PhD Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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What courses can I take as my PhD electives?

Milken Institute School of Public Health offers a variety of courses that can be counted as an elective for a PhD student. You can refer to your program guide by visiting your PhD program's website, or you can refer to this electives list. You can search for the availability of courses by going into myGW (my.gwu.edu) and using the Schedule of Classes quicklink in "my portal" tab; or you can Google search "gwu schedule of classes" and it should be the first result.
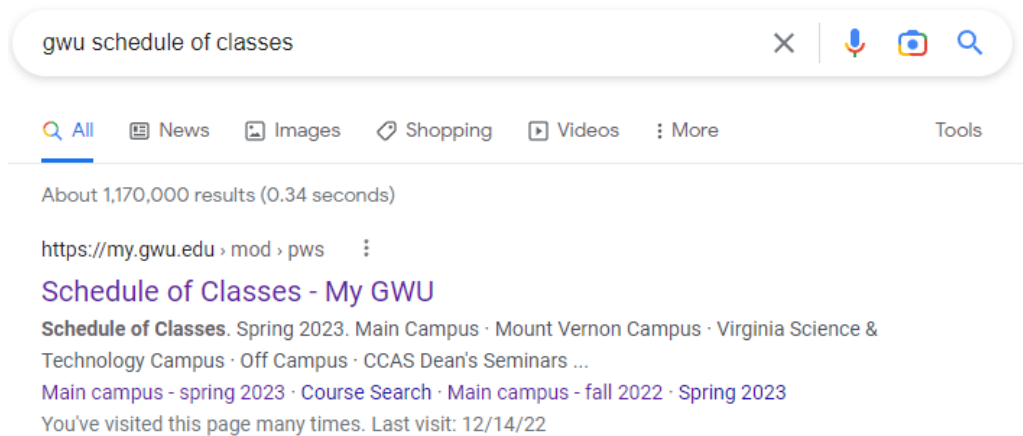
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How do I enroll in courses outside of my department as electives?

If courses outside of your department are restricted on GWeb, you can submit a RTF-EZ form to the Office of the Registrar (registrar@gwu.edu). The RTF-EZ is used for registration transactions for current or future terms that includes the following:

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

If adding a course, RTF-EZ is used before the end of the 4th week of classes in a fall or spring term, or before the end of the 2nd week of classes in summer; if withdrawing from a course, the form is used before the end of the 10th week of classes (fall/spring) or before the end of the 4th week of classes (summer).

For more information on registration forms, please visit the Office of the Registrar website.

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I have completed all my required courses, how do I maintain my full-time student status for the remainder of my PhD program?

PhD students who have met the coursework requirements, but are not ready to defend their dissertation proposal, can 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 (PUBH 0940), which requires a tuition payment of one full credit hour to maintain active status.

Students can enroll in PUBH 8999 Dissertation Research each semester while working on their dissertation proposal. 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 requirements are met, students may register for UNIV 0982-Continuous Enrollment (nominal fee/semester) each fall and spring until they complete and defend their dissertation. Registering for Continuous Enrollment requires the PhD Program Director approval.

For international students, you must submit a request for Full-Time Certification (FTC) through ISO Gateway each semester. The FTC form enables a student to drop below the full-time credit requirement (9 credits) while still being considered a full-time student. The form must be signed by the Academic Advisor, the Academic Dean, and the ISO Advisor.

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How should I format my dissertation?

The dissertation title page to abstract page format template can be downloaded here. The texts highlighted in yellow are for you to edit to your specific information (the shading or highlight will not display when printed or converted to PDF). Please delete the optional pages you do not wish to use. For pages beyond the abstract, please refer to the dissertation sample format document **[DO NOT USE AS A TEMPLATE**; this sample document is for illustrative purposes only.**]** For more information, please visit the Electronic Theses and Dissertation (ETD) format guide website for Milken Institute SPH.

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I am coming to the end of my dissertation writing process, or I am looking to submit my dissertation, what do I need to know?

When you are writing your dissertation, visit the ProQuest ETD Administrator website so you know what is involved in preparing and submitting an electronic thesis and dissertation (ETD). It is recommended to only submit your final, approved manuscript to ProQuest.

Once you defend your dissertation, make any changes required by your committee following the defense, and obtain advisor approval of the final version of your dissertation, you and your dissertation advisor/director must sign the ETD Access Approval Form.

Make sure to take care of other graduation tasks such as applying for graduation, pay any unpaid GW bills, update the address to which your diploma is to be sent, etc.. And prepare to submit the final approved copy of your dissertation. Convert your dissertation to PDF and check the PDF page by page to ensure no issues occurred in the conversion. Go to the GW ProQuest

[ETD Administrator](#) website and follow the instructions for submitting a dissertation. You will need your credit card handy for any optional ProQuest services you order online. After you upload your dissertation to ProQuest, submit the completed [ETD Access Approval Form](#) to your ETD School Administrator or Program Coordinator.

