of evidence for decision-making*****

Leadership, Management & Governance

5. Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders and other partners

6. Communicate public health science to diverse stakeholders, including individuals at all levels of health literacy, for purposes of influencing behavior and policies

7. Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values and potential contributions from multiple professions and systems in addressing public health problems

8. Create a strategic plan

9. Facilitate shared decision making through negotiation and consensus-building methods

10. Create organizational change strategies

11. Propose strategies to promote inclusion and equity within public health programs, policies and systems

12. Assess one's own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities, including cultural proficiency

13. Propose human, fiscal and other resources to achieve a strategic goal

14. Cultivate new resources and revenue streams to achieve a strategic goal

Policy & Programs

15. Design a system-level intervention to address a public health issue

16. Integrate knowledge of cultural values and practices in the design of public health policies and programs

17. Integrate scientific information, legal and regulatory approaches, ethical frameworks and varied stakeholder interests in policy development and analysis

18. Propose interprofessional team approaches to improving public health

19. Integrate leadership frameworks into practices, programs, and/or policies to address public health challenges*

20. Understand how to apply a health equity lens in all aspects of public health practice, including assessments, programs, policies, and/or services*

21. Apply the core elements of a policy analysis to issues in health policy (health services and public health policy)*

Education & Workforce Development

22. Assess an audience's knowledge and learning needs

23. Deliver training or educational experiences that promote learning in academic, organizational or community settings

24. Use best practice modalities in pedagogical practice

25. Develop workforce strategies that consider human motivation, adult learning principles, organizational factors, and available resources *****

Timeline for Completion of the Program

DrPH students must complete all requirements of the degree program **within a maximum of seven years**. Students are expected to be actively engaged in their course of study throughout their time in the DrPH program. It is expected that most, if not all, students will successfully fulfill all requirements of the DrPH program in 3-5 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 in 3.5–5 years. These part-time students are expected to take a minimum of 2 courses each fall and spring semester and two course each summer for the first two years and to complete the remaining coursework in their third and fourth years.

Students must fulfill all requirements of the DrPH degree in accordance with the Program of Study and embedded Sequencing Guide (Appendix A). The Sequencing Guide provides an outline of the expected progress through the program. The most up to date versions of these documents by cohort can be found in your Cohort Google Drive.

DrPH Phases

Phases of the Doctor of Public Health (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, the student moves to the candidacy phase.

Pre-Candidacy Phase:

1. DrPH Program Support

Throughout the program, students will receive support from their academic advisor, dissertation chair and committee, and the DrPH program office. Academic advisors will work with students to explore the student's interests, goals and practice experiences. (See Role of Advisor section.) A timeline for completion of coursework will be planned and agreed upon. The advisor will determine how to best help new students to prepare a plan for fulfilling the DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) and Dissertation requirements to help set them on the right course. Ultimately, students are responsible for their own course of action, however advisors will be supportive and assist in any ways they can. The DrPH program office provides a single point of contact for all administrative and academic matters pertaining to the DrPH journey.

2. Foundational Coursework

DrPH students must register for classes according to the procedures received from the Office of Admissions and Registrar. DrPH students are expected to enroll in coursework each Fall, Spring, and Summer term until coursework has been completed and must maintain a 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing.

Courses are outlined below, shown for full time study, to be completed in 3 years. Some students may follow a part-time path. When planning, it is important to know that all DrPH required courses are offered one time per year. Please see the Program of Study (Appendix A) for more comprehensive information.

DrPH Full-Time Plan of Study Outline Year-by-Year

Year 1

Fall Year 1	Spring Year 1	Summer Year 1
PUBH 8700 (3 credits) *DrPH Seminar and Introduction to DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx)*	**PUBH 8710** (3 credits) *Public Health Project Management and Social Entrepreneurship*	**PUBH 8716** (3 credits) *Education and Workforce Development Approaches for Public Health Leaders*
PUBH 8706 (3 credits) *Leadership Principles & Practice I*	**PUBH 8712** (3 credits) *Public Health Program Planning, Implementation & Evaluation*	**PUBH 8722** (3 credits) *Public Health Policy Analysis*
PUBH 8708 (3 credits) *Applied Public Health Methods I*	**PUBH 8714** (3 credits) *Leadership Principles & Practice II*	**PUBH 8705*** (0 credits) *Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study II for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development*
PUBH 8730 (2 credits) *DrPH Immersion (Washington, DC)*	**PUBH 8703** (0 credits) *Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study I for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development*	
TOTAL CREDITS = 11	**TOTAL CREDITS = 9**	**TOTAL CREDITS = 6**

Year 2

Fall Year 2	Spring Year 2	Summer Year 2
PUBH 8718 (3 credits) *Public Health Communications and Marketing*	**PUBH 8724** (3 credits) *Organizational Leadership & Change Management*	**PUBH 8711 (2 credits)** *Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation*
PUBH 8720 (3 credits) *Social Change and Collective Impact*	**PUBH 8726** (3 credits) *Applied Public Health Methods II*	**Comprehensive Exam**
PUBH 8707 (2 credits) *Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Development*	**PUBH 8709** (2 credits) *Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Defense*	
TOTAL CREDITS = 8	**TOTAL CREDITS = 8**	**TOTAL CREDITS = 2**

Year 3

Fall Year 3	Spring Year 3	Summer Year 3
PUBH 8713 (2 credits) *Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development*	**PUBH 8715** (2 credits) *Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense*	**PUBH 8715** (2 credits) *Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense* **(Continued as needed)**
Begin write-up of the dissertation		
TOTAL CREDITS = 2	**TOTAL CREDITS = 2**	**TOTAL CREDITS = 0**

The DrPH Program of Study and the Sequencing Guide found within it (Appendix A) will help students navigate their path of study and timeline, showing possible pathways for full time (also shown above) and part time courses of study. Any subsequent updates to this sequencing guide will be provided to students.

3. Proposal Defense

Students work with their committee to determine readiness to defend and then defend their DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) proposal to their committee. The DAPEx will serve as the foundation for the student's dissertation.

Please note in terms of the trajectory of the program that students may begin working on their DAPEx proposal prior to taking the comprehensive exam, however, they may *not* defend their proposal until after they have successfully passed this exam.

Students are encouraged to begin thinking about and exploring topics and methods for their DAPEx and dissertation at the beginning of the program. They should work closely with their academic advisors and DrPH program leadership as they progress through their course of study. PUBH 8707 – Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Development course helps students dive into their proposal development with active instructional guidance and support. Prior to registering for PUBH 8707, students will be asked to:

- Identify a dissertation topic;
- Identify an advisor;
- Identify an approach to use in addressing a public health problem or challenge;
- Consider what data you will need;
- Describe your anticipated public health impact.

A draft of the dissertation proposal is developed during PUBH 8707 and students prepare to defend this proposal orally to their Committee. The dissertation proposal should provide a clear, concise, and thorough plan of the proposed project/research. While enrolled in PUBH 8707, students will identify and confirm their Dissertation Committee members and submit the Dissertation Committee Approval Form to the DrPH Program Office.

4. 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 required 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 Advisor. The GWSPH will administer the comprehensive exam once a year in May *(exact dates to be determined)*.

Once students pass the comprehensive exam, they are officially admitted into the candidacy phase. Students who do not complete or fully pass the comprehensive exam will be offered the opportunity to retake the exam one additional time. Additional coursework may be recommended. The second exam must be taken within one year of the initial exam. Failure to complete or pass the comprehensive exam will be grounds for withdrawal from the DrPH program.

Pro Tip: We suggest that you download and save all of your course materials from the course platform (Blackboard and/or Digital Campus) as you may lose access to past courses on these platforms prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

Candidacy Phase:

The objective of the DAPEx and 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 addressing a concrete and substantial applied public health issue, opportunity, and/or problem. The DAPEx will serve as the foundation for the dissertation. The dissertation is a problem-based or issue-based inquiry that will involve applied research on a selected public health policy and practice issue. The dissertation should result in the identification or assessment of feasible solutions or recommendations to the selected problem or issue, appropriate to the context in which they occur. Students will be supported through the Dissertation Portfolio that includes a series of courses discussed in more detail below under the section [Dissertation Portfolio Sequence](#). The Dissertation Portfolio provides structure for students to identify their DAPEx and move through their dissertation.

1. **DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx)**

Upon successful defense of their DAPEx proposal during PUBH 8709, the student can enroll in PUBH 8711 – Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation and begin their DAPEx.

DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx)

The DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPchEx) is a requirement of the Doctor of Public Health Program. The goal of the DAPEx is to advance the development of higher-level applied competencies and critical thinking relevant to 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 coursework to real-life situations. This will demonstrate mastery of evidence-based public health decision-making and strong leadership skills in practice, integration of multiple disciplines and ability to translate empirical knowledge into effective public health practice.

You will learn more about the DAPEx through your program orientation and PUBH 8700. A DAPEx syllabus will also be made available through your learning platform or Google Drive.

2. Dissertation

Once the student has completed their DAPEx, they can enroll in PUBH 8713 – Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development. Once all coursework and dissertation credit requirements are met, students may be eligible to register for Continuous Enrollment, (nominal fee/semester). (See Registration Procedures)

3. Dissertation Defense

Students enroll in PUBH 8715 – Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense only upon successful completion of PUBH 8713. Students who are not eligible to enroll in PUBH 8715 must register for other course offerings or enroll in one credit of Continuing Research (PUBH 0940). (See Registration Procedures)

In order to schedule a defense, the members of the dissertation committee must agree that the candidate is ready to defend the dissertation. Candidates preparing for the official oral defense of their dissertation should be thinking ahead to the formatting requirements for the final document and the graduation clearance requirements for the GWSPH. The Dissertation Committee must be provided ample time to review the complete draft and the candidate time to respond to comments/make revisions, prior to scheduling the defense

date. Committees often require some final revisions and will determine, together with the Candidate, the timeline and further review, if any, is necessary.

