Graduate Program
in
Population Health
MS/PhD

ACADEMIC GUIDE

2020-2021

Subject to Revision

Fall 2020
The Population Health MS and PhD degrees and course requirements may change over time. In situations where policies have changed during a student’s time of enrollment, the Graduate School and the academic program, together with the student, may elect to enforce requirements that are in the best interest of the student i.e. either the old or the new requirements.

In addition, administrative procedures and processes often change over time. Students are required to follow the procedures and processes listed in the current Academic Guide. Consult your major advisor for additional guidance.

All website links are current as of September 2020
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Chapter 1: Admissions

Admission to the MS or PhD program in Population Health is limited to applicants with appropriate academic preparation. Academic preparation is assessed by undergraduate course work, graduate or professional degrees, grades, GRE scores, recommendation letters, the statement of purpose, and prior research and/or professional experience. See the department website for details about the admissions process.

**Minimum** admission requirements are as follows:

1. Applicants must fulfill all Graduate School admission requirements.

2. Applicants should have an undergraduate or graduate GPA of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).
   a. NOTE: Successful applicants generally have GPAs well above 3.0.

3. GRE scores no more than five years old are required for admission. Applicants with professional degrees may substitute their scores for the entrance exam that was required for that degree (e.g., MCAT, LSAT), if taken within the last 5 years. For more information on the GRE, visit: [http://www.ets.org/gre/](http://www.ets.org/gre/).

4. Applicants whose native language and language of study were not English must submit official scores from an English proficiency test. You can find further details on the Graduate School website: [https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/](https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/).
   a. Please note that the minimum test scores for our program are higher than those required by the Graduate School. Students can submit scores for the TOEFL or the IELTS exam. For the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), a **minimum** score of 580 (written), 237 (computer-based), or 92 (internet-based) is required. For the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), a **minimum** score of 7 is required. Use ETS institution code 1846. Find information on the TOEFL at [http://www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl). Find information on the IELTS at [http://www.ielts.org/](http://www.ielts.org/).

5. At least one semester of advanced quantitative preparation, preferably calculus, with a grade of "B" or better.

6. A personal statement is required.

7. Three letters of recommendation are to be submitted electronically.

Applications are welcome from students with diverse academic backgrounds. Students who have strong academic preparation in the biological/medical sciences, quantitative analysis, or population health-related social sciences are strongly encouraged to apply. Historically, applicants who succeeded in our program have come to us with backgrounds in fields as diverse as microbiology, genetics, nutritional sciences, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, environmental sciences, political sciences, business, sociology, education, engineering, psychology, economics, and actuarial science.
Chapter 2: Information Sources and Advising

There are many information sources available to MS/PhD students. For example, students can reference the department’s website (http://pophealth.wisc.edu/), this Academic Guide, the Graduate School’s website (www.grad.wisc.edu) and the Graduate School’s Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) for answers to their questions. When students need additional clarification on expectations, issues and rules, there are various faculty and staff resources available (described below). Generally, faculty and staff are best able to assist students who have done their own homework on a topic (using the resources mentioned above). One very important advising resource that students should continually review (on their own and with their advisor) is the MS Degree/Graduation Timeline (see section 3.A.1 of this Guide) or the PhD Degree/Graduation Timeline (see section 4.A.1 of this Guide). Graduate School deadlines can be found at https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/degreedeadlines/.

Faculty roles: The below text refers to Population Health Sciences Faculty as “Departmental Faculty”, and to Population Health Faculty as “Program Faculty”. The Program Faculty is a large group of faculty across Campus, eligible to guide student thesis and dissertation research in the program (https://pophealth.wisc.edu/grad/faculty). The Departmental Faculty (http://pophealth.wisc.edu/faculty) is a subgroup of the Program Faculty, consisting of Program Faculty with >0% appointments in the Department of Population Health Sciences. Only Departmental Faculty are eligible to serves as academic (course) advisors for new students. More detailed definitions are in Chapter 7 of this guide.

Academic Advisor: Upon entry into the program, each incoming student is assigned a Departmental Faculty member as an initial academic advisor. A list of Departmental Faculty is available at the Department of Population Health Sciences website (https://pophealth.wisc.edu/faculty). This advisor is a (non-emeritus) faculty member from this list, who tracks the student’s progress toward degree completion, assists with course selection and academic planning, and helps students identify possible research mentors and opportunities. The initial academic advisor may or may not serve as a source of funding. (See the Financing Your Education section on the department website for more information about funding).

Students are required to meet with their academic advisors prior to registering each semester. In preparation for this meeting, the student will fill out the online Course Advising Form each semester (printing the page that displays the selected courses) and, in the spring semester additionally, an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The latter can be one of the adviser’s choice or the one available through this link. These forms include a summary of progress and accomplishments such as which program milestones were met, what kind of funding the student has and a statement of future goals. The academic advisor and student discuss plans for the next semester and the online form is reviewed by the GPC. The IDP serves as a road map for discussion between the advisor and student and is not turned in to the Graduate Program Office. Students also benefit from information and workshops offered by the Graduate School Professional Development Office, http://grad.wisc.edu/pd/.

The initial academic advisor may become the student’s research mentor and/or thesis/dissertation committee chair, but this is not required or expected. When students pick a thesis/dissertation chair who is different from their academic advisor, they should make that person their new academic advisor. Students can change advisors at any time using the Course Advisor Request Change Form (available online). The student should complete the form, bring it to both the current and new advisors for their approval and signature, and return it to the Graduate Program Office.

Thesis/Dissertation Advisor (Chair): The chair of the thesis/dissertation committee must be Population
Health Program faculty (see section 7.A for definition). A list is available at [https://pophealth.wisc.edu/grad/faculty](https://pophealth.wisc.edu/grad/faculty). If the Chair is not also tenured or tenure track faculty with >0% appointment in the Department of Population Health Sciences (i.e. Departmental Faculty), a Departmental Faculty must be appointed co-chair of the committee. The student should identify a thesis/dissertation advisor who conducts research in their general area of interest. Students are encouraged to gather information from courses, faculty and student seminars, the department website, and publications to help identify faculty with matching research interests. The academic advisor assigned to the student is expected to help in the process of choosing a thesis/dissertation advisor. Students should ask the prospective advisor to serve as their thesis/dissertation chair, and also their academic advisor if they are not already the academic advisor, and submit the **Course Advisor Request Change Form** (available online) if there is a change in advisor and/or co-advisor designations.

The thesis/dissertation chair also helps the student follow overall thesis/dissertation rules and deadlines and takes a lead role in guiding student research. The Appendix provides further guidelines on expectations of the student/advisor relationship.

**Thesis/Dissertation Co-chair (Co-Advisor):** As Population Health is a multidisciplinary field, it is not unusual for a student to receive substantial academic and/or research guidance from an individual additional to the advisor. It is then appropriate to designate the individual a co-advisor, and fill out a **Course Advisor Change Request Form** to formalize the relationship. On the dissertation/thesis committee, the co-advisor can serve in any of the capacities described in Sections 3.B.1 and 4.E.1, respectively, for MS and PhD students.

**Thesis/Dissertation Topic and Committee:** The specific thesis/dissertation topic should be developed jointly between the student and the thesis/dissertation advisor. The thesis/dissertation advisor also assists in determining possible committee members with relevant research interests. Both the student and thesis/dissertation chair should consult the Academic Guide for committee structure rules. Students should ask prospective thesis/dissertation members to serve as committee members.

