

# Milken Institute School of Public Health

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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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**ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-24 PhD Student Handbook**

**Policies and Procedures**

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## Overview

The PhD Student Handbook serves as a resource for all PhD students in The Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH). It includes information on the policies and procedures for navigating through the PhD program.

The PhD Student Handbook is supplementary to the GWSPH Graduate Student Handbook, as well as individual PhD program guides. This PhD Handbook and the GWSPH Graduate Student Handbook will be updated as needed and can be found on the [GWSPH Student services page](#).

### PHD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree offered by the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University prepares students to assume roles as public health researchers and leaders in academia and other public health settings. The PhD degree is the terminal research degree in the professional discipline of public health. Consistent with this advanced professional orientation, the PhD degree prepares future public health researchers to apply critical thinking and rigorous research methods to a complex, wide range of practical public health problems.

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

The Milken Institute School of Public Health currently offers 7 PhD Degrees in the following public health disciplines:

| <b>Program Name</b>                              | <b>Program Director(s)</b>   |
|--|--|
| <u>Environmental Health</u>                      | Dr. Kate Applebaum, <a href="mailto:kapplebaum@gwu.edu">kapplebaum@gwu.edu</a><br>Dr. Lance Price, <a href="mailto:lprice@gwu.edu">lprice@gwu.edu</a>  |
| <u>Epidemiology</u>                              | Dr. Heather Young, <a href="mailto:youngh@gwu.edu">youngh@gwu.edu</a>  |
| <u>Exercise Physiology and Applied Nutrition</u> | Dr. Jennifer Scheck, <a href="mailto:jscheck25@gwu.edu">jscheck25@gwu.edu</a>  |
| <u>Global Public Health Science</u>              | Dr. Nirbhay Kumar, <a href="mailto:nkumar@gwu.edu">nkumar@gwu.edu</a>  |
| <u>Health Data Science</u>                       | Dr. Keith Crandall, <a href="mailto:kcrandall@gwu.edu">kcrandall@gwu.edu</a><br>Dr. Guoqing Diao, <a href="mailto:gdiao@email.gwu.edu">gdiao@email.gwu.edu</a><br>Dr. Toshi Hamasaki, <a href="mailto:hamasaki@bsc.gwu.edu">hamasaki@bsc.gwu.edu</a> |
| <u>Health Policy</u>                             | Dr. Avi Dor, <a href="mailto:avidor@gwu.edu">avidor@gwu.edu</a><br>Dr. Leighton Ku, <a href="mailto:lku@gwu.edu">lku@gwu.edu</a>   |
| <u>Social and Behavioral Sciences</u>            | Dr. Jeffrey Bingenheimer, <a href="mailto:bartbing@gwu.edu">bartbing@gwu.edu</a>   |

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES AND LEADERSHIP

1. Student Affairs: The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) is the first stop for students needing support, assistance, and advice on any Milken Institute SPH 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
  - 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. GWSPH Financial Student Services: GWSPH Student Financial Services ([gwsphrecords@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphrecords@gwu.edu)) 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. GWSPH 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
5. Student Records: The primary role of the Office of Student Records ([gwsphrecords@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphrecords@gwu.edu)) is to provide all GWSPH 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 Professional Enhancement Activities
- Half-time/Full-time Certification Requests
- Academic Integrity Quiz verification
- Assistance with locating academic advising
- DegreeMAP

| <b>Office Name</b>               | <b>Location</b>  | <b>Contact Information</b>   |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Student Affairs (OSA)            | 950 New Hampshire Ave, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor<br>Washington, DC 20052 | <a href="mailto:gwsphosa@gwu.edu">gwsphosa@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-7400         |
| Admissions                       | 950 New Hampshire Ave, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor<br>Washington, DC 20052 | <a href="mailto:gwsphadmit@gwu.edu">gwsphadmit@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-2160     |
| GWSPH Student Financial Services | 950 New Hampshire Ave, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor<br>Washington, DC 20052 | <a href="mailto:gwsphfinaid@gwu.edu">gwsphfinaid@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-3601   |
| Career Services                  | 950 New Hampshire Ave, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor<br>Washington, DC 20052 | <a href="mailto:gwsphcareer@gwu.edu">gwsphcareer@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-3601   |
| Student Records                  | 950 New Hampshire Ave, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor<br>Washington, DC 20052 | <a href="mailto:gwsphrecords@gwu.edu">gwsphrecords@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-0822 |

6. SPH Leadership: The leadership of the SPH includes leaders in academic, research and administrative areas. For PhD related matters, please contact Dr. Lorien Abroms, Associate Dean for PhD/MS Programs.

| <b>Name</b>                   | <b>Title</b>  | <b>Contact Information</b>   |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Lynn R. Goldman, MD, MS, MPH  | Michael and Lori Milken Dean of Public Health                 | <a href="mailto:goldmanl@gwu.edu">goldmanl@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-5179               |
| Jane Hyatt Thorpe, JD         | Senior Associate Dean for Academic, Student & Faculty Affairs | <a href="mailto:jthorpe@gwu.edu">jthorpe@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-4183                 |
| Adnan A. Hyder, MD, PhD, MPH  | Senior Associate Dean of Research                             | <a href="mailto:hyder1@gwu.edu">hyder1@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-3180                   |
| Wanda Nicholson, MD, MPH, MBA | Senior Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion     | <a href="mailto:wanda.nicholson@gwu.edu">wanda.nicholson@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-1082 |
| Lorien C. Abroms, ScD, MA     | Associate Dean for PhD/MS Programs                            | <a href="mailto:lorien@gwu.edu">lorien@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-3518                   |
| Heather Renault, MS           | Assistant Dean for Student Services                           | <a href="mailto:hrenault@gwu.edu">hrenault@gwu.edu</a><br>(202) 994-0554               |

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This section summarizes many important policies and procedures that will help students successfully navigate their way through their GWSPH PhD program.