Disposition of the Dissertation
When scheduling the dissertation defense, students are encouraged to review the University's Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) Approval Deadlines: https://library.gwu.edu/etd-deadlines. Best practice is to schedule the dissertation defense at least two weeks prior to the ETD deadlines to avoid any delays.

Upon successful defense of their dissertation, and time allotted to make any necessary revisions, all doctoral candidates are required to submit the FINAL dissertation (with all the approved changes) electronically to ProQuest/UMI in accordance with all requirements, including University deadlines. More information is available at: http://library.gwu.edu/etds/.

4. DrPH Degree Certification and Graduation

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

Students must submit an Application for Graduation.

The completed Application for Graduation is submitted to the GWSPH Office of Student Records (gwsphrecords@gwu.edu).

- Deadlines for submission are noted on the Application for Graduation.
- Students planning to submit an Application for Graduation should review their DegreeMAP record to ensure that all graduation requirements have been met. This includes confirming program requirements have been completed and all grades have been submitted.
- Once the Application for Graduation has been submitted, students will be contacted by GWSPH Student Records department with a checklist of items that need to be completed.

Dissertation Portfolio Sequence

Our program takes practice very seriously and our focus on it goes beyond just addressing a requirement. Practicing DrPH competencies is how students will learn what is necessary to move their own professional practice and leadership forward. Because of this, we have developed the Dissertation Portfolio that promotes practice by integrating the DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) throughout the curriculum and linking it to the dissertation.

Students are required to take eight courses related to the DrPH Dissertation Portfolio. These courses provide tailored support to DrPH students as they navigate the dissertation process and it ensures that both online and residential cohorts take the same Program of Study. Two of these courses, PUBH 8700 and PUBH 8707 in the Dissertation Portfolio Sequence are didactic courses (highlighted in **blue** in the graphic below). The DAPEx serves as the practice project that students will then write up as their dissertation. Our Dissertation Portfolio sequencing in our 2023 Program of Study in Appendix A shows the integration of the DAPEx and dissertation throughout the entire program.

PUBH 8700: DrPH Seminar and Introduction to DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx)
This interactive seminar course provides doctoral students in the DrPH program with fundamental understanding of current issues associated with Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health, Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, Global Health, Health Policy & Management, and Prevention and Community Health. It is also the first course in the Dissertation Portfolio series. The course introduces students to the DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) and Dissertation, and the process they will go through in identifying public health problems, researching them, and finding appropriate approaches and interventions to address them.

PUBH 8703 Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study I for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development

This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to narrow and refine a public health problem and approach they want to pursue for their DrPH applied practice experience and dissertation. In PUBH 8700, students identified topics they were interested in pursuing, and this independent study supports students as they determine how they will go about exploring and researching their specific topics. Initially, students will work independently with their faculty advisors and as they progress through the course, they will begin to identify faculty to serve on their Dissertation Committee who will support them moving forward. This course, along with PUBH 8705, will prepare students to take PUBH 8707 - Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Development.

PUBH 8705 Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study II for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development

This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to continue to narrow and refine a public health problem and approach they want to pursue for their DrPH applied practice experience and dissertation. This course follows and builds off of PUBH 8703 - Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study I for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development. During this course, students should identify and begin working with faculty members who will serve on their Dissertation Committee. The course will prepare students to meet the criteria necessary to take PUBH 8707 - Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Development.

Once the student identifies and confirms their Dissertation Committee members, the student must complete the DrPH Dissertation Committee Approval Form and email it to the [DrPH Program Office](#).

PUBH 8707 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Development

The primary purpose of this didactic course is to assist the doctoral student in developing and defending a draft proposal. Drafts of each section of the proposal will be submitted and reviewed in class and in detail by the instructor. Students are expected to identify and work closely with their advisor and/or dissertation committee members. At the onset of the course, students are required to identify a Dissertation Committee Chair and establish regular meetings to discuss relevant dissertation proposal components.

If the student has not already done so, at this time, they will need to complete the DrPH Dissertation Committee Approval Form and email it to the [DrPH Program Office](#).

PUBH 8709 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Defense

This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to work closely with their Dissertation Committee to prepare for their proposal defense. Students will work with their committee members for multiple rounds of review of their entire dissertation

proposal. In their proposal, students must identify the competencies that their dissertation will address. Committee members will provide written feedback to students prior to the decision to forward with the defense. The chair and committee members determine when the candidate is ready to schedule their defense.

Prior to the proposal defense, the DrPH Dissertation Proposal Defense Request Form must be completed and submitted to the [DrPH Program Office](#).

PUBH 8711 Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation
The DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) is a requirement of the Doctor of Public Health Program. The goal of the DAPEx is to advance the development of higher-level applied competencies and critical thinking relevant to 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 coursework to real-life public health challenges and approaches. This will demonstrate mastery of evidence-based public health decision-making and strong leadership skills in practice, integration of multiple disciplines and ability to translate empirical knowledge into effective public health practice. Upon a successful defense of their proposal, students may begin their DAPEx during this course. Students should stay in close contact with their committee members and site preceptor during this time and arrive at consensus with any mid-course adjustment.

PUBH 8713 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development
During this course, students will write about their DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) as their dissertation in consult with their dissertation chair and committee members, including their site preceptor. Students can choose a traditional 5 chapter dissertation or 2-paper manuscript format.

PUBH 8715 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense
This course is designed to provide students the opportunity to work closely with their Dissertation Committee to prepare for their dissertation defense. Students must submit the full dissertation draft to the dissertation committee for review and written comments at least once. Students may work with their committee members for multiple rounds of review of their entire dissertation. The chair and committee members determine when the candidate is ready to schedule their dissertation defense. There are three possible outcomes of the proposal defense: approval, approval with revisions, or no approval. The Dissertation Final Defense Request Form must be completed and submitted to GWSPH Student Records (gwsphrecords@gwu.edu)

Disposition of the Dissertation

When scheduling the dissertation defense, please review the University's Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) Approval Deadlines: https://library.gwu.edu/etd-deadlines
NOTE: Schedule your defense at least two weeks prior to the ETD deadlines to avoid any delays
Upon successful defense of their dissertation, you will need to
1) Complete and submit the ETD Approval Form to GWSPH ETD Administrator Jennifer Lyles-Shields at jenlyles@gwu.edu
2) submit the FINAL dissertation electronically to ProQuest/UMIt: https://library.gwu.edu/gw-etds

Role of the DrPH Academic Advisor

The role of the DrPH Academic Advisor is pivotal to the student's progression through the pre-candidacy phase. The DrPH Academic Advisor role supports the Milken Institute SPH's commitment to student development by:

- Guiding the student throughout the program and providing support with sequencing, scheduling and program administrative support such as signing off forms and other requirements. Any variation from the established program of study requires the approval of the DrPH Academic Advisor, and possibly the DrPH Program Director.

- Mentoring the student in his or her 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: knowledge of foundations, critical literature reviews, inquiry and research methods, clarity of written and oral thought, professional development, technological skills, and knowledge of the specialty area, if applicable.

- Setting clear expectations and guiding the student toward achieving a high level of quality in all written work.

- Guiding the student's preparation for the comprehensive examination.

- Serving as a resource as the student selects a dissertation committee chair and committee members.

Note: The DrPH Academic Advisor advises students primarily during the first two years of the program, but will support the student throughout their entire program. Advisors will help the student identify faculty members who have aligned academic and practice-based interests. These faculty members may be potential dissertation committee members. DrPH Academic 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 Academic Advisor will serve as an advisor for the student's dissertation.

Role of the Dissertation Chair

The Dissertation Chair takes serves as the DAPEx and dissertation advisor when the student has identified their DAPEx project idea and selects their Committee Chair. The initial role of a chairperson is to help students develop an outline for a focused, rigorous and manageable dissertation 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, design, and approach, the chair is expected to provide constructive input and timely feedback to help the student develop his or her DAPEx proposal. The selected Chair should have the expertise to guide the student through the candidacy phase. The Dissertation Chair will also advise and support the student/candidate in the selection of the other dissertation committee members.

The Dissertation Chair is expected to regularly review student progress and serve as a mentor, assuring that the project progresses in accordance with GWSPH guidelines and the DrPH program expectations.

DrPH Governance Structure

Program Director
To provide oversight, the DrPH Program Director works with a school-wide 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, requirements, and serves as the Chair of the DrPH 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, ruling on all petitions in accordance with SPH and Graduate School guidelines The DrPH Program Director serves as the DrPH Committee Chair.

Associate Program Director

The Associate DrPH Program Director supports the Program Director in all functions as described above and addresses day-to-day administrative issues affecting students and advisors. In the absence of the DrPH Program Director, the DrPH Associate Program Director will serve as the Chair of DrPH Committee meetings.

DrPH Governance Committee
The DrPH Committee advises and provides decision-making on all aspects of the Program. The DrPH committee is comprised of the DrPH Program Director, the DrPH Associate Program Director, and Committee Members to include a representative from every department of GWSPH, up to three student representatives (two students in pre-candidacy and one student in post-candidacy), and a practice-based adjunct faculty teaching in the Program.