For more information on the steps in ETD submission, visit [here](#).

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

For any inquiries related to payments (stipends, health insurance, summer funding, etc.), please contact the financial aid office (GWSPHfinaid@gwu.edu).

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Where can I view my late fees and attendance cost?

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

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Where can I find financial assistance during the summer?

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

GW Student Employment
Learning in Action

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

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

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

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

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

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

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I am an international student, what are my work hour restrictions?

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

Regulations for on-campus employment:

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

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

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

Students from countries that have a tax treaty with the US that includes a scholarship/fellowship article may claim exemption or a reduction of tax withholding if the payment meets the requirements of the treaty and the student completes the required forms with the University's Tax Department. See the [list of countries](#) that have tax treaties with the US. The taxes covered

under a treaty exemption include Federal, Virginia, and/or DC tax. Maryland does not recognize tax treaties.

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

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How do I get funding to support my research?

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

[Capital Connection Fund eligibility and application](#)

The *Doctoral Professional Development Award* is given to doctoral candidates who have **successfully completed their comprehensive exams** to support expenses associated with their dissertation research and dissemination of findings. Up to $1,500 in funding can be awarded per applicant.

Each application must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the student's dissertation committee chair. Individuals may only receive one Doctoral Professional Development Award.

[Doctoral Professional Development Award application requirements](#)

In addition, here are some [external funding opportunities](#), and two national databases [Grant Forward](#) and [Pivot](#) to help you find additional funding. These databases allow you to use specific terms/filters (e.g., grant/sponsor types, citizenships, organization sector) to narrow your search results.

You can also visit the [Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships](#) website, under funding search, to learn about a wide variety of university and non-university fellowships for graduate students.

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How do I get IRB approval?

You can submit an IRB application to the Office of Human Research (OHR) via the [GW Integrated Research Information Software (iRIS)](#). *Paper forms and submissions through email are not accepted*. Refer to this [list of requirements](#) when preparing your submissions. You

should allow a minimum of four weeks prior to your anticipated research start date for review of your application and study materials.

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

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

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

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

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Where can I print my research posters?

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

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

PhD students can engage in the classroom as a graduate teaching assistant (GA), an Instructional Assistant (IA), or a limited-service faculty (LSF). *Only students who passed their qualifying exams can become LSF*. Full descriptions, qualifications, and other requirements of each of these teaching roles are listed in the [Teaching Opportunities for Doctoral Students](#) document. You will also find within the document a list of courses that hire these teaching positions.

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How do I navigate DegreeMAP and address problems?

Access

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

Symbols

Here are the symbols listed in DegreeMAP:

- A green checkmark indicates the requirement is complete.
- An empty red circle indicates the requirement is not complete.
- A half-filled blue circle indicates the requirement will be met upon successful completion of classes in-progress.

Credits

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

What-If

Students and advisors have the option to run a "What if" audit which applies their current academic history to a different set of requirements so they can discuss how adding or changing concentration will impact their progress toward completion.
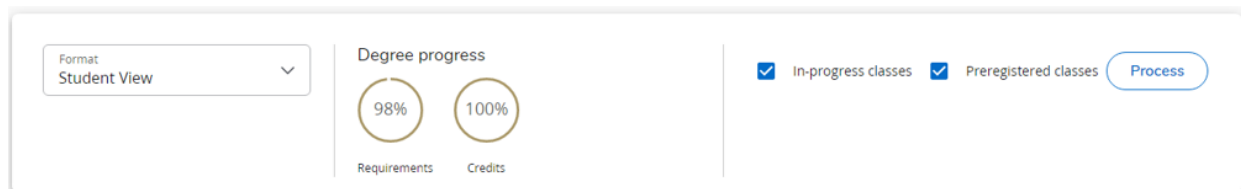
What does it mean when my DegreeMAP degree progress requirement displays 98%?

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

Who do I contact if I have student-related issues or an issue with DegreeMAP?

You should contact your academic advisor if you run into any issues or have any questions regarding the information presented in DegreeMAP.

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How do I get access to department spaces during after hours?

To access department spaces after hours, you will need to have extended access in your GWorld ID card. You or your department can make a request and discuss with Milken's administrative team point of contact Bahareh Sarrami Frooshani (bsf19@gwu.edu). Have your GWID ready! You must be working with a faculty member or your request will not be approved.

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

To get involved at GW, here is a list of student organizations at Milken.