**Relationships and Expectations:** The relationships students have with all their thesis/dissertation committee members (including the chair) are based on mutual respect and are generally mutually beneficial. Committee members provide feedback and evaluate student knowledge in order to determine eligibility to pass the Preliminary Exam (for PhD students) as well as to graduate during the thesis/dissertation oral defense.

**Graduate Program Office (WARF 744):** Students should always reference the Department website, this Academic Guide, the Graduate School’s website where the link to [https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/](https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) is especially helpful for finding answers to various program-related questions.

When students need additional clarification on any of these policies or procedures, they should contact the MS/PhD Graduate Programs Coordinator (GPC).
Chapter 3: MS in Population Health

3. A. Degree Requirements

**Credits:** 33 Required

A maximum of 5 credits of POP HLTH 990 may be applied toward degree requirements. A maximum of 3 credits of POP HLTH 699 may be applied toward degree requirements.

**Thesis:** Required

**Seminar:** 1 credit POP HLTH 820, Graduate Research Seminar

- Students are **expected** to attend and to participate in the Monday and Wednesday Departmental and Graduate Seminars each semester.
- All students are expected to enroll for credit in Seminar 820 during the semester in which they expect to defend their thesis.
- PHS 820 is a research seminar for students in the Population Health Sciences Graduate Programs. Presentations are generally made by graduate students, but may also be made by professors, public health professionals and experts, designed to cover the depth and breadth of research in the fields of population health and epidemiology.
- The purposes of PHS Monday Research Seminar are to
  - 1) expose students, staff, faculty and colleagues to a broad range of population health research and practice;
  - 2) critically think about diverse methodological and conceptual approaches to population health; and
  - 3) build collegial networks among speakers and attendees.

**Required Courses:**

**General Core Courses:**

- **POP HLTH 795**  Principles of Population Health Sciences (3 cr) **Fall**
- **POP HLTH 797**  Introduction to Epidemiology (3 cr) **Fall**
- **POP HLTH 451**  Introduction to SAS Programming for Population Health (2cr) **Fall**
- **POP HLTH 551**  Introduction to Biostatistics for Population Health (3 cr) **Fall**
- **POP HLTH 552**  Regression Methods for Population Health (3 cr) **Spring**

**Methods Core Courses:**

Students must complete six credits of methods course work from the list below. Students are required to take either Pop Hlth 796 OR Pop Hlth 798 to fulfill three of the six required credits (students are permitted to take both of these classes).

- **POP HLTH 651**  Advanced Regression Methods for Population Health (3cr)
- **POP HLTH 703**  Quality of Health Care: Evaluation and Assurances (3 cr) **Fall**
- **POP HLTH 709**  Translational & Outcomes Research in Health and Health Care (3cr) **Fall**
- **POP HLTH 796**  Introduction to Health Services Research (3 cr) **Spring**
- **POP HLTH 798**  Epidemiologic Methods (3 cr) **Spring**
- **POP HLTH 805**  Advanced Epidemiology: Causal Inference in Epidemiologic Studies (3 cr) **Fall**
POP HLTH 806  Advanced Epidemiology: The Practice of Epidemiology (3 cr) **Spring**
POP HLTH 875  Cost Effectiveness Analysis in Health and Health (3 cr) **Spring**
POP HLTH 876  Measuring Health Outcomes (3 cr) **taught periodically**
POP HLTH 881  Benefit-Cost Analysis (3cr) **Spring**

**The Responsible Conduct of Research and Ethics:**

Students are required to take a **minimum** of one credit in the responsible conduct of research (RCR).  
**Except for HIST SCI 545, courses on the below list cover all topics included in NIH requirements for trainees:**
1. animal welfare;
2. collaborative science;
3. conflict of interest and commitment;
4. data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership;
5. protection of human subjects;
6. mentor/trainee responsibilities;
7. publication practices, responsible authorship;
8. peer review;
9. research misconduct; and
10. societal and environmental impacts of scientific research.

Students may submit requests in writing to the Graduate Program Director through the Graduate Programs Coordinator proposing other UW ethics courses be considered as fulfilling PH Graduate Program requirement.  **Courses from our earlier lists taken prior to Spring 2018 will be considered as fulfilling PH program requirements.** Students on NIH training grants, who have taken courses not including all the above topics, are recommended to supplement via auditing parts of the below courses or other relevant lectures.

- **BMI 826-008**  Ethical Conduct of Research for Data Scientists (1 cr)
- **HST SCI 545**  Ethical and Regulatory Issues in Clinical Investigation (1 cr)
- **NUR 802**  Ethics and the Responsible Conduct of Research (1 cr)
- **VET SCI/SURGERY 812**  Research Ethics and Career Development (2 cr)
- **OBGYN 955**  Responsible Conduct of Research for Biomedical Graduate Students (2 cr)*
- **OBGYN 956**  Refresher: Advanced Responsible Conduct of Research (1 cr)*

*STUDENTS SHOULD CONTACT OB/GYN ABOUT THESE CLASSES BEFORE ENROLLING. CLASSES ARE FOR PHYSIOLOGY-BASED RESEARCH.

**Concentration Areas/Electives:**

Electives are chosen in consultation with the student’s advisor. Beyond the required core courses students have great latitude in selecting from the wide variety of courses offered on campus geared towards their own specific concentration and interests. When selecting electives, MS students should consider how their choices enhance their training and future career options.

Students may choose to focus on a specific area of concentration. **One of two formal specializations** will officially appear on the transcript:

**Population Health**  – **Unless otherwise enrolled in the Epidemiology Named Option, all students in the Population Health Graduate Program are also enrolled in the Population Health Named Option.**

**Epidemiology**  -- **with Epidemiology Option** (See section 5.B. of this Guide for more information)
Please see the [department website](#) for list of courses offered by the Department, and contact the GPC for suggested courses for some options for informal concentration and for links to courses offered by some other departments.

**Learning Goals: Population Health MS Learning Goals**

3. A. 1 Timeline

It is expected that the thesis process required of MS students, will take at least two semesters to complete. The thesis must be completed no later than two years after the completion of all coursework. A recommended two-year timeline is:

**Year 1 (Semester 1)**
- Enroll in core and elective courses each semester

**Year 1 (Semester 2)**
- Identify thesis advisor and topic

**Year 2 (Semester 1)**
- Select thesis committee (beginning of semester)
- Complete and distribute 5-6-page thesis proposal at least 1 week before meeting with committee (beginning of semester)
- Obtain committee approval for thesis proposal and obtain signatures for *Master’s Thesis Approval Form* (often done via a meeting)
- Submit *Master’s Thesis Approval Form* (middle of semester) to the Graduate Program Office.
- Obtain IRB approval.
- Send a request via email to the Graduate Programs Coordinator requesting an audit of your coursework during your 3rd semester.