The responsibilities of the committee members focus on advisement and decision-making in the areas of admissions; awarding of funding for students; curriculum; reviewing proposals for DrPH coursework; monitoring student progress and dismissals; doctoral applied practice experience (DAPEx); oversight of the comprehensive exam; dissertation oversight; and advising students within their area of expertise and/or matching students to faculty members. Sub-committees will be formed as necessary.

Professional Enhancement Activities

AFTER THE FIRST TERM.

All degree seeking students in the Milken Institute School of Public Health are required to attend a minimum of 8 hours of professional enhancement activities during their program (some programs require more). Professional enhancement activities supplement the academic curriculum and help prepare students to participate actively in the professional community. They enhance practical knowledge and awareness of public health issues – either in general or in a student's specific area of study. Please note that if you have completed 8 hours from a previous GW degree, you will still need to complete 8 PE hours while you are enrolled in the DrPH program.

Students can fulfill this requirement by attending workshops, seminars, live webinars (recorded webinars or meetings do not fulfill this requirement), or other relevant professional meetings, which are often held at the GWSPH and in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. After completing all 8 hours and obtaining their academic advisor's signature, students should submit the Professional Enhancement Requirement form (found on GWSPH's [Academic Forms page](#)) to Student Records at gwsphrecords@gwu.edu.

Eligible PE activities should advance student's understanding of public health. If students are unsure of whether an activity is appropriate for the PE activity or not, they should

reach out to an advisor to obtain approval at least 48 hours prior to attending the PE activity.

Registration Procedures

Upon matriculation, it is necessary to remain an active student in the DrPH program.

- DrPH students must register *every fall and spring semester* until successful completion of all DrPH program requirements, including defense, final approval, and submission of the dissertation. Students who do not register during each fall and spring term will be considered out of status and may not register for the following semester without first petitioning for readmission.

- DrPH students must register for specified core class(es) during summer one and summer two. Students may register for additional classes during the summer session as well. 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.

- When not enrolled in summer classes, or not scheduling the dissertation or dissertation proposal defense during the summer term (i.e.- summer three and beyond), students are not required to register for any classes during the summer session.

- Following the completion of required coursework, students must continue to register each fall and spring semester to maintain their active status until all program requirements are met and the student graduates. This can be met through course enrollment, dissertation credits, continuous enrollment (if eligible), or continuing research. International students and students receiving federal financial aid are responsible to ensure they maintain the necessary enrollment requirements to avoid administrative problems, which may include exclusion. Students are strongly encouraged to plan their sequencing and credit allocation well in advance.

- The type of registration depends on the student's progress in the program:

   o DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) - Only DrPH students who have successfully defended the DAPEx proposal may register for PUBH 8711 - Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation.

   o Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development - Only DrPH students who have successfully completed their DAPEx (PUBH 8711) may register for PUBH 8713 - Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development.

- o Continuous Enrollment- If all other program requirements have been met, and the program director approves, students may be eligible to register for continuous enrollment (UNIV 0982- which may present with a nominal fee to the university) in the term in which the dissertation will be defended.

- o Continuing Research: DrPH students who have met the coursework requirements but have not yet successfully defended their DAPEx proposal, must register for one credit of Continuing Research (PUBH 0940), which requires a tuition payment of one full credit hour to maintain active status in a fall or spring term. Continuing Research credits cannot be used to satisfy any of the credit requirements for the DrPH.

- Students have the option of taking a Leave of Absence for up to 2 semesters while enrolled in the DrPH program. Students must apply for a Leave of Absence by completing a petition during the Fall or Spring registration period; the petition must be approved by the student's advisor and the DrPH Program Director. Each Leave of Absence for a given semester must be separately approved and can be taken sequentially or at different times while in the program. Students must officially register for Leave of Absence to stay in status. The University charges a nominal registration fee to remain enrolled during a Leave of Absence.

- Students are responsible for completing and submitting all required registration materials and are advised to periodically review their registration actions (via DegreeMAP, see below) to make certain they are accurate and current. Students should always retain copies of all registration transactions submitted to the University or the GWSPH.

Registering for Classes

To register for course please follow the instructions below:
1. Go to https://it.gwu.edu/gweb. Bookmark this page for easy access.
2. Under Access with GW Email, click Current Students and sign in as prompted.
3. Click Student Records and Registration, then Registration Menu.
1. Click Register for Classes.
2. Select the appropriate term and click Continue.
3. Click Advanced Search.
4. Enter in subject: PUBH the course number underneath and click Search
5. You will see a list of all offered courses that fit the criteria you entered
6. Click Add next to the course section
7. On the bottom right click Submit.

For further instructions on how to register, including how to register by using CRN numbers, please visit the Office of the Registrar site (https://registrar.gwu.edu/how-register-0) and click on the How to Register Guide link.

Track You Academic Progress Using DegreeMAP

[DegreeMAP](#) is GW's online advising tool for use by students, advisors, and the office of the registrar to clear students for graduation. To use the planner, log in to DegreeMAP:
1. Log in to the **GWeb Infosystem**
2. Click on the Records and Registration link
3. Click on the Student Records Information link
4. Click on the DegreeMAP link
5. Click the "Launch DegreeMAP" button
6. Students are responsible for meeting all degree requirements therefore DegreeMAP should be used for planning and verifying graduation requirements.

Guidance for Updating DegreeMAP
In the case that a degree requirement gets miscategorized on DegreeMAP, students will need to complete and submit a [Graduate Petition](#) to GWSPH Student Records (gwsphrecords@gwu.edu).

We recommend that these changes are made once a year toward the end of Spring semester. Please note that you can use <u>one</u> petition for <u>multiple</u> requests if those requests need to be signed off by the same individual(s).

Below are the most common updates that students may need to make to their DegreeMAP including instructions for making these changes:

Waiving Pathways (PUBH 6080)
If you waived PUBH 6080: Pathways to Public Health but it still shows up on your DegreeMAP as a missing course, you can correct this by using the [Graduate Petition](#) form:
- Select the third option (*Waive and Replace a Required Course*) on the petition
- Complete the *Rationale* section – specify that you received an MPH from a CEPH-accredited institution

Waiving and replacing one course for another
If you received program permission for a "waive and replace" of a required course with a different public health course that you have taken, you will need to follow the below instructions.

To make this change in your DegreeMAP, use the [Graduate Petition](#) form:
- Select the third option (*Waive and Replace a Required Course*) on the petition
- Complete the *Rationale* section – specify that you have consulted with your advisor and course instructor and both have agreed that you have provided sufficient evidence of the information being requested.

Please keep in mind that these updates/changes typically take 2-3 business days but sometimes up to 5 if it is a busy time for the Registrar's Office.

Communications

Weekly GWSPH Newsletter

Read the GWSPH Weekly Student Newsletter. All enrolled GWSPH students receive the 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.

Monthly DrPH Newsletter

Read the Monthly DrPH Newsletter. All DrPH students receive the monthly newsletter which provides information on our community, lists opportunities for DAPEx, features profiles on our students, posts dissertation presentations, and features happenings of the DrPH Coalition.

Joining Other Listservs

Students are also welcome to join the opt-in GWSPH listserv that includes students, alumni, faculty, staff, and members of the community. The list is used to distribute information on seminars, internships, fellowships, and professional conferences. Once a member of the list, you can send public health related announcements to fellow list members.

If you are interested in subscribing to the GWSPH listserv, please:
1. Use your GW email address to send an email to Robin Delk (robin3@gwu.edu)
2. Write "Subscribe to Listserv" in the subject field of the email
3. Simply include "Please add me to the student listserv" in the body.

We also strongly encourage students to contact respective departments of interest and request to be added to their listservs as well as provide contacts.

Final Note: *Please note that University and School policies and procedures as outlined in the George Washington University Bulletin and the Milken Institute SPH website apply to DrPH students.*

Appendix A: DrPH Program of Study

Milken Institute School of Public Health THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY	Doctor of Public Health Program of Study AY 2024-2025

Course Distribution Summary
- Total Credits = Minimum 48
- Required Coursework = 35 credits
- Dissertation Portfolio = 13 credits *(highlighted courses below)*

REQUIRED COURSE WORK			
Course #	*Course Title*	*Credits*	*Semester*
PUBH 8730	Doctor of Public Health Immersion	2 credits	Fall 1
PUBH 8700	DrPH Seminar and Introduction to DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx)**	3 credits	Fall 1
PUBH 8706	Leadership Principles and Practice I	3 credits	Fall 1
PUBH 8731	Applied Public Health Methods I: Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation	3 credits	Fall 1
PUBH 8732	Applied Public Health Methods II: Mixed Methods	3 credits	Spring 1
PUBH 8703	Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study I for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development	1 credit	Spring 1
PUBH 8710	Public Health Project Management and Social Entrepreneurship	3 credits	Spring 1
PUBH 8714	Leadership Principles and Practice II	3 credits	Spring 1
PUBH 8705	Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study II for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development	1 credit	Summer 1
PUBH 8716	Education and Workforce Development Approaches for Public Health Leaders	3 credits	Summer 1
PUBH 8722	Public Health Policy Analysis	3 credits	Summer 1
PUBH 8707	Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Development**	2 credits	Fall 2
PUBH 8718	Public Health Communications and Marketing	3 credits	Fall 2
PUBH 8720	Health Equity and Public Health Leadership	3 credits	Fall 2
PUBH 8709	Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Defense	2 credits	Spring 2
PUBH 8724	Organizational Leadership and Change Management	3 credits	Spring 2
PUBH 8733	Applied Public Health Methods III: Evidence for Decision-Making	3 credits	Spring 2
PUBH 8711	Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation	2 credits	Summer 2
PUBH 8713	Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development	1 credit	Fall 3

PUBH 8715	Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense	1 credit	Spring 3
PUBH 6080	Pathways to Public Health***	0 credits	Year 1
COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (UPON COMPLETION OF REQUIRED COURSEWORK -- SUMMER 2 MAY/JUNE)			
TOTAL PROGRAM 48 CREDITS			
SPH NON-ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS 1. PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENCE(S) - (MINIMUM 8 HOURS) 2. CITI TRAINING 3. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY QUIZ			

**DAPEX/Dissertation courses with didactics PUBH 8700 and PUBH 8707. *Prior to the start of PUBH 8707*, students are required to have done the following:

1. Identified a DAPEx partner organization
2. Identified a preceptor
3. Identified their Dissertation Committee Chair
4. Developed a strong abstract
5. Submitted a draft practice plan to their 8707 instructor
6. Met with the 8707 instructor

***Students without a prior MPH or other public health degree from an accredited school of public health will be required to successfully pass the free, zero credit, online course (PUBH 6080) within one year of matriculation. There is no fee for this course. See information about Pathways to Public Health on the website in the Academic Advising section.