### 1. Student Rights and Responsibilities

All students, upon enrolling in and while attending The George Washington University, are subject to the provisions of the [Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). That documentation typically addresses instances of significant or recidivistic non-academic student misconduct, which may result in a disciplinary record and sanctions that include suspension or expulsion from the university, or other educational sanctions. For more information, please visit [The Office of Students Rights & Responsibilities Website](#).

### 2. Maintaining Enrollment Status

Once enrolled in a PhD degree program, students are expected to be continuously registered for at least one credit during all fall and spring terms and actively engaged in fulfilling the requirements of the degree.

- **For fall and spring terms**, PhD students must register for one or more credit hours to maintain enrollment status until they have successfully completed all PhD program requirements, including defense, final approval, and submission of their dissertation. Registration must be consecutive, or the student will be considered out of status. International students on an F-1 or J-1 visa are responsible to enroll as full-time students (minimum 9 credits) for fall and spring terms.
- Students may register for additional classes during **summer sessions** but are not required to do so to remain in status for GWSPH. Students should consult their program director and advisors, as well as any loan requirements, about summertime enrollment and research activity expectation as well as other enrollment requirements. Students on SPH Fellowships with summer stipends will be taxed on their summer stipend if not enrolled in a class. For more information, contact GWSPH Financial Student Services.
- PhD students who fall out of status by not registering for each Fall and Spring semester will be withdrawn from the program and required to petition for re-admission through the Milken Institute SPH Office of Admissions.
- If a degree-seeking student finds it necessary to interrupt active pursuit of a degree program, it is permissible to petition to take a **Leave of Absence** for a specific period of time, limited to a total of one calendar year (or 2 semesters) during the student's 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 PhD Program Director and PhD advisor, if different. Each Leave of Absence must be separately approved and can be taken sequentially or at different times while in the program. Students must officially register for Leave of Absence to stay in status. If a student discontinues active enrollment in degree studies without being granted a leave of absence, or if they are granted a leave but do not return to active study at the close of the period of approved absence, the student is no longer in status. The University may charge a nominal registration fee to remain enrolled during a Leave of Absence.
- Students are responsible for completing and submitting all required registration materials and ensuring that DegreeMAP is up to date. Students are advised to periodically review their registration actions to make certain they are accurate and current. Students should always retain copies of all registration materials and paperwork submitted to the University or the Milken Institute SPH. DegreeMAP can be accessed through [GWeb](#) (Student Records & Registration → Student Records Information Menu → DegreeMAP).

### 3. PhD Transfer Credit and Substitution Policy

**Transfers:** With the approval of the program director, graduate credits may be transferred according to the PhD transfer credit policy. The transfer credit policy for PhD students depends on the number of credits for the PhD program. There is one policy for PhD programs with 48 credits and another for PhD programs with 72 credits.

#### 48 credit degree policy:

With approval of the program director, up to 12 graduate credits that have not been applied to any previous graduate degree may be transferred to the PhD program. External credits must have been earned from an accredited institution in the last 6 years with a minimum grade of 3.0 (B) in each course.

#### 72 credit degree policy:

With approval of the program director, up to 24 graduate credits may be transferred to the PhD program. External credits must have been earned from an accredited institution in the last 6 years with a minimum grade of 3.0 (B) in each course.

In order for transfer credits to be considered and evaluated, students must first complete the [Transfer Credit Petition Form](#). When completing the form, the student must provide a transcript and the syllabus for each course being petitioned.

**Substitutions:** With the approval of the program director, students can petition to waive and replace (or substitute) courses listed in the program guide to better fit their training needs and/or to ensure that classes taken are at the appropriate level for students. Please consult with advisor and/or program director for replacing/substituting courses in the program guide.

**Time limit:** The time limit will be commensurate with the number of graduate credits transferred (e.g., transfer students between doctoral programs with a semester's worth of credits transferred in will have one fewer semester to complete the PhD).

### 4. Adding and Dropping Courses

Students may add and drop courses before the first day of class without penalty. Refer to the [Registrar website for refund rates](#).

### 5. Maintaining Good Academic Standing

The Milken Institute School of Public Health takes academic integrity issues seriously. It is the student's responsibility to review, understand, and comply with the George Washington University's [Code of Academic Integrity](#). Students should also be familiar with [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#). For more details on Academic Standing, consult the GWSPH Graduate Student Handbook.

An annual review is conducted at the beginning of every Fall semester for PhD students who have completed at least one year of their program. On the PhD Annual Review form, students indicate the progress they have made in the previous academic year and set objectives and timelines for the next year. Additionally, the student's Advisor reviews the student's progress and determines whether acceptable progress has been made.

A graduate student who is not suspended, on academic probation, or on provisional admission status is considered to be in good academic standing. A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 (B) must be maintained to be awarded a graduate degree. All courses taken for graduate credit after matriculation as a degree candidate (but excluding those audited or taken for the grade of CR/NC) will be used to calculate the grade point average (GPA).

Below are descriptions for the academic standing categories:



## **Probation**

A graduate student whose GPA falls below 3.0 at any point after completing nine credit hours, who fails to complete an appropriate number of credit hours per semester, or who receives “unacceptable progress” noted on his/her annual review will be placed on academic probation. A student who fails to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 or better, completes an appropriate number of credits hours per semester, or make appropriate progress towards the PhD during the period of probation is subject to suspension. Incomplete grades and grades of B- or lower are not permitted during the probationary period and are grounds for automatic suspension or continued probation. Students on academic probation are not eligible to apply for graduation. The GWSPH Dean’s Office, in consultation with the student’s academic advisor, may continue a student on probation (in lieu of suspension) if satisfactory progress is demonstrated during the probationary period as determined by the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

## **Grade of F**

A graduate student who receives a grade of F is subject to suspension. If the student wishes to remain enrolled, they must present cause, for consideration by the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the director of the degree program, as to why continued study should be permitted. Once a grade of F is earned it remains a part of the student’s permanent record and is calculated into the GPA. A graduate student who earns the grade of F in a core or other required course and is permitted to continue in graduate studies must repeat the course and achieve at least the grade of B; such a repeat does not expunge the grade of F, which remains as part of the student’s record.