**Year 2 (Semester 2)**
- Confirm completion of degree requirements by reviewing your *Curriculum Audit Form* and the Epidemiology Option Checklist (if applicable).
- Resolve any incompletes.
- Schedule final meeting/defense as well as reserve room and any needed audiovisual equipment (several weeks before the end of the semester).
- Obtain a *Graduation Request Form* and a *Master’s Degree Warrant Request Form* online from the website.
- Return both forms to the Graduate Program Office before March 15 for spring/summer graduates OR before October 15 for fall graduates (or 4 weeks before defense – whichever is earlier).
- Distribute thesis to committee at least 2 weeks before defense date (middle of semester).
- Present research in Graduate Research Seminar.
- Student will be notified via email when the Warrant arrives from the Graduate School and is available for pick-up.
- Present thesis to committee and have committee members sign the Warrant. Do NOT write the name of your thesis on the Warrant! If you do, your degree will not be posted until you have deposited your thesis at Memorial Library!
- Turn in signed graduation Warrant to Graduate Program Office before graduation deadline.
- Turn in final copy of thesis to committee chair (at least) within two weeks of graduation deadline (see section 3.B.9 for further details).
- Email a final electronic PDF of your thesis as well as an electronic copy of updated resume/CV to the Graduate Program Office within two weeks of the graduation deadline (see section 3.B.9 for further details).

3. B. Thesis and Graduation

Master’s students in Population Health Sciences are required to complete a thesis. Before proceeding with the work of their thesis, all MS students must submit a Master’s Thesis Approval Form (see section below titled Thesis Proposal).

The thesis is a detailed and careful study of a population health problem or methodology. It includes a statement of conclusion with the work and logic to back it up. The thesis must address a question or hypothesis. It must provide a defense of the position. A thesis can involve new data on an important issue, an innovative data collection method, an analysis of existing data sets in new ways to answer new and important questions, or a derivation of new research methods and a demonstration of their usefulness.

The purpose of the thesis is to help the student learn how to think through and investigate a relevant research question. The thesis should show competence in the development, implementation, and reporting of a research project. It provides the student with experience in conducting independent research, with guidance from qualified researchers, and it also provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate research skills to future employers. The thesis should be of suitable quality and scope for submission to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal or funding agency.

More specifically the thesis serves to demonstrate the student’s ability to:

1. Define a research question of importance to population health.
2. Describe current knowledge as a context for the thesis based on a careful review of the relevant literature.
3. Explain the research design, conduct, and analysis.
4. Conduct analyses appropriate for the thesis.
5. Clearly present and interpret the findings and/or implications for population health.


The biggest step for your thesis is deciding on a topic. It should be a topic that interests you and that can demonstrate your abilities. It should also be a topic for which you can find interested faculty with whom you would like to work and who can serve as an important resource for you. Finally, it should be a topic that is feasible in the time allotted. For example, MS students should not plan to collect original data or think they are writing a dissertation. The actual writing of the Master’s thesis should take about a semester.

Students should select thesis topics that are of interest to them but there is no need to officially decide until the start of your final year. MS and PhD students alike should discuss potential topics with current, more advanced students as well as with their academic advisor. Consider writing down your ideas as they become firmer.
The student should identify a thesis advisor from the Program Faculty who does research in the general area of interest to the student. Students are encouraged to gather information from courses, faculty and student seminars, the program website and publications to help identify faculty with interests matching those of the student. The academic advisor assigned to the student at the time of admission to the program is expected to help in the process of choosing a thesis advisor. The specific thesis topic should be developed jointly between the student and the thesis advisor.

3. B. 2. Choosing a Thesis Committee

Chapter 7 of this guide contains definitions of different faculty roles in the Population Health Graduate Program. Also see the PHS website lists of Population Health Program Faculty and Population Health Sciences Department Faculty as a tool to meet the committee membership requirements described below. In consultation with the thesis advisor, who serves as committee chair, students must choose at least two additional committee members.

The following conditions must be met:

- The thesis committee must have at least three members.
- The chair (the advisor) and one more member of the thesis committee must be Population Health Program Faculty. If the chair is not also Departmental Faculty, a Departmental Faculty member must be appointed co-chair (co-advisor).
- A third committee member may be Program Faculty or from any of the following categories:
  - (1) faculty from a department with or without a graduate program;
  - (2) academic staff (including emeritus faculty);
  - (3) visiting professors;
  - (4) faculty from other institutions;
  - (5) externally funded researchers;
  - (6) postdoctoral scholars; or
  - (7) other individuals deemed qualified.

The suitability of this third committee member will be reviewed and approved by your advisor in consultation with the Director of the Graduate Program.

Be sure to fill out the Master’s Thesis Approval Form as far in advance as possible and turn it in to the Graduate Program Office. Staff will review the committee members you listed to make sure they meet the requirements.

To receive a Master’s degree, students must receive no more than one dissenting vote from their committee.

Because Population Health is an interdisciplinary area, committee members should represent a broad spectrum. If the student requires extensive advice and input from a committee member in addition to the thesis advisor it is appropriate to recognize that committee member as a co-advisor for the thesis.

It should also be recognized that committee members (and in some rare cases other individuals) who make substantial contributions to the research should have the opportunity to be included as co-authors on any publications that result, following the journal guidelines of authorship. The thesis advisor and student should discuss potential authorship issues at the outset, and as needed during
the project to ensure mutual understanding.

Please contact the Graduate Programs Coordinator for any questions concerning the thesis committee membership and structure.

3. B. 3. Thesis Options

There are three format options:

1) traditional format
2) paper option or
3) grant proposal

The thesis advisor must approve the choice of format.

1) Traditional Format

A traditional thesis should contain the following sections:

- Title page (see section 3.B.9 for more information)
- Abstract (structured or unstructured) of 250 words or less
- Acknowledgements (including a list of the members of the committee, funding sources, and date of IRB clearance)
- Table of Contents (including a list of tables and figures)
- Introduction
- Background/Literature Review
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions
- Bibliography
- Appendices (including material such as extensive tables, questionnaires and measurement protocols)

The length of the thesis excluding the appendices should be no more than 40-60 double-spaced pages.

2) Research Paper

A paper option should contain the following sections:

- Title page (see section 3.B.9 for more information)
- Abstract (structured or unstructured) of 250 words or less
- Acknowledgements (including a list of the members of the committee, funding sources, and date of IRB clearance)
- Table of Contents (including a list of tables and figures)
- Introduction and literature review
- Manuscript (formatted for the proposed journal)
- Bibliography
- Appendices (including detailed methods, material such as extensive tables, questionnaires
The introduction must include a critical literature review, the objectives of the research study, and a discussion to provide an overall evaluation of the research study. The manuscript should be appropriate for publication in a peer reviewed national or international journal. The manuscript should be ready for submission and follow the format of a journal chosen by the thesis advisor and the student. The appendices must demonstrate the full development of the thesis material and are constructed based on the guidance of the thesis advisor and committee. In the instance of any apparent conflict between formatting guidelines of the chosen journal and the Department of Population Health Sciences thesis requirements, the journal guidelines will take precedence for the manuscript section of the thesis.

3) Grant Proposal

When the thesis is a grant proposal, it should contain the following sections:

- Title page (see 3. B. 9 for more information)
- Abstract (structured or unstructured) of 250 words or less
- Acknowledgements (including a list of the members of the committee, funding sources, and date of IRB clearance)
- Table of Contents (including a list of tables and figures)
- Specific Aims
- Significance
- Innovation
- Approach
- Human Subjects
- Literature Cited
- Appendices (including additional materials such as data collection instruments)

Refer to the NIH guidelines at: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm).

3. B. 4. The Thesis Proposal

After choosing a topic, the student is expected to write a 5 to 8-page thesis proposal for review by the thesis advisor and committee. The thesis proposal should include a description of the research question, a review of the most relevant existing literature, what format you wish to utilize (research paper, proposal-type, etc.), a description of the data, and the methodology to be used to answer the research question.