Milken Institute School of Public Health
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)
2024-2025
DrPH Sample Sequencing Guide
for Full-time versus Part-time Study

Note: DrPH courses are offered 1 time per year only

Full-Time (3 years) *(3 terms per year for 3 years)*	Part-Time (3.5 - 4 years) *Strongly prefer FT for first Fall Term as this maintains core course sequencing*
Fall Yr 1: 11 credits *8700, 8706, 8730, and 8731*	**Fall Yr 1**: 8 credits *8700, 8706, and 8730*
Spring Yr 1: 10 credits *8710, 8732, 8714 and 8703* – Dissertation Portfolio: *Independent Study I for DAPEx Proposal Development (0 credits)*	**Spring Yr 1:** 7 credits *8710, 8714, and 8703* – Dissertation Portfolio: *Independent Study I for DAPEx Proposal Development (0 credits)*
Summer Yr 1: 7 credits *8716, 8722 and 8705* – Dissertation Portfolio: *Independent Study II for DAPEx Proposal Development (0 credits)*	**Summer Yr 1:** 7 credits *8716, 8722 and 8705* – Dissertation Portfolio: *Independent Study II for DAPEx Proposal Development (0 credits)*
Fall Yr 2: 8 credits *8718, 8720 and 8707* – Dissertation Portfolio: *Proposal Defense Planning*	**Fall Yr 2:** 8 credits *8720, 8731 and 8707* – Dissertation Portfolio: *Proposal Defense Planning*
Spring Yr 2: 8 credits *8724, 8733 and 8709* – Dissertation Portfolio: *Proposal Defense* Comp Exam- May	**Spring Yr 2:** 5 credits *8709 and 8732*
Summer Yr 2: 2 credits *8711* – Dissertation Portfolio*: DAPEx*	**Summer Yr 2:** 2 credits *8711* – Dissertation Portfolio*: DAPEx*
Fall Yr 3: 1 credit *8713* – Dissertation Portfolio: *Dissertation*	**Fall Yr 3:** 4 credits *8718 and 8713* - Dissertation Portfolio: *Dissertation*
Spring Yr 3: 1 credit *8715* - Dissertation Portfolio: *Dissertation Defense*	**Spring Yr 3:** 7 credits *8724, 8733 and 8715* – Dissertation Portfolio: *Dissertation Defense* Comp Exam- May
Summer Yr 3: 0 credits *8715* - Dissertation Portfolio*: Dissertation Defense* (continued as needed)	**Summer Yr 3:** 0 credits *8715* (continued as needed)
	Fall Yr 4: 0 credits *8715* (continued as needed)
	Spring Yr 4: 0 credits *8715* (continued as needed)
	Summer Yr 4: 0 credits *8715* (continued as needed)

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT SEQUENCING:

1. The full-time and part-time sequences listed in this document are suggested schedules and are subject to change based on course availability and pacing of students. Students should consult with their academic advisor to ensure they are following the most up-to-date sequence and are taking the appropriate courses during a given semester.

2. Most courses are offered once each year, so students are encouraged to follow this sequencing guide as closely as possible. Part-time students should pay close attention to the part-time sequencing outlined above and work closely with their advisors to determine their course sequence each semester and throughout the program.

3. Students become eligible to sit for the comprehensive exam after all required coursework has been completed. The comprehensive exam will be administered once a year in May; specific dates to be determined annually. Students may retake the comprehensive exam up to one time. Students must successfully complete the comprehensive exam prior to defending their dissertation.

4. GW students are required to be registered for coursework every fall and spring semester until they have successfully completed all program requirements to remain in active status. It is not required to be registered in the summer term to maintain active status. In the DrPH program, this requirement also pertains to the defense, final approval, and submission of the dissertation. Students must be registered in PUBH 8715 (Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense) or continuous enrollment (may be a nominal fee) in the term in which the dissertation is defended, including the summer term, if that is when the defense is scheduled.

5. DrPH students are required to take eight courses related to the DrPH Dissertation Portfolio. These courses are structured and sequenced to guide students through the dissertation process, which includes the conceptualization, development, and defense of their DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx); writing up this experience in a dissertation format; and successful completion of their dissertation defense. Students can begin their DAPEx after successfully completing their proposal defense and the proposal is approved by the student's Dissertation Committee.

6. The DrPH program is designed for full time students to complete all requirements within 3 years and part time students within 3.5 to 4 years. However, all students must complete all DrPH requirements within 7 years of matriculation, including official leaves of absence.

   REQUIRED COURSES
   PUBH 8700: DrPH Seminar and Introduction to DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx)
   PUBH 8703: Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study I for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development
   PUBH 8705: Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study II for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development
   PUBH 8706: Leadership Principles and Practice I
   PUBH 8707: Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Development
   PUBH 8709: Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Defense

PUBH 8710: Public Health Project Management and Social Entrepreneurship
PUBH 8711: Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation
PUBH 8713: Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development
PUBH 8714: Leadership Principles and Practice II
PUBH 8715: Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense
PUBH 8716: Education and Workforce Development Approaches for Public Health Leaders
PUBH 8718: Public Health Communications and Marketing
PUBH 8720: Health Equity and Public Health Leadership
PUBH 8722: Public Health Policy Analysis
PUBH 8724: Organizational Leadership & Change Management
PUBH 8730: Doctor of Public Health Immersion
PUBH 8731: Applied Public Health Methods I: Public Health Planning, Implementation & Evaluation
PUBH 8732: Applied Public Health Methods II: Mixed Methods
PUBH 8733: Applied Public Health Methods III: Evidence for Decision-Making

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Credits. Successful completion of all required coursework; minimum 48 credits total credits required.

2. Grade point average. A minimum overall grade point average of 3.0.

3. Timeline. The degree must be completed within seven years of matriculation. Degrees are awarded each semester, though formal commencement ceremonies –including the doctoral hooding ceremony– only occur in May. Students are eligible to participate in graduation activities only after they have completed all degree requirements, including a successful dissertation defense and have no financial obligations to the University.

4. Doctoral Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx). Successfully complete all requirements for the DAPEx.

5. Comprehensive examination. Students become eligible to sit for the comprehensive exam after all required coursework has been completed. Upon successful completion of the exam, students officially enter the doctoral candidacy phase of the program. Students are not permitted to defend their dissertation prior to passing the comprehensive exam. The exam may be repeated, up to one time, upon approval.

6. Dissertation Portfolio. Throughout the program, the focus is on maintaining the Portfolio sequence as closely as possible, even for part-time students. The successful oral defense and submission of the dissertation portfolio is required.

7.Dissertation Portfolio: Proposal defense. Doctoral candidates prepare a written proposal with guidance from their dissertation advisor and committee. Each DrPH candidate gives an oral presentation and defense to the committee who determines the student's readiness to commence their DAPEx and dissertation.

8. Professional Enhancement. All GWSPH students must complete a minimum of 8 hours of professional enhancement activities. This can be accomplished through participation in seminars, workshops,

professional meetings and other appropriate functions. Documentation of attendance to the event should be submitted to the GWSPH Office of Student Records at gwsphrecords@gwu.edu.

9. Integrity Quiz & Plagiarism. In the first semester as a DrPH student, all students should review the George Washington University's Code of Academic Integrity, take the quiz and submit documentation to the GWSPH Office of Student Records at gwsphrecords@gwu.edu

10. CITI Training requirement. All students are required to complete training regarding human subject protection regulation and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). To fulfill this requirement, you must complete the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) Course in The Protection of Human Research Subjects and then send to GWSPH Office of Student Records at gwsphrecords@gwu.edu. Please save this for future reference for your DAPEx and Dissertation Portfolio.

Appendix B: DrPH Dissertation Portfolio Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **DrPH Program of Study**
- **DrPH Sample Sequencing Guide**

Introduction

The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) Dissertation Portfolio Guide provides comprehensive information about the dissertation process, including; key steps, policies and procedures. It offers guidance to students, advisors, faculty, and dissertation committee members.

At The George Washington University, Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH), the DrPH program's focus on practice goes beyond just addressing a requirement. 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 accreditation requirements through the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) for practice and dissertation work through one integrated experience, including 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 DrPH Applied Practice Experience (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 that promotes 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. Through the Dissertation Portfolio, students are required to take eight courses that provide tailored support to DrPH students as they navigate the dissertation process from idea generation during first semester to the final dissertation defense at the end of the program.