## **Suspension**

A graduate student who receives an F or does not meet the conditions of probation (see above) is subject to suspension. Suspended students may not register for or complete any courses at GW. An outstanding Incomplete (I) grade at the time of suspension will become an F. Suspended students may reapply to a program, using SOPHAS Express, after one full calendar year from the time of suspension. To be readmitted, the student must submit evidence that suggests the probability of academic success. A student who is readmitted will continue on academic probation and must achieve a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 in the next 12 credit hours of graduate study. Should the student fail to achieve this grade-point average, the student will again be suspended and will not be readmitted.

## **Dismissal**

A student who has been suspended twice is not permitted to reapply to Milken Institute School of Public Health and will be dismissed from the school.

\*\* Students receiving Federal Student Aid are subject to Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements. This is a separate GW policy, which can be found on the [Office of Student Financial Assistance Webpage](#).\*\*

## **Timely Progress Towards a PhD Degree**

A graduate student who fails to make acceptable progress toward the PhD degree, failure to complete an appropriate number of credit hours per module/semester, or “unacceptable progress” noted on his/her annual review may be placed on probation, suspended or removed from the program. For students in the dissertation phase of the program (e.g., writing their dissertation proposal, conducting dissertation research), progress will be assessed by their Advisor/Chair on the annual review and assessed based on their progress against objectives set in the prior year.

## **Notification of Academic Status**

Students who are not in good academic standing will be notified by email as part of their annual review. Any student seeking to appeal academic decisions with respect to maintenance of good academic standing may do so through the Senior Associate Dean for Academic, Student & Faculty Affairs on a case by case basis.

## 6. Student Appeals Process

All students have the right to appeal an academic decision. Information on appeals is noted in the GWSPH Graduate Student Handbook.

## 7. Professional Enhancement Activities

Some PhD programs have required Professional Enhancement activities requirements. Consult your program guide for program specific Professional Enhancement activities instructions and requirements. Professional enhancement activities supplement the academic curriculum and help prepare students to participate actively in the research community. Students can fulfill this requirement by attending workshops, seminars, or other relevant professional meetings. The Professional Enhancement form is available from the [GWSPH Academic Forms](#) page.

## 8. Graduate Teaching Assistantship Program (GTAP) Course

In addition, all PhD students are required to take the [Graduate Teaching Assistantship Program \(GTAP\)](#) course in order to serve as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) in a future course. This class is for 0 credits, is available online, and must be completed prior to the semester in which the GTA is to occur. Many PhD students take this class in their first semester. Please consult with your PhD Advisor or Program Director to register.

## 9. Generative Artificial Intelligence

The Office of the Provost provides [Guidelines for using Generative Artificial Intelligence](#) at GWU.

In the absence of explicit directions to the contrary from instructors, the following default rules apply at the University.

- I. Work submitted for evaluation is represented as the student's own intellectual product. Students may not submit content (e.g., ideas, text, code, images) for evaluation that was generated, in whole or in part, by Generative Artificial Intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT and other large language models). Doing so without instructor's explicit permission constitutes *cheating* under the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) and is therefore prohibited.
- II. Students are *permitted* to use GAI tools to generate content that is not submitted to an instructor for evaluation. For example, using GAI tools to study for examinations, tests, and quizzes is permitted. Likewise, on assignments where the use of the Internet is not otherwise prohibited by the instructor, GAI tools may be used for learning, studying, and brainstorming.
- III. Unless the instructor explicitly states otherwise in advance and in writing, the use of GAI tools during any assessment (e.g., examination, test, quiz) whether taken in the classroom or elsewhere, constitutes *cheating* under the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) and is therefore prohibited. This prohibition includes assessments for which the use of the Internet is otherwise permitted.

The policy for Generative Artificial Intelligence will be updated regularly in accordance with the [Guidelines for using Generative Artificial Intelligence](#) from The Office of the Provost at GWU.

## PHD PROGRAM ADVISING, TIMELINE AND PHASES

### 1. Role of PhD Faculty Advisor

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

PhD students are assigned to a faculty advisor (Advisor) following admission. Advisors will guide the student in the selection of his or her coursework plan, research opportunities, professional/leadership development, dissertation research topics, the selection of the dissertation committee members, among other topics. In addition to routine academic and research advising (with a minimum of 1/semester depending on stage in the PhD program), the advisor will meet with the student to set annual objectives, as well as a timeline for program completion, typically in the fall. Based on this meeting, the advisor will provide the PhD Program Director with an update on the student's progress and goals for purposes of the annual review, including progress on objectives/timeline.

Students may change Advisors during the program, but the Advisor should be affiliated with the students' PhD program Department. The Advisor typically may become the dissertation chair or a member of the committee, but it is not required.

Advising roles include:

- Setting a timeline for the program and setting clear annual objectives and guiding the student toward meeting those objectives.
- Guiding the student in the development of a program of study, including the selection of elective courses and selection of professional research development work that enhances the dissertation research experience during the candidacy phase. The program of study is based upon the student's entry knowledge, skills, and experiences; his or her career objectives; and the expectations of the applicable field for scholarly professionals. Any variation from the program of study outlined in the program guide requires the approval of the department program director.
- Mentoring the student in his or her development as a scholar and professional, including addressing interpersonal skills as necessary.
- Guiding the student in later semesters to consider the focus of the dissertation research, exploring various potential topics and questions, and weighing the feasibility, advantages, and disadvantages of each.
- Guiding the student's preparation for the comprehensive examination.
- Serving as a resource as the student selects a dissertation committee chair and committee members.