After the thesis advisor’s approval, the proposal is distributed to the thesis committee. It is recommended that the thesis advisor, student, and members of the committee meet to discuss the proposal. The thesis proposal must be given to all committee members at least 1 week before the meeting. Once the thesis committee approves the proposal, the student must submit the Master’s Thesis Approval Form to the Graduate Program Office.

Committee members sign the proposal form to indicate acceptance of committee membership and support of the chosen topic. The form must be signed and submitted before the student proceeds with the thesis.

3. B. 5. IRB Clearance
Students planning to engage in research involving human subjects must satisfy current IRB requirements, which include completion of the online Human Subjects Training Module. You can find more information at the following website:


Students planning to engage in research involving protected health information must satisfy the current HIPAA requirements, which include completion of the online HIPAA Training Program, which will be found on the CANVAS site via wisc.edu.

This clearance must be done prior to initiation of the research. In addition, the proposed work must be presented to the University of Wisconsin and other relevant IRBs for clearance before the work can begin. The thesis advisor must be involved in this process. If the work is part of a larger project that has already received clearance, the student must be added as key personnel to the IRB protocol.

3. B. 6. Graduation Request Deadlines

Please review the Timeline in 3. B.1. for a summary of the steps leading up to graduation. Students must formally notify the department and the Graduate School of their intention to graduate. Notification consists of confirming completion of degree requirements (including the epidemiology option if applicable) by requesting an audit of your coursework from the Graduate Program Office, completing an Intent to Graduate Form, and submitting a Master’s Degree Warrant Request Form to the Graduate Office by the deadlines below.

**Fall:** October 15 or 4 weeks before defense (whichever occurs sooner)

**Spring/Summer:** March 15 or 4 weeks before defense (whichever occurs sooner)


The thesis committee is required to attend a final meeting, scheduled by the student, in which the student will present his or her work. The student is also responsible for reserving the room and any required audiovisual equipment for this final meeting. Please see the Administrative Assistant in room 707 for more information on reservations. It is advised that student’s schedule this final meeting several weeks before the semester ends since many times revisions are required before the warrant will be signed, and the graduation date is based upon the date the warrant is signed.

The student is responsible for knowing and meeting the Graduate School deadlines for degree completion. The deadlines can be found at:

https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/degree deadlines/.

The thesis must be delivered electronically or in paper format to all committee members depending on the members’ preference at least 2 weeks before the final meeting. The final meeting can be rescheduled if a committee member feels there is insufficient time to review the thesis prior to the final meeting. At the final meeting, the committee will discuss the thesis work with the student and determine revisions, if any. The committee decides when and how the Master’s degree warrant will be signed.

3. B. 8. Depositing of Thesis/Warrant to Department
• On or before the graduation deadline, a signed *Master’s Degree Warrant Request Form* to the Graduate Program Office.

• Students are welcome to produce a bound copy of their thesis for their advisor, and for the departmental library, but this is not required.

• Within two weeks of the graduation deadline, email a PDF copy of the thesis to the Graduate Program Office.

• Within two weeks of the graduation deadline, an electronic copy of your resume/CV must be emailed to Graduate Program Office staff.

### 3. B. 9. Formatting the Thesis

There are specific guidelines which should help you prepare your thesis, so that it will constitute a permanent document of quality. For formatting instructions, see the Graduate School’s Guide to Preparing Your Master’s Thesis at: [https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/mastersthesis/](https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/mastersthesis/).

### Depositing of Thesis to Memorial Library

The Department of Population Health Sciences **does not** require that your thesis be deposited in Memorial Library; however, the student may choose to do so. If you choose to deposit your thesis in the Memorial Library, please refer to the Graduate School Guide to Preparing Your Master’s Thesis at: [https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/mastersthesis/](https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/mastersthesis/).

### 3. B. 10. Graduation FAQs

If you are not able to find the answer to your graduation-related question here, please review the other sections of the Academic Guide or the department website (including FAQ categories in the Prospective Students section).

**When do I receive my actual diploma?**

Please find the answer at the Registrar’s website: [http://registrar.wisc.edu/diploma.htm](http://registrar.wisc.edu/diploma.htm).

**When is my degree posted on my transcript?**

Please find the answer at the Registrar’s website: [http://registrar.wisc.edu/posting_of_degrees.htm](http://registrar.wisc.edu/posting_of_degrees.htm).

**Does the Epidemiology Option for my MS or PhD degree show up on my diploma and/or transcript?**

For MS and PhD students who have completed the Epidemiology Option, this credential will be noted only on your transcript, not on your diploma.

**When is my commencement ceremony at Camp Randall Stadium?**

Please find the answer at the Commencement website: [https://commencement.wisc.edu](https://commencement.wisc.edu).

**How/when do I need to order my commencement attire?**

Please find the answer at the Commencement website: [https://commencement.wisc.edu](https://commencement.wisc.edu).

**Is there a department commencement celebration in addition to the MS Camp Randall ceremony?**

Yes! The department event honors its graduates prior to the larger, Camp Randall commencement ceremonies for MS students. The MS/PhD Graduation event is held once a year in May for MS and...
PhD graduates who have graduated in the fall term, spring term, or the upcoming summer term (for example, for the academic year 2017-18 Graduation event, we honored the graduates of Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Summer 2018).

Faculty, staff, students, and the families of graduates are invited to this celebration. The event typically occurs the Friday of Spring Commencement weekend.

Please note that MS Commencement ceremonies at Camp Randall Stadium typically do not fall on the same day of the department graduation event. The ceremonies often fall on the Saturday or Sunday of Commencement weekend. Please confirm dates/times/locations of commencement ceremonies and of our department graduation events prior to making any plans.

**Is there anything else?**
Expect the Graduate School to send you a link to take an exit survey. You will also be contacted by the Graduate Programs Coordinator to do a brief exit interview to help us improve the Program.

**What can I do to stay in touch with the department and/or students/faculty after I graduate?**
We strongly encourage our graduates to stay in touch with the department and each other after graduation since it is a great way to build your professional network. There are many ways you can stay connected! Please contact the Graduate Programs Coordinator (pophealth@mailplus.wisc.edu) to find out how you can stay in touch with us, and about special events in the Department! You are always welcome!

Alumni are an invaluable source of feedback and Program improvement, so you can expect us to contact you periodically. Please keep us updated on your address and employment situation.

**3. C. Double Degrees (2 degrees, 2 majors)**

Double degrees are two same-level (Master’s or Doctoral) degrees from two separate graduate programs and can be earned at either the Master’s or Doctoral level. A student completing a double degree earns two degrees (two programs) and receives two diplomas. The student has two advisors and two separate committees and completes two theses (masters) or dissertations (PhD). Students may apply for an additional program at the time of original application, add a program at any time during enrollment, or reapply and pursue a second degree after completion of the first. For additional information, see [https://nelson.wisc.edu/graduate/joint-double-dual.php](https://nelson.wisc.edu/graduate/joint-double-dual.php).

The Program has a historic collaboration and special procedures for granting double degrees with the Department of Sociology. For further information, contact the Graduate Programs Coordinator.
Chapter 4: PhD in Population Health

4. A. Degree Requirements

Credits: 51 Required

Dissertation: Required
A maximum of 11 credits of POP HLTH 990 may be applied toward degree requirements.

A maximum of 6 credits of POP HLTH 699 may be applied toward degree requirements.

Seminar: 2 credits (POP HLTH 820, Graduate Research Seminar, 1 cr.)