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 that 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.

Overview

The Dissertation Portfolio Courses

The Dissertation Portfolio promotes practice by supporting students in identifying, developing and implementing their DAPEx project and writing up and defending this experience through a high-level academic dissertation. The Portfolio includes a series of courses that provides structure for students to identify their dissertation project, defend their proposal, and write up and defend their dissertation. These courses support DrPH students as they navigate the entire dissertation process from start to finish.

Students are required to take **Eight Courses** related to the DrPH Dissertation Portfolio starting first semester and ending when the student successfully defends their dissertation. These courses support DrPH students as they navigate the dissertation process. Figure 1.1 below shows the Dissertation Portfolio Sequence. Two of these courses, PUBH 8700 and PUBH 8707 in the figure are didactic courses (highlighted in blue). The other courses are primarily independent study with support from the student's committee members. PuBH 8703 and 8705 are hybrid courses with a mix of independent work and a few live sessions throughout the semester with their course instructor. Individual course descriptions can be found in the **Dissertation Portfolio Course Descriptions** section of this guide.

Figure 1.1 Dissertation Portfolio Sequence

The sequencing of the Dissertation Portfolio courses is also outlined in Program of Study. The Program of Study shows the integration of the dissertation portfolio courses throughout the entire program. The Program of Study Sequencing Guide outlines how full time and part time students should plan for their coursework and also the depicts the optimal timeline in which students take both core and dissertation portfolio courses. The full-time and part-time sequences listed in Program of Study Sequencing Guide are suggested schedules and are subject to change based on course availability and individualized pacing for students.

Core courses are offered once each year. Students are encouraged to follow this sequencing guide as closely as possible with regard to core courses. While the sequencing guide identifies a specific semester-specific timeline for each Dissertation Portfolio course, both full and part time students can adapt this timeline to meet their individual goals, needs and readiness for each course. Students are required to consult with their advisor and eventually their committee members to discuss their ideal timeline and subsequently assess their readiness to take the next course in the sequence based on where they are at with their dissertation progress. For example, a student who has not yet successfully defended their proposal, is not ready and cannot register for PuBH 8711: DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation course.

The Written Dissertation

The dissertation is a high-quality written product that is consistent with expectations for advanced, doctoral-level studies and university policies. It typically includes key academic components such as the incorporation of theory, conceptual frameworks, a problem statement, and established research or applied methods to guide, inform and structure the practice experience.

There are three formats for the dissertation. Students may prepare an applied/practice dissertation, a research dissertation, or a two-paper option dissertation. This decision is made in consultation with the dissertation committee chair and members. See **The Dissertation Defense** section of this guide for further details. Students may find it helpful to look at examples of final dissertations that are published through the [Office for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs Web Resources for Dissertations and Theses](#).

The DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx)

The DAPEx is a requirement of the DrPH program and the program's accreditation. The goal of the DAPEx is to advance the development of higher-level applied competencies and critical thinking relevant to 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 coursework to real-life situations. Through this, students will demonstrate mastery of evidence-based public health decision-making and strong leadership skills in practice, integration of multiple disciplines and ability to translate empirical knowledge into effective public health practice.

The Relationship between the DAPEx and the Dissertation

The DAPEx is the practice-based dissertation project that the student develops and leads in partnership with a partner site. The dissertation is the academic document that the student writes and defends with their dissertation committee. The dissertation includes key academic components such as the incorporation of theory, frameworks, and methods to guide, inform, and structure the practice experience. It also includes the student's defense of both the written dissertation proposal and final dissertation.

An Outlook on Program Completion

The **Time** necessary to plan, complete, and defend a dissertation and move through this entire process from start to finish can vary by student, depending on the complexity of the topic, challenges obtaining required data, competing demands on the student's schedule, or other considerations. Coursework supporting both the DAPEx and the dissertation is integrated throughout the entire program as shown in the Dissertation Portfolio Sequence.
Students are to **Register** for Dissertation Portfolio courses based on their successful completion of the previous course in the sequence and on their readiness to take the next course in the sequence. For PuBH 8707, there are prerequisites that need to be met prior to registering and

taking the course. These requirements are indicated in the **Dissertation Portfolio Course Descriptions** section of this guide. For PuBH 8711, students need to successfully defend their dissertation proposal and submit the appropriate paperwork. For PuBH 8715, students need to be ready to defend their dissertation that semester.

Students will receive a letter **Grade** for the didactic Dissertation Portfolio courses, PuBH 8700 and 8707. For all other Dissertation Portfolio courses, students will receive "credit" or "no credit". If students fall out of sequence, they should receive guidance from their Academic Advisor and Committee Chair. Students are welcome to also consult with DrPH Program Leadership.

The student moves to the **Candidacy Phase** after passing the comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam is administered once a year in May; specific dates are determined annually. Students must successfully pass the comprehensive exam prior to defending their full dissertation. Ideally, students will pass their comprehensive exam prior to implementing their dissertation project but this is not necessary and may especially be the case for part-time students who elect to go at a slower pace with their core coursework but move through the dissertation portfolio courses at a faster pace.

Students have a total of seven (7) years for **Program Completion**, including defense of the dissertation. During this time, students must make steady progress toward completion of the DrPH degree through the pre-candidacy and candidacy phases. We encourage students to maintain a schedule of classes and achievements to enable them to complete the program in three to four and a half (3-4.5) years. Steady progress means students must be actively engaged in coursework, comprehensive exam preparation, dissertation proposal development, or dissertation work throughout their time in the program, depending on the phase of their training. Students may require more than two years to complete coursework, or may need additional time to prepare for comprehensive exams or the dissertation proposal defense, but these are considerations that must be discussed and agreed to by the DrPH program leadership as appropriate. Students who are not making adequate progress in different phases of the program will be required to meet explicit deadlines that are deemed reasonable by the program director and, if applicable, dissertation chair. Students may be withdrawn from the program if their progress is stalled and they are unable to successfully progress through the stages of training.

Dissertation Portfolio Course Descriptions
This section includes course descriptions for Dissertation Portfolio courses. Information about course prerequisites and course deliverables and action steps are also included.

PUBH 8700: DrPH Seminar and Introduction to DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx)

This interactive seminar course provides doctoral students in the DrPH program with fundamental understanding of current issues associated with Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health, Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, Global Health, Health Policy & Management, and Prevention and Community Health. It is also the first course in the Dissertation Portfolio series. The course introduces students to the DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) and Dissertation, and the process they will go through in identifying public

health problems, researching them, and finding appropriate approaches and interventions to address them. Successful completion of this course allows students to move on to PuBH 8703.

PUBH 8703 Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study I for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development

This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to narrow and refine a public health problem and an appropriate approach that they want to pursue for their DrPH applied practice experience and dissertation. In PUBH 8700, students identified topics they were interested in pursuing, and this independent study supports students to take the next steps necessary to push their ideas forward towards implementing their practice experience and writing their project up as a dissertation. This course, along with PUBH 8705, will prepare students to take PUBH 8707 - Dissertation Portfolio: Proposal Defense Planning. Successful completion of this course allows students to move on to PuBH 8705.

PUBH 8705 Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study II for DAPEx and Dissertation Proposal Development

Building off of PUBH 8703: Independent Study I for DAPEx Proposal Development, this course is designed to provide students with a continued opportunity to further narrow and refine a public health problem and identify an appropriate approach that they want to pursue for their DrPH applied practice experience and dissertation. During this course, students will work to identify their DAPEx partner site, preceptor, dissertation committee chair and other dissertation committee members. They will also begin writing up key components of their proposed work and summarizing this in an abstract format.

By accomplishing these things, students will be prepared to meet the prerequisites associated with taking the next Dissertation Portfolio course, PUBH 8707: Dissertation Proposal Development.

Successful completion of this course - in addition to meeting PuBH 8707 prerequisites that are listed in the course description below - allow students to move on to the next course in the Dissertation Portfolio sequencing, PuBH 8707. Students who do not meet these requirements must wait until another semester to take PuBH 8707. Please note that PuBH 8707 is offered fall and spring semesters.

PUBH 8707 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Development

The primary purpose of this didactic course is to assist the doctoral student in developing and defending a draft dissertation proposal. The class is very interactive; students are expected to move through dissertation proposal components and refine their research/practice aims and approach through presentations in the class and in-depth discussions and critiques of sections of the proposal. Students prepare an oral dissertation proposal defense along with the written proposal and practice their presentation skills with their fellow classmates and the instructor.

Students are expected to identify and work closely with their advisor and/or dissertation committee members.

> *PUBH 8707 Course Prerequisites*
> In order to take PUBH 8707: Dissertation Proposal Development, students need to have identified their DAPEx partner site, a preceptor, their dissertation committee chair; have a strong abstract developed, and submit a draft [Practice Plan](). Students who do not meet these course requirements will need to wait until another semester to take PUBH 8707.
> To register for the course, students need to do the following:
> Students will need to send their Practice Plan to their PUBH 8707 course instructor and meet with the instructor prior to taking the course to ensure their readiness; they will need the instructor's permission to register for the course.
>
> Successful completion of this course allows students to move on to PuBH 8709.