### 2. Timeline for Completion of the Program

PhD students must complete all requirements of the degree program within 7 years of initial enrollment. Students are expected to be actively engaged in their course of study throughout their time in the PhD program. For more information, see Section on "Maintaining Good Academic Standing."

Typically, students complete most coursework over a two-year period. Most students take the comprehensive exams in the summer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the program and defend their dissertation proposal in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year. A student who transfers into the PhD program with credits may be on a shorter timeline. While PhD programs allow for 7 years, we encourage students to maintain a schedule to enable them to complete the program in 4-5 years or sooner. Progress towards completion of the PhD program will be monitored, and an annual review will take place each year in order to ensure timely progress is being made against objectives set annually by the student and advisor. A graduate student who fails to make acceptable progress toward the PhD degree, may be placed on probation, suspended or removed from the program. For students in the dissertation phase of the program (e.g., writing their dissertation proposal, conducting dissertation research), progress will be assessed by their Chair and annually on the annual review and determined by their advisor's assessment of their progress against objectives

set in the prior year. Please consult your program guide and advisor for developing your timeline. The timeline will vary by student depending on background of the student and goals within the program.

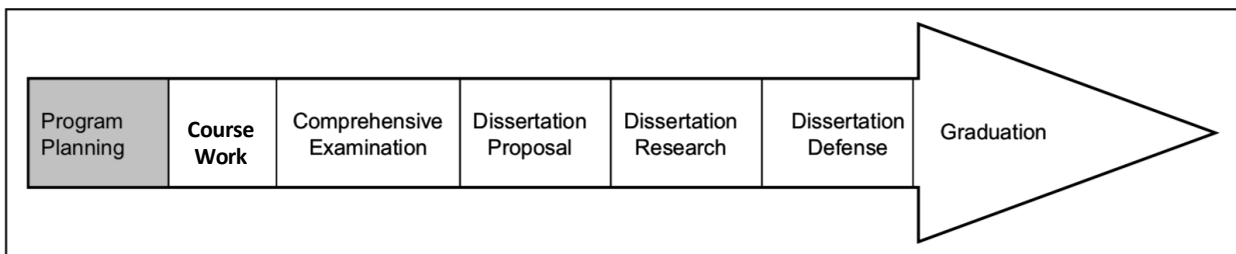
### 3. PhD Phases

The PhD Degree is divided into two phases: pre-candidacy and candidacy. During pre-candidacy a student completes the course requirements through the comprehensive examination. Upon satisfactory completion of the requirements associated with pre- candidacy, including successfully completing the comprehensive exam, the student moves to the candidacy phase.

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

#### **PRE-CANDIDACY PHASE:**

##### **1. Program Planning: The Program of Study**



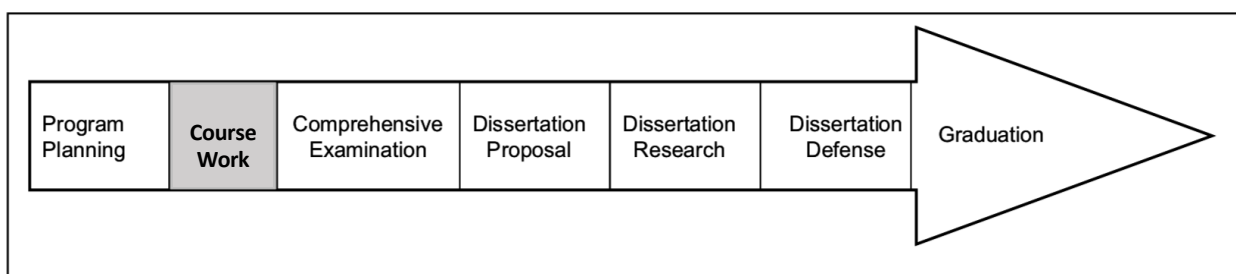
Careful planning with your advisor and PhD program director is the important first step. The student and the advisor will discuss the student’s interests, goals and experiences, and prepare a program of study. A timeline for completion of coursework will also be discussed and agreed upon.

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

1. Required core courses and research methods
2. Required department and specialization specific courses
3. Elective courses

**\*See your department’s program guide for additional details on specific course requirements\***

##### **2. Course Work**



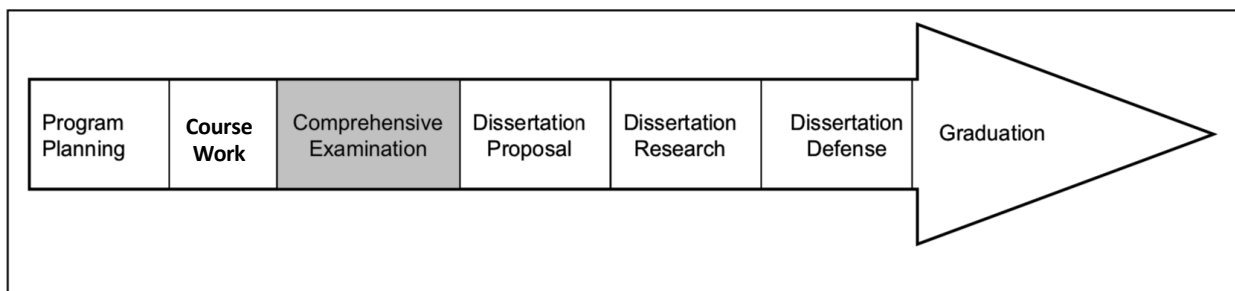
Once a program of study has been developed in consultation with the program guide and their advisor, PhD students must register for classes according to the procedures received from the Office of Admissions. If a student wishes to enroll for a course at another school or institution, please follow the steps listed in the

Students should review their program of study each semester with their advisor for accuracy and relevance. Any changes to the program of study must be approved by the advisor and/or program director.