- Students are expected to attend and to participate in the Monday and Wednesday Departmental and Graduate Seminars each semester.
- All PhD students are expected to enroll for credit in Seminar 820 twice during their program before becoming a dissertator, including the semester before or during the semester in which they expect to present their Preliminary Exam proposal.
- PHS 820 is a research seminar for students in the Population Health Sciences Graduate Programs. Presentations are generally made by graduate students, but may also be made by professors, public health professionals and experts, designed to cover the depth and breadth of research in the fields of population health and epidemiology.
- The purposes of PHS Monday Research Seminar are to
  o 1) expose students, staff, faculty and colleagues to a broad range of population health research and practice;
  o 2) critically think about diverse methodological and conceptual approaches to population health; and
  o 3) build collegial networks among speakers and attendees.

Required Courses:

- POP HLTH 451 Introduction to SAS Programming for Population Health (2 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 551 Introduction to Biostatistics for Population Health (3 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 552 Regression Methods for Population Health (3 cr) Spring
- POP HLTH 651 Advanced Regression Methods for Population Health (3 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 795 Principles of Population Health Sciences (3 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 796 Introduction to Health Services Research (3 cr) Spring
- POP HLTH 797 Introduction to Epidemiology (3 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 798 Epidemiologic Methods (3 cr) Spring

The Responsible Conduct of Research and Ethics:

Students are required to take a minimum of one credit in the responsible conduct of research RCR). Except for HIST SCI 545, courses on the below list cover all topics included in NIH requirements for trainees:

1. animal welfare;
2. collaborative science;
3. conflict of interest and commitment;
4. data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership;
5. protection of human subjects;
6. mentor/trainee responsibilities;
7. publication practices, responsible authorship;
8. peer review;
9. research misconduct; and
10. societal and environmental impacts of scientific research.

Students may submit requests in writing to the Graduate Program Director through the Graduate Programs Coordinator proposing other UW ethics courses be considered as fulfilling PH Graduate Program requirement. **Courses from our earlier lists taken prior to Spring 2018 will be considered as fulfilling PH program requirements.** Students on NIH training grants, who have taken courses not including all the above topics, are recommended to supplement via auditing parts of the below courses or other relevant lectures.

**BMI 826-008**  
Ethical Conduct of Research for Data Scientists (1 cr)

**HST SCI 545**  
Ethical and Regulatory Issues in Clinical Investigation (1 cr)

**NUR 802**  
Ethics and the Responsible Conduct of Research (1 cr)

**VET SCI/SURGERY 812**  
Research Ethics and Career Development (2 cr)

**OBGYN 955**  
Responsible Conduct of Research for Biomedical Graduate Students (2 cr)*

**OBGYN 956**  
Refresher: Advanced Responsible Conduct of Research (1 cr)*

*STUDENTS SHOULD CONTACT OB/GYN ABOUT THESE CLASSES BEFORE ENROLLING. CLASSES ARE FOR PHYSIOLOGY-BASED RESEARCH.

**Concentration Areas/Electives/PhD Minor:**

Electives are chosen in consultation with the student’s advisor. Beyond the required core courses students have great latitude in selecting from the wide variety of courses offered on campus geared towards their own specific concentration and interests. When selecting electives, PhD students should consider how their choices enhance their training and future career options. Students may choose to focus on a specific area of concentration. **One of two formal specializations** will officially appear on the transcript:

Population Health – *Unless otherwise enrolled in the Epidemiology Named Option, all students in the Population Health Graduate Program are enrolled in the Population Health Named Option. Epidemiology -- with Epidemiology Option (See section 5.B. of this Guide for more information)*

Descriptions of all courses offered by the Department of Population Health Sciences can be found at [https://pophealth.wisc.edu/degree-programs/courses-and-syllabi/](https://pophealth.wisc.edu/degree-programs/courses-and-syllabi/). Students may pursue informal concentrations, such as Clinical Research, Health Services Research and Social and Behavioral Health Sciences. Students should discuss these with their advisor.

**Minor Requirement (Applies to all Population Health PhD students):**

All Population Health Doctoral students are required to complete a minor. Students should decide on a minor, complete the *PhD Minor Agreement Form*, and turn it in to the Graduate Program Office for approval **BY THE END OF THEIR SECOND YEAR.**

Two options exist for a PhD minor:
A) external or
B) distributed.

It is important to note that courses required for the degree cannot also be counted as part of the 9 credits minor.

**Option A (external)** -- Requires a minimum of 9 credits of course work in a single department or major field of study. Selection of this option requires the approval of the minor department.

**Option B (distributed)** -- Requires a minimum of 9 credits of course work in two or more departments and can include course work in the major department. A distributed minor should have a cohesive focus and those selecting this option must explain this on the *PhD Minor Agreement Form*. Selection of this option requires the approval of the major department. Turn in the completed form to the Graduate Program Office.

**Deadlines Summary:** (Note: Matriculation refers to the date the student enrolled in the PhD program either de novo or after transferring from the MS program.)

**Qualifying Exam**

Full-time PhD Students: Must pass the exam by the end of the summer following their 3rd year
Part-time PhD Students: Must pass the exam by the end of the summer following their 4th year

Students must notify the Graduate Program Office of intent to take the qualifier by June 1st for the Summer exam and November 1st for the Winter exam. After declaring intent to take the exam, a decision not to take the exam less than 6 weeks before the first exam is administered, will result in an automatic failure.

**Preliminary Exam**

Full-time PhD Students: Must pass the Preliminary Exam within four years of matriculation.
Part-time PhD Students: Must pass the Preliminary Exam within six years of matriculation.

The final copy of the Preliminary Exam proposal must be circulated to the Preliminary Exam committee at least two weeks prior to the oral exam.

**Dissertation**

Doctoral students are expected to pass the oral defense of their dissertation and deposit no later than five years from the date of passing the Preliminary Examination.

The dissertation final draft to be defended must be submitted to the committee at least 2 weeks prior to the final defense date.

**Learning Goals:** Population Health PhD Learning Goals

4. A. 1. PhD Timeline and Credits

Year 1-2
• Enroll in required coursework, electives, and Wednesday seminar for the first time (suggested 3rd semester).
• Begin to think about dissertation topic and engage in research.
• Pass Qualifier Exam.
• Decide on a minor, complete the PhD Minor Agreement Form, and turn it in the form to the Graduate Program Office BY THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR.