PUBH 8709 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Defense

This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to work closely with their Dissertation Committee to prepare for their proposal defense. Students will work with their committee members for multiple rounds of review of their entire dissertation proposal. In their proposal, students must identify the competencies that their dissertation will address. Committee members will provide written feedback to students prior to the decision to forward with the defense. The Chair and other committee members determine when the candidate is ready to schedule their dissertation proposal defense.

When the Chair determines a student is ready to defend, students should schedule their proposal defense and

> ➢ Complete and submit the [Proposal Defense Request Form]() to [drphadmin@gwu.edu]()
> ➢ After students defend their proposal, send their [Dissertation Proposal Defense Report]() form to [drphadmin@gwu.edu]()

Successful completion of this course allows students to move on to PuBH 8711.
PUBH 8711 Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEx and Dissertation Implementation

Upon a successful defense of their proposal and Oversight approval, students will implement their DAPEx during this course. Students should stay in close contact with their committee members and their Preceptor during this time and arrive at consensus with any mid-course adjustment.

Successful completion of this course allows students to move on to PuBH 8713. Please refer to the **DAPEx Deliverables** section of this guide to learn more about course requirements for completion.

➢ Course deliverables need to be uploaded to the Blackboard course platform.

PUBH 8713 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development

During this course, students will write Chapters 4 and 5 of their Dissertation based on findings and results from their dissertation project. Students should work closely with their Chair, Preceptor and other committee members. Students may prepare an applied/practice dissertation, a research dissertation, or a two-paper option dissertation. See further details in **The Dissertation Defense** section of this guide.

Successful completion of this course allows students to move on to PuBH 8715. Students are to check in with their Dissertation Chair to determine their readiness to proceed to PuBH 8715.

PUBH 8715 Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense

This course is designed to provide students the opportunity to work closely with their Dissertation Committee to prepare for their dissertation defense. Students must submit the full dissertation draft to the dissertation committee for review and written comments at least once. Students may work with their committee members for multiple rounds of review of their entire dissertation. The chair and committee members determine when the candidate is ready to schedule their dissertation defense.

➢ The Dissertation Final Defense Request Form must be completed and submitted to GWSPH Student Records (gwsphrecords@gwu.edu).
➢ After successful completion of the final dissertation defense and all final deliverables have been submitted, students should submit the signed Dissertation Defense Report Form to drphadmin@gwu.edu.

Successful completion of this course allows students to submit their dissertation electronically and complete all graduation requirements for the program.

<p style="text-align:center">CHAPTER TWO</p>

DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) Requirements

Identification of DrPH Competencies

Students must identify a minimum of *five* DrPH Competencies that will be addressed in the project. At least one competency must come from the *Leadership, Management & Governance* category. Please see DrPH Competencies in **Appendix C** of this guide for a complete list of competencies. 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.

Scope of Work & Practice Plan

The DAPEx must be a mutually agreed upon and beneficial scope of work between the student and the Preceptor and the partner site. This Scope of Work must be supported by the student's dissertation committee which will include the committee Chair - who must be a faculty member within the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH) - the Preceptor, and one other committee member who may be internal or external to GWSPH. All opportunities must be approved by the student's dissertation committee and will receive final confirmation and documentation after the student's proposal defense.
Students will need to complete and submit an approved [Practice Plan](#) with concurrence from their Chair and Preceptor that includes the following information:
- Name of partner agency/site,
- Preceptor name and contact info
- Project title
- Brief summary of the project (1-3 paragraphs),
- Five program competencies to be addressed,
- A listing of primary activities, and
- An anticipated work product that benefits the partner agency/site.

This plan will first be submitted to determine readiness to take PUBH 8707: Proposal Development. Revisions to the plan can be made at any time. A final version should be submitted during PUBH 8711: DAPEx.

Given the realities of practice, the exact scope of work may shift throughout the design and implementation period. In this case, the student, the site preceptor, and the other dissertation committee members need to agree in real-time on changes to the plan and a revised scope for moving forward.

Timeframe & Length of Project

The DrPH [Program of Study](#) lays out the **optimal timeframe** for moving through the Dissertation Portfolio and completing the dissertation project.

Starting first semester of the program, students begin to move through Dissertation Portfolio courses that are designed to support them in identifying a topic of interest, researching possible partners and sites, designing and implementing the project, and writing their project in a dissertation format. The [DrPH Program Handbook](#) walks students through the portfolio sequence, coursework and process.

According to the [Program of Study Sequencing Guide](#), full-time students will complete their project during Summer Year 2. Part-time students may elect to go at a slower pace. Regardless of status, all students have the **flexibility** and may elect or need to move through the Dissertation Portfolio at slower pace based on their needs, the approvals of their advisors and committee members for moving on to the next phase, and assessed defense readiness and results.

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 Dissertation Portfolio sequencing for guidance on the suggested timeline.

Role of the Preceptor

The 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 and provide guidance and help facilitate the student's work with the partner site. The Preceptor should serve in the role as being the point person at the partner site that helps the student integrate into and supports the site's work. The Preceptor can provide background information, guidance, and feedback in relation to the agreed upon scope of work and pre-defined learning objectives. More details about Preceptor qualifications can be found in **The Dissertation Committee Members** section of this guide.

Partner Site or Setting

For each project, the DrPH student is responsible for identifying an appropriate setting for their practice activities and for identifying and securing a commitment from the site preceptor. This negotiation is critical in maintaining strong institutional ties with community partners and is considered to be part of meeting the leadership competency component of a successful dissertation project.

Students may choose a site based on their professional development needs and interests in consultation with their academic advisor and committee members. DrPH faculty (advisors, program leadership, and other content experts) are available to assist students in brainstorming options and potential opportunities for practice experience.

Students should consider **choosing a site** that is external to their school or program so that the experience is an application of learning in a real-world setting, and not just an academic exercise. With this said, there may be some appropriate opportunities for applied, practice-related work through centers and institutes at the school. If students are interested in exploring these options further, they should reach out to their advisor and/or program leadership.

Typically, DrPH students select sites external to where they work professionally to gain new and significant advanced-level practice experiences. However, students may complete their applied practice project within their own work setting, as long as the scope of the work is distinct from their current role and allows them to fulfill the identified competencies and engage in advanced-level practice. This work should demonstrate a clear opportunity for professional growth and advancement. This option may be more practical for students who work full time.

It is very important that the partner site receive a benefit from working with a DrPH student so that the partnership is two-directional and mutually impactful. In an effort to ensure that this happens, the student should submit at least one work product to the Preceptor and partner site in support of the site's mission and activities. It is anticipated that there will be other **benefits** to the partner site in terms of having doctoral student support to carry out a scope of work that is determined to be beneficial to the mission and activities of the site. This might take the form of increased capacity, filling organizational gaps, providing supplemental skill set(s), taking on an expanded scope of work or taking on new initiatives and finding opportunities for innovation.

In terms of **site commitment**, partner sites should be prepared to allow the Preceptor the time, space, flexibility, and/or resources they might need to work with the student in the agreed upon timeline and corresponding scope of work. If a new scope of work is being carried out, the Preceptor should ensure that there is site alignment and support for this collaborative work. In terms of documenting the agreed upon scope of work, the student and the site can rely on the Practice Plan and any other planning or agreement document that the participating individuals may agree to in an effort to outline and codify the work between an external site, a site preceptor, and GWSPH DrPH student's individual practice and dissertation work.

The scope of work should be mutually agreed upon as being beneficial and aligned with the agency/site's mission, goals and activities. From a learning and leadership perspective, the project should be led by the student with the oversight and collaboration of the preceptor and carried out in such a way that it is integrated into and supportive of the partner site.

In terms of school-level **agreements**, GW may consider entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or an Affiliation Agreement (AA) with an external site if there is broader work done with GW over a period of time and beyond the scope of a student's individual work with an organization. If a student has additional questions, they should reach out to the DrPH Program Office.

There is no financial **compensation** for supporting a doctoral student through this process beyond the benefit of working with a student on an agreed upon scope of work and project.

International DAPEx Partner Sites
Experiences will often be with sites in a student's geographic area but may also include alternative sites. If the student plans to travel outside of the United States to conduct the DAPEx, additional advance planning is required.

All travelers must use GW Passport to register university related travel (including DAPEx) and/or propose travel to high risk destinations going forward**.** The GW Office of International Programs links to GW Passport and also provides you with information on completing a high-risk travel exception, which is needed typically for a destination with a Department of State Advisory Level 4 for Graduate students/Faculty/Staff travelers.

Registering travel with the university ensures 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 (including Dept of State Level) should be clearly described in their practice plan. The scope of work should be approved by the DrPH Program and the Office of Research Excellence (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.

*All travels must be registered with OIP at least 30 days prior to departure.

Students with F-1 Visas

Curricular Practical Training (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 (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 US office or address in order for the CPT to be approved for a student who is physically in the US during the practicum. This means that, even if the site is virtual, if the site does not have a US 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 US for the DAPEx experience, then they do not need CPT nor a site that has a US address.

The International Services Office (ISO) and the GW Career Center (Samantha Neary, sneary@gwu.edu) are actively involved in the CPT process. For more information, please visit the GW International Services Office Webpage or contact the International Services Office.