Core courses for the PhD Program are as follows. Please consult with your program guide for the core course requirements of your specific PhD program. In many cases, PhD students will register for **PUBH 8001**: PhD Seminar: Cross Cutting Concepts in Public Health (1 credit) and **PH 6421**: Responsible Conduct of Research (1 credit) in their first semester of matriculation. In certain circumstances, students who have prior training that meet or exceeds expectations in a core course, substitutions may be possible in consultation with the program advisor/director.

| Core Discipline                             | Core Class Title   |
|---|--|
| Current Topics and Debates in Public Health | <b>PUBH 8099 (8001)</b> : PhD Seminar: Cross Cutting Concepts in Public Health (1 credit)  |
| Responsible Conduct of Research/Ethics      | <b>PUBH 6421</b> : Responsible Conduct of Research (1 credit) or <b>PUBH 8475</b> Ethics in Domestic and International Research (1 credits)  |
| Statistical Methods                         | <b>PUBH 8418</b> : Applied Statistical Analysis or <b>PUBH 6862</b> : Applied Linear Regression Analysis for Public Health (3 credits)   |
| Design of Health Studies                    | <b>PUBH 8416</b> : Study Design and Evaluation Methods or <b>PUBH 6495</b> : Field Trial Methods and Application, with (1 additional credit) (3 credits) <b>PUBH 6247</b> : Design of Health Studies (3 credits) |
| Grant and Proposal Writing                  | <b>PUBH 8435</b> : PhD Dissertation Proposal Development (2 credits)   |
| Dissertation Research                       | <b>PUBH 8999</b> : Dissertation Research (1-3 credits)   |

### 3. Comprehensive Examination



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

Once students pass the comprehensive exam, they are officially admitted into the candidacy phase. Students who fail to complete or pass comprehensive exams will be offered the opportunity to retake the exam in accordance with their PhD program policies. The second exam must be taken within 12 months of the initial exam, as determined by each department. Failure to complete or pass the comprehensive exams will be grounds for termination from the PhD program.

**\*See your department’s program guide for additional details on specific requirements and format\***

## CANDIDACY PHASE:

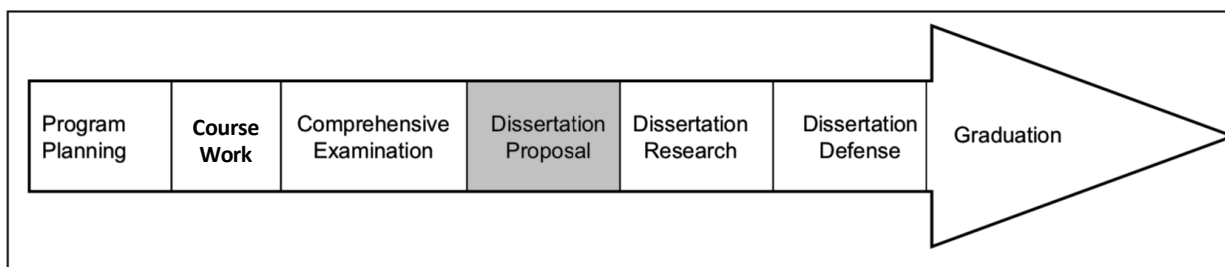
It is the expectation that doctoral candidates will work independently, under the guidance of their Dissertation Committee, to prepare an oral and written dissertation. The objective of the dissertation is to demonstrate that the candidate has synthesized the knowledge gained during the pre-candidacy phase and is able to apply this knowledge to the resolution of a concrete and substantial public health research problem. The dissertation also demonstrates that the candidate has mastered research methods to successfully conduct scientific research.

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

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

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

### 1. Dissertation Proposal



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

Students must identify and confirm their Dissertation Research Committee members and submit the Dissertation Research Committee Approval Form to PhD Student Records ([gwsphrecords@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphrecords@gwu.edu)). If a member of the proposed Dissertation Research Committee is not a full-time, Milken Institute SPH faculty member, please provide his/her institutional affiliation, highest academic degree, and CV. The Dissertation Research Committee Approval Form can be accessed at: <https://publichealth.gwu.edu/content/services-students>.

Students are required to have a potential Chair identified, as well as a dissertation topic, and a general research approach, prior to enrolling in **PUBH 8435: PhD Dissertation Proposal Development** (2 credits). The proposal should provide a clear, concise, and thorough plan of the proposed research. Generally, the research proposal follows a format where there are three research questions and outlines a plan to write **three manuscripts** of publishable quality as agreed upon by all members of the student's committee. In some PhD programs, a traditional dissertation is accepted as an alternative format.