Years 3-4
• Satisfactorily complete all courses (including minor coursework credits) and resolve any incomplete grades. Confirm completion of degree requirements by reviewing your Curriculum Audit Form and the Epidemiology Option Checklist (if applicable).
• Send a request via email to the Graduate Programs Coordinator requesting an audit of coursework during the fifth semester or earlier.
• Form Preliminary Examination committee after checking the committee requirements in the Academic Guide, having the list of members approved by the Graduate Program Office and prepare the Preliminary Exam research proposal.
• Enroll in seminar PHS820 for the second time either the semester before or the semester of the Preliminary Exam.
• Schedule Preliminary Exam meeting and reserve room and any needed audiovisual equipment.
• Fill out a Request for Preliminary Warrant Form and send to the Graduate Program Office at least 3 weeks before the date of the exam.
• Student will be notified when the preliminary warrant arrives from the Graduate School and is available for pick-up in the Graduate Program Office.
• Enroll in three 990 credits each semester.
• Enroll in summer 990 credits if you will graduate in the summer or if your assistantship or fellowship requires it (See https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/ for specifics).
• Form Dissertation Committee, which is often the same as Preliminary Exam committee. If there are changes to the committee, be sure to check with the Graduate Program Office to ensure the committee requirements of the Graduate School and Program are being met.
• Obtain IRB approval.
• Conduct research and prepare dissertation.
• Schedule final meeting/defense and reserve room and any needed audiovisual equipment (several weeks before the end of the semester).
• Obtain a Graduation Request Form and a PhD Final Oral Committee Approval Form (Warrant). Student will be notified via email when the Warrant arrives and is available for pick-up.
• Return both forms to Graduate Program Office before March 15 for spring/summer graduates OR before October 15 for fall graduates (or 4 weeks before defense – whichever is earlier).
• Distribute a hard or electronic copy of dissertation to committee members at least 2 weeks before the defense date.
• Seminar must be publicized at least 2 weeks in advance by hanging signs on the Departmental bulletin boards (on floors 3, 5, 6, 7, and 10) and by sending an email to the
Graduate Programs Coordinator who will forward the information to students and faculty.

- Present dissertation to committee and have all committee members sign the Warrant.
- Turn in photocopy of signed Warrant to the Graduate Program Office before graduation deadline. (Retain original copy for Final Review). Graduation deadline: https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/degreedeadlines/.
- Schedule “Final Review” and deposit final copy of dissertation with original signed Warrant with the Graduate School (give photocopy of Warrant to Graduate Program Office) before graduation deadline. Also, see options for dissertation submission at https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/Doctoralguide/.
- Turn in final copy of dissertation to at least the committee chair within two weeks of graduation deadline (see section 4.E.5 for further details).
- Email final electronic PDF copy of dissertation and an electronic copy of resume/CV to Graduate Program Office staff within two weeks of graduation deadline (see section 4.E.5 for further details).

Of the total 51 credits (or 48 for those entering before fall of 2014) required for a PhD degree in Population Health a maximum of 11 credits can be granted for research work. Students should register for these credits as Pop Hlth 990. PhD students must be enrolled in at least three graduate level credits during the semester in which they graduate (this is considered full-time status).

4. B. Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination is designed to assess the readiness of students to proceed to advanced coursework and to beginning to design their dissertation research. The exam consists of two parts:
   1. Epidemiology and Biostatistics and
   2. Population Health/Health Services Research

Content reflects first year course work in these areas, and tests students’ application of knowledge, comprehension and critical evaluation of the material as encountered in journal articles and design, analyses and interpretation of studies. Although each section is graded separately, the Qualifying Examination is considered to be integrative -- testing, in part, the student’s ability to apply knowledge across disciplines. The Qualifier is a closed book exam, allowing one page of notes for the Epidemiology and Biostatistics section.

PhD students are encouraged to take the exam during the nearest exam date following the successful completion of one year of core courses. However, after consulting with their advisor, some students may decide to wait. Full time students have until the end of their third year to pass the Qualifying Examination, and their first sitting must occur no later than the end of their second year. Full time students must take both sections on their first sitting and take all failed sections during their second sitting.

Part-time students may take either one or both sections on their first sitting and must take all sections failed at the first sitting during their second sitting. When electing to take either one or both sections on their first sitting, part time students are reminded of the integrative nature of the Qualifying Exams.

The Qualifier Exam is administered over a two-day period in late summer, and in winter, dependent on demand. Students take one exam section each day, with each exam period being four hours long. Each section of the qualifier (epidemiology and biostatistics, health services research) is graded separately as pass/fail by masked graders. Both sections must be passed in order to pass the
Qualifying Examination.

No section can be taken more than a total of two times except on rare occasions. Students in good academic standing, who have passed 1 of the 2 qualifying exams sections, and have failed the 2nd exam twice, have the ability to appeal to take the 2nd exam for the 3rd time. The appeal must be initiated and presented to the Steering Committee by two supporting program faculty who explain the exceptional circumstances, which prompted the appeal. Two letters of support written by program faculty are required. The Steering Committee retains final approval or denial authority of the appeal.

Students who do not pass after two attempts (or three in the case of an approved appeal) are given the option of leaving the program or completing the Master’s degree. They may not continue in the PhD program.

Here are additional guidelines or notes regarding the Qualifying Exam:

- The PhD qualifying exam is offered in summer; it may be offered in January if sufficient demand exists.
- PhD students must complete the six core, methods, and quantitative analysis courses (Pop Hlth 551, Pop Hlth 552 Pop Hlth 795, Pop Hlth 796, Pop Hlth 797, and Pop Hlth 798) with grades of B or better.
- Any “Incomplete” (I) grades in the six core and required courses must be resolved and letter grades assigned before a student may sit for the qualifying exam.
- To sit for the examination, the individual must:
  - have been accepted in the PhD program and have accepted the offer of admission
  - be currently enrolled in the Graduate Program or have been enrolled in the past

Students intending to sit for the Qualifying Exam must notify their advisor and the Graduate Program Office no later than November 1 for the winter exam and June 1 for the summer exam. It is important to discuss your plans with your advisor before indicating that you intend to take the exam(s) on a particular date. This is especially important because students may not withdraw within six weeks of the date of the exam unless there are exceptional circumstances. Students who do not report to take the exam(s) or have not contacted their advisor and the Graduate Program office in advance about their exceptional circumstances, will receive an automatic “fail” on their exam(s). Any appeals of this rule will be decided by the Population Health Sciences Steering Committee.

Past qualifying exams are available in the Department Commons, 730 WARF Building.

**Deadline for Full-time PhD Students**

Students following a full-time course of study (approximately three courses or a minimum of 8 credits each semester) are expected to pass the exam by the end of their third year and their first sitting must occur no later than the end of their second year. Generally, students take the exam in summer after their first year of study but can elect to delay the exam to allow for additional preparation time. If students do not pass one or more sections the first time, they may sit for those exam sections again during the winter or summer exam date(s) prior to the end of their third year.

**Deadline for Part-time PhD Students**

Part-time students (typically enrolled in one or two courses or less than 8 credits each semester) are
expected to pass the exam before the end of their fourth year (regardless of whether the student is continuously enrolled). This means that a part-time Doctoral student must first take the exam during one of the winter or summer exam dates before the end of their third year.

For example, a part-time Doctoral student who entered the program in Fall 2014 may take the exam for the first time in Summer 2015 (the end of their 1st year), Winter or Summer 2016 (during or at the end of their 2nd year), or Winter or Summer 2017 (during or at the end of their 3rd year). The exam must be passed by end of the fourth year. Part-time students who sit for the first time at the end of their fourth year (in summer) will not have the opportunity to retake the exam if they do not pass on the first attempt, due to the overall time limit.

**Notification of Results**

Students are notified of their exam results prior to the first day of classes of the semester immediately following the qualifying exam date. Exams are not returned to students nor are the specific answers discussed or written comments provided. Students receiving a “Failure” on one or more of the exams should meet with their academic advisor to discuss options. Some students benefit from taking the pertinent course(s) again for further preparation. No faculty member is obligated to offer a 699 course for students who have failed one or more sections of the qualifying exam.

**Viewing Results**

A students’ advisor can view the original, unmarked Qualifier exam taken by their advisee(s) or assign another faculty member to view it. The exam may be viewed in the office of the GPC when a Graduate Program Office staff person is available. The exam cannot leave the GPC office for any reason. Once the exam has been viewed, the staff person will refile it with the other exams. Grading of the exam cannot be questioned.