DAPEx Deliverables

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

A Reflective Report

A reflective report outlining accomplishments during the dissertation project and must include the student's expression of personal and/or professional reactions to the project. The report should be between 3-6 pages, single-spaced. The report should include the following sections:

    a. Background/introduction
    b. Description of the DAPEx (goal and objectives), activities and outcomes.
    c. Identification and discussion of how students achieved each of the pre-selected DrPH competencies

d. Discussion of how the DAPEx allowed them to apply principles of leadership and management and public health theories and methodologies learned through the program coursework to real-life situations

e. 1-2 paragraph summary of the experience that could be disseminated to other students and for posting on the DrPH program website (should read like a journal abstract)

A Work Product

While the primary goal for this experience is to further the student's mastery of identified competencies through applied practice in real-world settings, a secondary and very important intent is for students to contribute to the sponsoring site and further its public health mission. The Practice Plan should include the identification of a **Work Product** deliverable that contributes in this capacity. This experience should be mutually beneficial and strengthen our collective public health impact.

The dissertation project is designed to be flexible and to respond to individual student's learning interests and may take multiple forms. Listed below are several examples to show how students may fulfill this requirement. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Community Health Assessment Report	Impact Evaluation Plan or Analysis
Health Education Curriculum Plan	Intervention and Implementation Plan
Literature Review Analyses Report	Budget, Vendor Selection, Contract, and/or Supply Chain Analysis Report
Program Evaluation Report	Technology Platform or Application Design Proposal
Risk Assessment Analysis Report	Strategy Document (assessment/research, process map, etc.)
Research Study Proposal	Monitoring and Evaluation Tool Development
Project Management Plan (work-plan, Gantt chart, stakeholder map, etc.)	Program Management Plan (evidence-based design, stakeholder analysis, budget, etc.)
Survey Design & Development Plan	Quality Improvement Plan
Predictive Analytics	Care Coordination Model; Payment Policy

Dissertation Committee Members

Dissertation committees must consist of **three (3) members**, including the chair. (The Chair must be full-, part-time faculty, or an adjunct at GWSPH. The Preceptor serves as one of the committee members given their support and effort in the work. The third member should complement the strengths of the other two members and fill in any gaps in terms of academic or practice experience in regards to content or methods to fully support the student and their project and dissertation scope.

Selection of Dissertation Committee Members

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 during PubH 8700, 8703 and 8705 to learn about faculty interests and strengths and to identify faculty whichmight serve as a dissertation chair. Students should also consult with their Academic Advisor to identify faculty to meet with to discuss potential dissertation topics or common interests. As students sharpen their interests and get to know faculty across the school, they will identify an individual(s) to ask to serve as their Chair. Often, the student will seek guidance from the Chair about other members who might serve on the committee. It is not a given that faculty members will accept this request. It depends on their interest and alignment with the project as well as their bandwidth to serve in this role. Students may need to have an alternative option(s) in mind. There isn't a hard and fast rule about when to select a Dissertation Committee chair and other committee members. 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, identify a faculty mentor or potential chair as a dissertation topic evolves to ensure feasibility given the time and resource constraints plus the public health implications. 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 potential Chair identified, as well as a dissertation topic, prior to enrolling in PubH 8707 - Dissertation Portfolio: Proposal Development. For full time students and part time students strictly following the Dissertation Portfolio sequencing, they should plan on taking PubH 8707 fall semester of Year 2. This means that during throughout PubH 8703 (spring Year 1) and 8705 (summer Year 1) students will seek to identify committee members. In order to do this, students should have a strong idea of what their topic is and what their project will be, in order to find committee members who can support their proposed scope of work and academic inquiry.

Qualifications for Dissertation Chair and Dissertation Committee Members

Dissertation chairs and committee members have doctoral level training and commonly hold a PhD, DrPH, ScD, MD, JD, or other related degree. All members of the dissertation committee should ideally have doctoral level training, although exceptions to this rule can be made on a case-by-case basis by the DrPH program leadership, especially in regards to the academic training of the Preceptor committee member. 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. Some members of the committee may be chosen because of their depth of knowledge about the student's topic, while others may participate on the committee primarily because of their expertise in relevant research and applied methods. If a committee member does not have a doctoral degree, the student must submit a CV for review and consideration to their committee and then to DrPH program leadership.

Qualifications for Dissertation Preceptor

The preceptor should be qualified to support, supervise, and mentor doctoral-level practice work. Ideally, the preceptor will have doctoral level training and hold a PhD, DrPH, ScD, MD, JD, or another related terminal degree. Equivalent work experience may substitute for doctoral training for the site preceptor given the realities of the practice field. Equivalent experience may be alternatively assessed through years of experience, leadership experience, seniority within a position, site, or field, and/or public health related accomplishments. In these cases, this decision should be made by the Committee Chair and in collaboration with DrPH program leadership. A CV should be submitted for review and consideration.

The Role of Dissertation Chair

The initial role of a chair is to 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 his or her 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, the topic, the approach, or 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/materials prior to submitting it 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 senior or junior level full or part-time faculty member.
>
> **Coordinator** - In this scenario, the chair serves more of a leader/ 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/

sections of the dissertation and consequently the student will also rely on the other committee members and other advisors as necessary for the initial review of specific areas/chapters. The chair will provide guidance on his or her 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 he/she is 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 may be a senior or junior faculty member. 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 relationships with the students, time constraints and 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 and outside readers.

The Role of 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 and 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 that 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.

Communication with Dissertation Committee Members

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 (for example, bi-weekly or monthly meetings or memoranda from the student providing updates on the student's progress, or explicit deadlines for committee members to

review chapters or related materials) and when submission of work or research products and timelines for review of chapters or other materials are clarified and respected.

Optional Dissertation Committee Readers

As of December 2023, the decision was made to make readers *optional* on a dissertation committee. Students may discuss this change with their dissertation chair if helpful. The role of a dissertation reader has been to review the final dissertation draft prior to the final defense and participate in the final defense by asking questions and serving as a voting member of the committee. If students are interested in inviting readers to participate, more details can be found below.

If students choose to have readers, they attend the dissertation defense and actively participate as an examiner along with dissertation committee members. Readers are not 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 (4-5) 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 <u>must</u> be available to attend the dissertation defense.

Readers can attend the dissertation defense remotely, if not available to attend in-person. This is a decision made by the student, the dissertation chair, and the reader and may require logistical support to make sure that technical issues do not delay the defense.
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. But remember, readers must have an opportunity to review the dissertation draft at least 4-5 weeks prior to scheduling the oral defense.

Approval Form for Dissertation Committee

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 as soon as the committee is solidified. This form does *not* include the names of potential readers, which are optional. All dissertation forms can be accessed from the DrPH section of the website (http://publichealth.gwu.edu/services/students).

The Dissertation Proposal

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 3 chapters. Students should have a conversation with their committee members as to what format they will choose for their final dissertation, including: Applied/practice dissertation, Research dissertation, or the Two-paper option dissertation. More details about these three formats can be found in the **The Dissertation Defense** section of this guide.

The Dissertation Proposal Format

The dissertation proposal should provide a clear and thorough plan of the proposed research/practice. The proposal includes the first several chapters of what will become the final written dissertation. The dissertation proposal is sometimes referred to as the first three chapters of the dissertation, although this may vary by the scope of work. The three chapters are often referred to as 1) introduction and/or background; 2) literature review; 3) methods/approach. 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):** Approach/methods, with clear, concise and specific details explaining the practice and dissertation questions and/or hypotheses, methods/approach and design, human subjects review, and limitations of the work. The approach/methods section of the proposal describes the tools/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 collected will be managed and analyzed to address the research question(s). This plan may be adapted for more practice-based approaches and in this case should include ample details and decision points about the approach that will be taken to address the public health problem of interest. The plan should include a timetable for the project that accounts for all phases of the dissertation study and a discussion of potential challenges to meeting that timetable and ways to address the challenges. A statement should also be included of 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 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. The revised version of the proposal that will be discussed at the dissertation proposal defense 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. Although this is not required, it is strongly recommended. Some committees may schedule a call to address issues that arise during the proposal development or dissertation stage. It is common, however, for committees not to meet as a group outside of the dissertation proposal defense or the dissertation defense and this is permitted. The student should discuss the meeting schedule or style with the chair and committee members.

The chair and committee members must assess the student's **readiness** to move to the proposal defense phase before the defense can be scheduled. The same process is used later to determine that a student is ready to defend the dissertation.

➢ Prior to the defense, the Dissertation Proposal Request Form should be completed and submitted to drphadmin@gwu.edu. *This form should be sent at least three to four (3-4) calendar weeks prior to the scheduled proposal defense*.

The Format of the Dissertation Proposal Defense

Students prepare a formal oral presentation as part of their dissertation proposal defense. Presentations should include sufficient detail to give the committee members confidence that the student can accomplish what is proposed, that the study is methodologically rigorous and that the topic and approach will make a valuable contribution to the 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 an 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 meeting.

The Outcomes of the Dissertation Proposal Defense

There are three possible outcomes of the proposal defense:

- Approval,

- Approval with revisions, or

- No approval.

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 the committee present. In cases when 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-defend 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 Report Form](#) must be signed by all dissertation committee members, indicating whether the student passes, passes with revisions, or does not pass. The signed form must be submitted within a week after the proposal to drphadmin@gwu.edu.

Dissertation Compliance and Institutional Review Board (IRB) Requirements

Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) Training

All students in the GWSPH are required to complete training regarding human subject 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 either the **Social and Behavioral Research** OR the **Biomedical Investigators** "Basic Course". Students must complete the CITI course **before** they are approved to begin the DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEx) and/or any other field or research-related activities. This course is available online. Students should print out the certificate of completion for the CITI course and keep a copy for their records. Students will need this documentation for any IRB submission package. Documentation of completion is also required for graduation clearance. Students will submit these documents to the Office of Student Records, gwsphrecords@gwu.edu. Additional training requirements exist for students who plan to conduct some types of research (e.g., clinical research). More information can be found [here](#).
IRB Review

In addition to the CITI Online Course, 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 the plan to engage in research activity in their Practice Plan and will also be required to complete research questionnaires prior to beginning the work, OR in the event that the direction of the project changes. 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 IRB. Note that this process can be lengthy, and we advise a minimum of 45 Days is allowed for its completion.