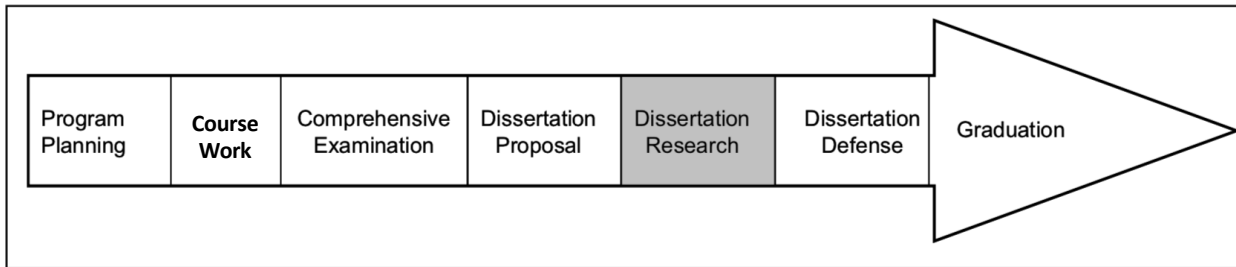
If a student is not ready to defend the proposal immediately following PUBH 8435, he or she may enroll in PUBH 6010 Independent Study or PUBH 8999 Dissertation Research. If students have already satisfied their

other requirements and do not wish to take course for credit, they will be required to register for one credit of continuing research.

o Continuing Research: PhD students who have met the coursework requirements, but have not yet successfully defended their dissertation, must register for one credit of Continuing Research (PUBH 0940), which requires a tuition payment of one full credit hour to maintain active status. This does not count toward the dissertation research credit requirement or any other curricular requirements for completion of the PhD degree.

**\*See your department’s program guide for additional details on specific requirements and guidance\***

## 2. Dissertation Research



With their Advisor’s approval and after successfully passing the comprehensive exam, PhD students may enroll in PUBH 8999 Dissertation Research each semester when they begin working on their dissertation proposal. Students who are conducting dissertation research may also enroll in PUBH 8999. Candidates should consult their program guides for the required number of dissertation research credits which are typically taken over the course of 2-3 years. Once all coursework and dissertation research credit requirements are met, students may register for Continuous Enrollment (nominal fee/semester) each fall and spring semester until they complete and defend their dissertation. Registering for Continuous Enrollment requires the PhD Program Director approval. Students may not enroll in Continuous Enrollment until they have satisfied all their requirements, including dissertation research credits. Note that there are sections for PUBH 8999 for Environmental Health, Epidemiology, Exercise Physiology and Applied Nutrition, Global Health, Health Data Science, Health Policy, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Students who are not eligible to enroll in PUBH 8999 must register for other course offerings or enroll in one credit of Continuing Research (PUBH 0940). All forms and detailed descriptions can be found on the [Academic Forms page](#).

o The Full-Time Certification (FTC) form enables a student to drop below the full-time credit requirement (9 credits) while still being considered a full-time student. International students must submit their FTC form through the ISO Gateway. The form must be signed by the Academic Advisor, the Academic Dean, and the Registrar/ISO Advisor. Students may need to register for at least 3 credits in order to qualify for FTC.

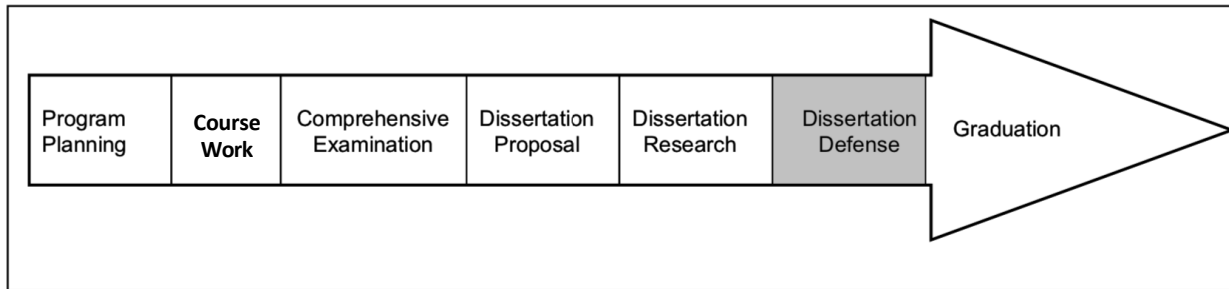
o Dissertation Research: PhD candidates who are writing their dissertation proposal may register for PUBH 8999 Dissertation Research. Generally, students may register for one or more dissertation research credits per semester when they have entered candidacy. Consult your PhD program guide for program specific details.

o Continuous Enrollment: PhD students who have completed their Dissertation Research credit requirements may register for UNIV 0982-Continuous Enrollment with approval from their PhD Program Director. The University charges a nominal fee for Continuous Enrollment. Upon approval, students may continue to register for Continuous Enrollment throughout the remainder of their PhD program. Continuous Enrollment is most commonly used by students in their last semester or two of the program, as they complete the dissertation and prepare for their final dissertation defense. Consult your

PhD program guide for program specific details.

**\*See your department's program guide for additional details on specific requirements and guidance on the development of written doctoral thesis\***

### 3. Dissertation Defense

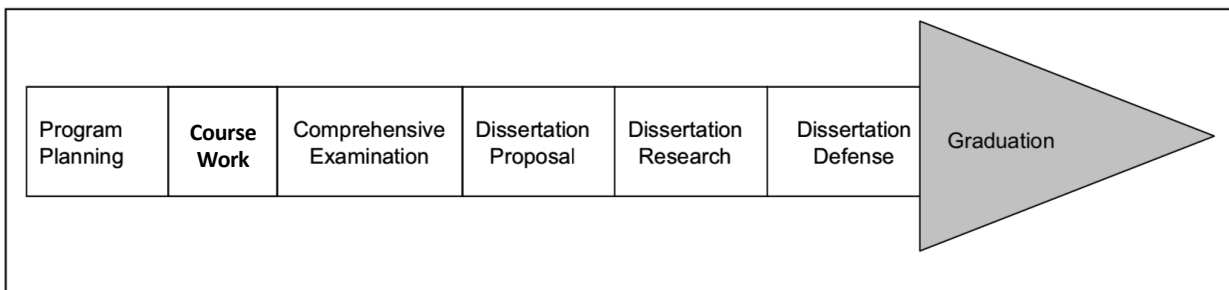


Students preparing for the official oral defense of their dissertation should be thinking ahead to the formatting requirements for the final document and the graduation clearance requirements for the Milken Institute SPH. The Dissertation Research Committee must be provided at least four weeks to review the complete draft prior to scheduling the defense date. In many cases, at least 1 external (outside of student's department/not involved in student's research project) Reader is required to join the Dissertation Committee; the external reader joins the Dissertation Committee and provides feedback on the final dissertation. Additionally, they attend the defense and can vote on whether the student passes the dissertation. Please consult with your program director for program specific requirements

### Disposition of the Dissertation

All doctoral candidates are required to submit the FINAL dissertation (with all the approved changes) electronically to ProQuest/UMI in accordance with all requirements. <http://library.gwu.edu/etds/>.