*If an advisor wishes to view an exam:*

1) Advisor emails the GPC requesting an appointment to view the Qualifier Exam.
2) The GPC will email back to confirm appointment or suggest another appointment time.
3) Exam will be given to advisor at the appointment time to view in the GPC office.
4) Exam will be returned to the Graduate Program Office staff person and it will be refiled.

**4. C. Preliminary Examination**

Doctoral students are required to complete a dissertation. Before proceeding with the work of the dissertation, PhD students must pass a Preliminary Exam. The Preliminary Exam is the written proposal and oral defense of the student's anticipated dissertation research (see section below titled Dissertation/Graduation for a definition of a dissertation). Doctoral students must pass their Preliminary Examination no later than four calendar years following admission for graduate study in the Department (if full-time) or no later than six calendar years following admission (if part-time). Requests for special extension of the deadline for completing the Preliminary Examination must be made to the Director of the Graduate Program through the Graduate Programs Coordinator. See 4.A.1 above for more information. Passing the Preliminary Examination leads to the granting of dissertator status by the Graduate School, which implies lower tuition and that only research (PH 990) credits can be taken.

**4. C. 1. Choosing a Preliminary Examination Committee and Topic**
The student is responsible, in consultation with their advisor, to form the Preliminary Examination committee. It is strongly recommended that students select the same members for their preliminary committee as their dissertation committee. See the Guidelines for Choosing a Dissertation Committee in 4. E.1.

The subject matter of the Preliminary Exam research proposal will coincide with the student's anticipated dissertation research. The biggest step in the dissertation is deciding on a topic. It should be a topic that interests the student and that can demonstrate their abilities. It also should be a topic for which one can find interested faculty with whom to work and who can serve as an important resource. Finally, it should be a topic that is feasible in the time allotted.

A student should begin thinking about possible topic upon entry into the PhD program, but there is no need to officially decide until after completion of the qualifying exam. It is recommended that PhD students identify a dissertation advisor and engage in research early in their program. PhD students should discuss potential topics with current, more advanced students as well as with their academic advisor. Students should consider writing down ideas as they become firmer. When a student has an idea they would like to pursue, doing some reading on the topic is important. Finally, talking with others about the idea is appropriate. The Graduate School’s Professional Development Resources can be helpful.


The student should submit the proposal early in the semester, after which the student must consult individually with each member of the Preliminary Exam Committee to solicit suggestions for revision. The final draft of the proposal must be circulated to the Preliminary Exam Committee at least two weeks prior to the oral exam.

The proposal may be prepared in a format similar to the “Research Strategy” section of a National Institutes of Health [postdoctoral] grant application. For help with the specific categories and format, please see Strategy to Write the Research Plan at the NIH website and discuss with your advisor.

4. C. 3. IRB Clearance

Students planning to engage in research involving human subjects must satisfy current IRB requirements, which include completion of the online Human Subjects Training Module. More information can be found at the following website: https://kb.wisc.edu/gradsch/page.php?id=32559.

This clearance must be done prior to initiation of the research. In addition, the proposed work must be presented to the University of Wisconsin and other relevant IRBs for clearance before the work can begin. The dissertation advisor must be involved in this process. If the work is part of a larger project that has already received clearance, the student must be added as key personnel to the IRB protocol.

Students planning to engage in research involving protected health information must satisfy the current HIPAA requirements which include completion of the online HIPAA Training Program via MyUW at the wisc.edu website.

4. C. 4. Requesting the Preliminary Exam Warrant
Please review the Timeline in 4. A.1. for a summary of the steps leading up to your Preliminary Examination. At least three weeks before the scheduled Preliminary Examination, the Request for Preliminary Warrant must be turned in and approved by the Graduate Program Office. The Request for Preliminary Warrant will then be sent to the Graduate School. The warrant request will not be filed until a student has passed the qualifying exam, cleared their record of all Incomplete “I” and Progress “P” grades (other than research and thesis), has completed (or is about to complete) all coursework for the PhD major and minor (including the Epidemiology Option if applicable) and a PhD Minor Agreement form is in the file. Thus, be sure to resolve any grades and confirm completion of all degree requirements via an audit done by the Graduate Program Office before submitting a warrant request form.


The Preliminary Exam Committee is required to attend a final meeting, scheduled by the student, in which the student will present his or her proposal. The student is also responsible for reserving the room and any required audiovisual equipment for this final meeting. Please contact the receptionist in the main office (WARF 707) for assistance.

*The final draft of the proposal must be circulated to the Preliminary Exam Committee at least two weeks prior to the oral exam.* The student will prepare an oral presentation of approximately 30-40 minutes with visual aids (e.g. PowerPoint presentation) describing the research proposal. After the presentation, the student will respond to questions by the Preliminary Exam Committee. The questions will deal with the proposal itself and any related material. The oral exam is usually completed within two hours.

At the end of the Preliminary Exam, the student exits the room and the committee discusses the proposal. The committee will vote one of the following:

1. pass,
2. retake, or
3. fail.

If the committee does not reach consensus, then the majority vote serves to determine the outcome. Even when the vote is “pass”, it is common for the student to emerge from the exam with numerous suggestions from the committee. The student’s advisor will summarize these, and the student should plan a meeting with the advisor and possibly other committee members as appropriate to clarify and plan for requested revisions to the plan.

4. C. 6. Preliminary Exam Outcomes

If a student does not pass the Preliminary Exam, the major advisor and student should decide what course of action to take. Some options are: to substantially revise the proposal and reschedule the exam, terminate with a Master’s degree, or discontinue the Program. A letter outlining the course of action to be taken should be sent to the Director of the Graduate Program through the Graduate Programs Coordinator.

4. D. Advancing to Dissertator Status

Students advance to dissertator status and become PhD candidates after passing the Preliminary Exam. Dissertators are required to enroll in exactly (no more, no less) three credits of PHS 990 research each fall and spring semester. Dissertators holding traineeships, research assistantships
(RA) or fellowships that require summer enrollment must also enroll in exactly three credits of PHS 990 research during the summer. Dissertators who expect to graduate in August must enroll in the eight-week general session for exactly three PHS 990 credits.

4. E. Dissertation/Graduation

The dissertation is a detailed and careful study of a population health problem or methodology. It is a statement of conclusion with the work and logic to back it up. It addresses a research issue of importance and part of the dissertation is defending that the topic is indeed important. The dissertation is the beginning of a career or work. A dissertation can be based on new data on an important issue, an innovative data collection method, an analysis of existing data sets in new ways to answer new and important questions, or a derivation of new research methods and a demonstration of their usefulness.

The objective is to help the student learn how to think through and investigate a research question. The dissertation should show competence in the development, implementation and reporting of a research project. It provides experience in conducting research, obtaining advice from very qualified researchers, and it demonstrates ability to conduct research to future employers. It should be of suitable quality and scope for submission to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal.

4. E. 1. Choosing a Dissertation Committee

Chapter 7 of this guide contains definitions of different faculty roles in the Population Health Graduate Program. Also see the PHS website for a list of Population Health Program Faculty, and Population Health Sciences Departmental Faculty as a tool to meeting committee membership requirements described below.