A human subject is defined by the GW Office of Human Research as "a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains: data through intervention or interaction with the individual or identifiable private information." 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 Practice Plan include:

- All student projects outside of activities limited to the classroom need to be entered into the portal.
- This process allows the Dean's Office of Research Excellence (ORE) to support the educational journey while ensuring compliance with GW policies.
- This portal is managed by ORE. For general questions about the process, please email sphstudentirb@gwu.edu.

In order to ensure full compliance with regulations and GW policies, ***students may not begin their project 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.

The Dissertation Defense
There are three formats for the dissertation. Students may prepare an applied/practice dissertation, a research dissertation, or a two-paper option dissertation. This decision should be made in consultation with the dissertation committee chair and members. Regardless of whether the student chooses the applied/practice dissertation, research dissertation, or two-paper option dissertation all students must prepare a dissertation proposal using one of the formats described below and defend the proposal before the dissertation committee.
Option One (Applied Practice Dissertation)
Students have an option of preparing an applied/practice dissertation, which essentially builds upon the format of the dissertation proposal, with revisions (including additional information) 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, the work product. Depending on the length of the product, students may want to put the actual work product in as an Appendix. 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 findings/results and addresses next steps for further development or research. This chapter may also include implications and recommendations sections.

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/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,

Option Two (Research Dissertation)
Students have an option of preparing a research dissertation, which essentially builds upon the format of the dissertation proposal, with revisions (including additional information) 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 chapter with a 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 results 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 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 Three (Two-Paper Dissertation)

The two-paper option dissertation 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.

The precise details of what needs to be included in the dissertation summary chapter, and the topics for the two papers, should be determined in consultation with the dissertation committee. 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. Students who choose the two-paper option should have a discussion with the 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 at least one of the two papers; the student may be lead author on all two papers, although it is also common for students to be second author on at least one of the papers. In all cases, authorship should be discussed and determined (at least for first and second author) prior to development of each manuscript.

Dissertation Review and Dissertation Defense Scheduling

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 their 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, its findings, and prepares 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. Committee members often see several drafts of sections or complete drafts of the dissertation chapters or manuscripts. After at least one full round of review with comments and revisions (although multiple reviews are the norm), the committee may recommend that the candidate is ready to defend the dissertation.

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. (Note that different locations may have different capabilities in terms of technology or technical support.) The request for scheduling a defense **must** be made 4 weeks out from the planned defense. The candidate should work with the DrPH Program Offcie to coordinate logistics. To do this, candidates should email drphadmin@gwu.edu.

Candidates may defend their dissertation any time during the year. It is important to note that students have their degrees conferred in Fall, Spring, and/or Summer. If a student is targeting attending a May graduation, they must be finished with the dissertation defense no later than the first week of April to allow for any revisions that may need to be made and still graduate in May. Students **must** submit the final dissertation draft, including manuscripts for the two-paper option, to all committee members a minimum of 4 weeks before the dissertation defense date.
A 4-week review period is generally required for feedback from dissertation committee members on chapters or sections of the proposal or dissertation prior to the review of the full dissertation. Students should take review periods into consideration when developing their dissertation plan and timetable.
> ➢ Four-weeks prior to the planned defense, candidates should complete and submit the *Dissertation Defense Request Form* and submit to drphadmin@gwu.edu. If this form is submitted late, the defense will need to be rescheduled.

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, it is often the case that the chair abstains from the rounds of questioning. If the chair engages in questioning, then the questions should be clarifying, integrative and/or forward looking. Often, other students and faculty, or guests from outside of the program or university, also attend. Family and friends are often in attendance for the dissertation defense.

The Format of the Dissertation Defense

The format of the defense is as follows. 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 to

identify areas for additional study, to evaluate the methods and their strengths and limitations, and to place the work in a larger public health context.

Following the examination period, the dissertation committee go 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:

- Approval,

- Approval with revisions, or

- No approval.

Committee members will determine the outcome of the defense. They 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 when 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.

Candidates must be registered throughout the time they are working on the dissertation, its defense, or the revision process prior to official submission as a requirement for graduation. Candidates cannot be cleared for graduation if they are not currently registered. Students who have satisfied all required credits may enroll for Continuous Enrollment (nominal fee) through the semester in which they will graduate.

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 concurrently will issue credit for the student's dissertation research credits to Student Records. More information is found at: http://library.gwu.edu/etds/

All doctoral candidates are required to submit the final dissertation (with all approved changes) to http://library.gwu.edu/etds/ in the semester they apply for graduation. The deadline for submission in ETD for fall, spring, and summer graduations change with each academic year, typically between 2 to 4 weeks prior to degree conferral dates. The submission deadlines can be found at https://library.gwu.edu/etd-deadlines. (NOTE: To ensure you meet the deadline, it is highly recommended that you upload the 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.

After submission, the library will check the format before forwarding the ETD to the Office of Student Affairs - Student Records. Student Records will review the ETD and confirm that all doctoral requirements have been met and submit the ETD to ProQuest/UMI.

CHAPTER FOUR

Graduation

Students may officially graduate in January, May and August of each year; however, commencement is held only once -- in May of each year. Students may participate in the doctoral hooding and commencement exercises in May following completion of all of their program requirements. It is common for students who graduate in January or August to return to campus the following May to participate in commencement ceremonies, including the doctoral hooding.

Notice to the Office of Student Records must be received according to its deadlines to be eligible to participate in commencement in May.
The application for Graduation must be completed and submitted to the SPH Office of Student Records in the semester in which you will graduate in accordance with the established deadlines. For Spring graduates, please make note of the specific deadlines to be eligible to participate in commencement in May. The Application for Graduation form should be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs - Student Records or email gwsphrecords@gwu.edu and can be found via the website- http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/forms.

Upon receipt of the Application for Graduation, Student Records will email a checklist of graduation requirements directly to the student to prepare for the audit of student records. Students should review graduation requirements carefully with the department program director before applying for graduation to be aware of what items may be missing before submitting the graduation application.

<div align="center">**APPENDIX A**</div>

References and Resources

   A. [GWSPH Website (Forms, DrPH Handbook and Program Guides)](#)

   B. [Himmelfarb APA Citation Services](#)

   C. [Himmelfarb Library Public Health & Health Services Portal](#)

   D. [GW Writing Center](#)

   E. [GW Office of Human Research](#)

   F. [GW Office of Ethics, Compliance and Risk Policies](#)

   G. [Office for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs Web Resources for Dissertations and Theses](#)

   H. [CEPH Guidance](#)

APPENDIX B

Where to Submit Required Documents

All completed and signed petitions, registration, and graduation forms should be submitted to the Milken Institute SPH Office of Student Affairs - Student Records (email gwsphrecords@gwu.edu).

All other required DrPH program forms should be submitted to drphadmin@gwu.edu. Students are advised to keep a copy of all forms for their records. Required Dissertation Forms include:

- Dissertation Committee Approval Form
- Dissertation Proposal Defense Request Form
- Dissertation Proposal Defense Report Form
- Dissertation Defense Request Form
- Dissertation Defense Report Form

DrPH Competencies
Updated Language as of March 2024
The DrPH curriculum aligns with the current Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) criteria, including 20 foundational DrPH competencies. In addition to these, the GWSPH DrPH program has identified five program-specific competencies. The five GW-specific competencies listed below are identified with an asterisk (*).

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

4. Apply implementation science approaches to improve uptake of evidence for decision-making*

Leadership, Management & Governance
5. Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing partners, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders, and others
6. Communicate public health science to diverse audiences, including individuals at all levels of health literacy, for purposes of influencing behavior and policies
7. Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values, and potential contributions from multiple professions, sectors, and systems in addressing public health problems
8. Create a strategic plan
9. Facilitate shared decision making through negotiation and consensus-building methods
10. Create organizational change strategies
11. Propose strategies to promote inclusion within public health programs, policies, and systems
12. Integrate leadership frameworks into practices, programs, and/or policies to address public health challenges*
13. Understand how to apply a health equity lens in all aspects of public health practice, including assessments, programs, policies, and/or services*
14. Apply the core elements of a policy analysis to issues in health policy (health services and public health policy)*
15. Assess one's own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities, including cultural proficiency
16. Propose human, fiscal, and other resources to achieve a strategic goal
17. Cultivate new resources and revenue streams to achieve a strategic goal

Policy & Programs
18. Design a system-level intervention to address a public health issue
19. Integrate community-informed knowledge such as cultural values and practices in the design of public health policies and programs
20. Integrate scientific information, legal and regulatory approaches, ethical frameworks, and varied parties' interests in policy development and analysis
21. Propose interprofessional and/or intersectoral team approaches to improving public health

Education & Workforce Development
22. Assess an audience's knowledge and learning needs
23. Deliver training or educational experiences that promote learning in academic, organizational, or community settings
24. Use best practice modalities in pedagogical practices
25. Develop workforce strategies that consider human motivation, adult learning principles, organizational factors, and available resources*

APPENDIX D

Practice Plan Template

APPENDIX E

- **DrPH Program of Study**
- **DrPH Sample Sequencing Guide**