### 4. PhD Degree Certification and Graduation



Requirements, policies, and procedures to apply for graduation are detailed in the University Bulletin and the Milken Institute SPH website.

Students must submit an Application for Graduation: <https://registrar.gwu.edu/online-graduation-application-instructions>

The completed Application for Graduation is submitted to the Milken Institute SPH Office of Student Affairs - Student Records or email [gwsphrecords@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphrecords@gwu.edu). Students are advised to keep a copy of the form for their records.

- Deadlines for submission are noted on the Application for Graduation.
- Students planning to submit an Application for Graduation should contact their advisor/department



program director well in advance (at the latest during the prior semester) to review transcripts ensuring that all graduation requirements have been met. This includes confirming program requirements have been completed and all grades have been submitted.

- Once the Application for Graduation has been submitted, students will be contacted by Milken Institute SPH Student Records department with a checklist of items that need to be completed.

## **Graduation Events**

Graduation ceremonies for GW students occur in May of each calendar year. Students completing degree requirements in August, January or May are invited to participate in the May graduation events, which include the University Hooding Ceremony (specifically for doctoral graduates on campus), the Milken Institute School of Public Health Celebration (on campus), and the University Commencement (on the National Mall). Students who wish to participate in the May graduation events must notify the Office of Student Records, in accordance with their deadlines, to receive tickets/notifications of these events if you choose to participate.

*University and School policies and procedures as outlined in the George Washington University Bulletin and the Milken Institute SPH website apply to PhD students.*

**Current Academic Year:**

**GWID:**

**Student Name:**

**Program:**

**Year of PhD Program Entry:**

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**STUDENT PORTION:** *Please complete below. Attach additional documents as needed.*

1. *Please rate your progress in meeting your past year's objectives (if this is your first annual review, rate your progress completing your coursework for the year).*

|                   |   |   |   |   |   |                    |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------|
| 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7                  |
| No objectives met |   |   |   |   |   | All objectives met |

2. *Describe the progress you have made during the past Academic Year towards completing your PhD (if you have any incomplete courses, please list them here as well as the plan for completing them).*

If applicable:

**Comprehensive Exam Passed** (Yes/No/Not yet) –

**Proposal Committee Approved** (Yes/No/Not yet) –

**Proposal Defended** (Yes/No/Not yet) –

**Dissertation Defense Scheduled** (Yes/No, not yet) –

**Other** - Note any other activities you may have undertaken that show progress toward your PhD degree (e.g. submitted abstract to GWSPH Research Day, outside workshops attended, etc.)

*3. Objectives/Timeline for next Academic Year*

*4. Objectives/Timeline for completion of dissertation:*

**PHD DEPARTMENT ADVISOR or DIRECTOR PORTION:**

*Prior to completing the section below, Advisor/Director please hold a meeting with the student.*

Meeting date with student:

1. *Please rate the student's progress in meeting their objectives for the past Academic Year.*

|                   |   |   |   |   |   |                    |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------|
| 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7                  |
| No objectives met |   |   |   |   |   | All objectives met |

2. *Comments on student progress during the Academic Year.*

3. *Comments on objectives/timeline for next Academic Year.*

Acceptable progress made

Additional progress needed/Unacceptable progress  
*(If this is checked, include an agreed upon detailed action plan below or attach it to this form)*

Other Comments/Action plan:

Student Signature:  
Program Director:  
Advisor Signature:

Date:  
Date:  
Date:

**SUBMIT SIGNED COPIES TO [OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu](mailto:OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu)  
COPIES TO: STUDENT/ADVISOR/PHD PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

**Appendix II. PhD Advising Worksheet for Annual Review with PhD Advisor  
(optional)**

**PhD Advising Worksheet for Annual Review with PhD Advisor (optional)**

The PhD Advising Worksheet is a document to help you, the PhD student, reflect on your goals for your next academic year and your professional goals. This worksheet is optional and is an expanded version of the annual review that you will complete with your Advisor. You may use it as the basis of your annual review discussion with your advisor.

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GWID:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Academic Year (Fall/Spring):** \_\_\_\_\_

**PhD program:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Career and Professional Goals**

1. What are your **long-term professional goals**? e.g., What positions or responsibilities appeal to you for 5-10 years after graduation? What career responsibilities do you want to have? Which career options or tracks do you want to learn more about? What sector or sectors (e.g., academia, non-profit, policy or government, industry, other) might you want to be in or learn more about?

2. What **shorter-term objectives may help you achieve those goals**? E.g., are there specific skills you would like to acquire or improve? Are there courses, workshops, experiences, internships, etc. that might be helpful in furthering, or better articulating, these professional goals? **(NOTE: See Table below which may help to guide some of your thinking in this area).**

3. Are there factors that you are concerned may negatively affect your progress in pursuit of your professional short or long term goals? What help can your advisor or other faculty/staff provide?

Below are some professional competencies for PhD students. Please check boxes in the right-hand column of areas you would like to make a priority for further development in the upcoming year. Discuss with your advisor(s) strategies and resources for identifying activities in the focus areas.

| Area  | What do you believe is your level of competency in this area? | Focus area for next year (place check mark) |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Writing</b>                                  | 1= low competency; 5= very high competency;                   |   |
| For a scholarly publication                     | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
| For a lay audience, the media, or practitioners | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
|   |   |   |
| <b>Oral communications</b>                      |   |   |
| To a specialized or technical audience          | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
| Presentation to a lay audience                  | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
|   |   |   |
| <b>Professionalism/interpersonal</b>            |   |   |
| Networking                                      | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
| Establishing a professional identity            | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
|   |   |   |
| <b>Teaching</b>                                 |   |   |
| Course planning                                 | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
| Lecture delivery                                | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
| Leading seminars/discussions                    | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
|   |   |   |
| <b>Career Advancement</b>                       |   |   |
| Preparing a job talk                            | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
| Applying for a job                              | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
| Understanding career opportunities              | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
|   |   |   |
| <b>Technical Skills</b>                         |   |   |
| Program specific skills                         | 1   2   3   4   5   unsure                                    |   |
|   |   |   |
| <b>Other (specify)</b>                          |   |   |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |

Appendix III. Comprehensive Exam Pass Form

Milken Institute School  
of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

PhD Comprehensive Exam Pass Form

Instructions:

This form should be completed and signed by the Program Director to certify completion of the comprehensive exam. Email the completed form to OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu and GWSPHrecords@gwu.edu.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Comprehensive Exam Completion Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pass

Did not Pass

PhD Comprehensive Exam

Comments:

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Program Director Signature

Date

# Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

## Doctoral Dissertation Committee Approval Form

Instructions:

All proposed Dissertation Committee members must agree to serve on the Committee prior to submitting this form. The Committee consists of at least three but no more than five members: this includes a Dissertation Committee Chair and two-four Committee members. The Committee Chair serves in the role of advocate for the candidate during the Oral Defense. If a member of the proposed Dissertation Committee is not a full-time, Milken Institute SPH faculty member, please note his/her institutional affiliation and highest academic degree and attach a copy of the CV to this form. (See the DrPH or PhD Handbook for information about the composition of the Dissertation Committee.) Email the completed form to [OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu](mailto:OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu).

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Specialty Field \_\_\_\_\_

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Department and/or Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Member \_\_\_\_\_

Department and/or Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Member \_\_\_\_\_

Department and/or Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Member \_\_\_\_\_

Department and/or Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

(optional)

Member \_\_\_\_\_

Department and/or Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

(optional)

Department Program Director signature

Date

Doctoral Advisor Signature

Date



# Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

## Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Defense Request Form

### Instructions:

Submit this form, an electronic PDF copy of the proposal, and the requested proposal defense date, to the Department Program Director for signature at least three weeks before the requested proposal defense date. Submit the electronic PDF copy to each committee member. Email the completed form to [OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu](mailto:OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu).

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Requested defense date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### Required Signatures

Signing this form indicates your approval of the proposal for defense.

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Instructions:

This form should indicate the recommendations of the Dissertation Committee following the dissertation proposal defense. If the proposal is accepted with modifications, the process for making required changes should be described on a separate attachment and should include the estimated date for completing the changes/modifications. All but one of the members of the committee must agree with the decision to accept the proposal without modifications, accept with modifications, or reject. If the proposal is rejected, the student is required to re-defend the proposal after all required changes are addressed. Email the completed form to [OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu](mailto:OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu).

**Proposal Defense Report**

On \_\_\_\_\_, this committee met the proposal of \_\_\_\_\_.

The Examiners' recommendations are as follows:

| <b>Accept<br/>without<br/>Modifications</b> | <b>Accept<br/>with<br/>Modifications</b> | <b>Reject<br/>Re-defense<br/>Required</b> |
|---|--|---|
|---|--|---|

Dissertation Committee Chair

Print name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Committee Member

Print name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Committee Member

Print name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Committee Member (optional)

Print name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Committee Member (optional)

Print name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

## Doctoral Dissertation Defense Report Form

### Instructions:

This form should be completed and signed by the Doctoral Dissertation Research Committee to certify successful defense of the dissertation. Any "Conditional Pass" evaluations should be accompanied by a document describing the process for making changes pursuant to "Conditional Pass," including who should review the changes (e.g., Dissertation Committee, Committee Chair) and when the changes need to be made. All but one of the members of the Committee must agree for the final decision to be either "Pass w/ No Revisions" or "Conditional Pass." Email the completed form to [OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu](mailto:OfficePhDMS@gwu.edu)

On \_\_\_\_\_, this committee met for the Doctoral Dissertation Defense of \_\_\_\_\_  
(date) (name)  
entitled: \_\_\_\_\_  
(title of dissertation)

### The Committee Member and Reader recommendations are as follows:

|   | Pass w/<br>No Revisions | Conditional<br>Pass | Fail Must<br>Re-defend |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Dissertation Committee Chair<br>Print name:             |                         |                     |                        |
| Signature: _____  | _____                   | _____               | _____                  |
| Dissertation Committee Member<br>Print name:            |                         |                     |                        |
| Signature: _____  | _____                   | _____               | _____                  |
| Dissertation Committee Member<br>Print name:            |                         |                     |                        |
| Signature: _____  | _____                   | _____               | _____                  |
| Dissertation Committee Member (optional)<br>Print name: |                         |                     |                        |
| Signature: _____  | _____                   | _____               | _____                  |
| Dissertation Committee Member (optional)<br>Print name: |                         |                     |                        |
| Signature: _____  | _____                   | _____               | _____                  |
| Dissertation Reader<br>Print name:                      |                         |                     |                        |
| Signature: _____  | _____                   | _____               | _____                  |
| Dissertation Reader<br>Print name:                      |                         |                     |                        |
| Signature: _____  | _____                   | _____               | _____                  |