In consultation with the dissertation advisor, who serves as committee chair, students must choose at least three additional committee members. The following conditions must be met:

- Doctoral committee/final oral examination committee must have at least four members.
- At least three members must be designated as readers and will read the entire dissertation.
- The chair (the advisor) and two additional members of the dissertation committee must be Population Health Program Faculty.
- If the chair is not Departmental Faculty, a Departmental Faculty member must be appointed co-chair (co-advisor). At least one of the 4 members must be faculty in a UW graduate program other than or additional to Population Health and Epidemiology.
- One committee member may be from any of the following categories:
  - (1) tenure or tenured track faculty from a department with or without a graduate program;
  - (2) academic staff (including emeritus faculty);
  - (3) visiting professors;
  - (4) faculty from other institutions;
  - (5) externally funded researchers;
  - (6) post-Doctoral scholars; or
  - (7) other individuals deemed qualified.

The suitability of this fifth committee member will be reviewed and approved by your advisor in consultation with the Director of the Graduate Program.

Note for students who entered program prior to 2017: These requirements are more lenient than previous ones, except possibly for next to last bullet. Previous guidelines were for a
member from “outside the student’s major program or major field” and “one member with primary appointment outside PHS”. There was no mention of this member being associated with another graduate program. Current wording is better aligned with Graduate School requirements.

As Population Health Sciences is an interdisciplinary area, committee members should represent that broad spectrum. If the student requires extensive advice and input from a committee member in addition to their dissertation advisor, it is appropriate to recognize that committee member as a co-advisor for the dissertation.

Dissertation committees must be reviewed and approved by the Director of the Graduate Programs and the Graduate Programs Coordinator. Please contact the Graduate Programs Coordinator for any questions concerning the dissertation committee membership and structure.

It is expected that the student will meet with the committee members periodically, at least once each year. The student will provide their committee with a written summary of progress annually, and after the committee meeting, the advisor will provide the student with a brief evaluation, suggestions and strategies that were discussed to meet any challenges identified.

4. E. 2. Dissertation Options

The dissertation must be an original contribution; however, the data do not have to be original. Students may opt to submit either of the following to satisfy the dissertation requirement:

1) a traditional single topic, extensive exploration from which papers may be drawn later, or

2) three publishable papers. Two of the papers must present new empirical analyses. Please see the Graduate School guidelines for formatting information: [https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/Doctoralguide/](https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/Doctoralguide/).

1) Traditional Format

A traditional dissertation should contain the following sections:

- Title page (see [https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/Doctoralguide/](https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/Doctoralguide/ for more information)
- Abstract (structured or unstructured) of 250 words or less
- Acknowledgements (including a list of the members of the committee, funding sources, and date of IRB clearance)
- Table of Contents (including a list of tables and figures)
- Introduction
- Background/Literature Review
- Specific aims
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions
- Bibliography
• Appendices (including material such as extensive tables, questionnaires and measurement protocols)

2) Research Paper

The three-paper option should contain the following sections:

• Title page (see https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/Doctoralguide/ for more information)
• Abstract (structured or unstructured) of 250 words or less
• Acknowledgements (including a list of the members of the committee, funding sources, and date of IRB clearance)
• Table of Contents (including a list of tables and figures)
• Introduction and literature review
• Specific aims
• Significance
• Innovation
• Methods
• Manuscripts (formatted for the proposed journal)
• Conclusion
• Bibliography
• Appendices (including detailed methods, material such as extensive tables, questionnaires and measurement protocols)

The manuscripts should be appropriate for publication in peer reviewed national or international journals. The manuscripts should be ready for submission and follow the formats of the journals chosen by the dissertation advisor and the student. The appendices must demonstrate the full development of the dissertation material and are constructed based on the guidance of the dissertation advisor and committee. In the instance of any apparent conflict between formatting guidelines of the chosen journals and the Department of Population Health Sciences dissertation requirements, the journal guidelines will take precedence for the manuscript section of the dissertation.

4. E. 3. Graduation Warrant Request Deadlines

Please review the Timeline in 4. A.1. for a summary of the steps leading up to graduation. Students must formally notify the department and the Graduate School of their intention to graduate. Notification consists of confirming completion of degree requirements (including the epidemiology option if applicable), completing an Intent to Graduate Form (available online), and submitting a PHD Final Oral Committee Approval Form to the department by the deadlines below:

Fall: October 15 or 4 weeks before defense (whichever occurs sooner)
Spring/Summer: March 15 or 4 weeks before defense (whichever occurs sooner)


The dissertation committee is required to attend a final meeting, scheduled by the student, in which the student presents their work. The student is also responsible for reserving the room and any required audiovisual equipment for this final meeting. Please contact the Receptionist in room 707 for assistance. It is advised that students schedule this final meeting several weeks before the semester ends. This is advisable since many times revisions are required before the warrant is
signed. The actual graduation date is determined by the date the student has their final review meeting at the Graduate School to submit the final version of the dissertation with the signed warrant (original not a copy).

**You are responsible for knowing and meeting the Graduate School deadlines for degree completion.**
The deadlines can be found at [https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/degreedeadlines/](https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/degreedeadlines/).

The dissertation final draft to be defended must be submitted to the committee **at least 4 weeks** prior to the final defense date. All members of the committee must be provided with a **hard copy** of the document, if they so request.

As part of the final defense, a 60-minute public seminar, including an open question and answer session, is required. The seminar must be publicized **at least 2 weeks** in advance by hanging signs on the Departmental bulletin boards (on floors 3, 5, 6, 7, and 10) and by sending an email to the Graduate Programs Coordinator who will forward the information to students and faculty.

During the public seminar, the student presents research results, followed by questions from the floor. At the end of the open session, the committee will go into closed session. The committee will meet privately with the student after their closed session. The examination (public and closed sessions) will last approximately 3 hours.

**Possible Outcomes of the Defense**

Possible outcomes of the committee’s closed session deliberations (discussed above) are pass, fail, or conditional pass. In the case of a conditional pass, the dissertation advisor and in some cases other committee members will not sign the final warrant until all revisions are completed and approved.

**Deadline for Passing the Final Exam**

Doctoral students are expected to pass the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation no later than five years from the date of passing the Preliminary Examination. The oral examination is the oral defense of the completed dissertation. Full-time students generally complete the dissertation within two years of the Preliminary Examination. Part-time students may take longer.

According to Graduate School policy, a candidate for the PhD degree who fails to take the final oral examination within five years after passing the Preliminary Examination is required to take another Preliminary Examination and be readmitted to candidacy.

**4. E. 5. Depositing Dissertation and Copy of Warrant to Department**

Specific guidelines for formatting the dissertation are listed here: [https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/Doctoralguide/](https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/Doctoralguide/). At your Final Review with the Graduate School, the final copy of your dissertation will be retained and sent to Bell and Howell Information Learning for microfilming and binding. In addition, you must submit the following items:

- On or before the graduation deadline, a photocopy of the signed **PHD Final Oral Committee Approval Form** must be submitted to the Graduate Program Office (retain original for Final Review).
- Within two weeks of the graduation deadline, email a PDF copy of the dissertation to the
Graduate Program Office. Within two weeks of the graduation deadline, an electronic copy of the dissertation must also be provided to the Department on a CD.

- Within two weeks of the graduation deadline, an electronic copy of your resume/CV must be emailed to Graduate Program Office staff. https://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/Doctoralguide/
- Students are welcome to produce a bound copy of their dissertation for their advisor, and for the departmental library, but it is not required.

4. E. 6. Graduation FAQs

If you are not able to find the answer to your graduation-related question here, please review the other sections of the Academic Guide or the department website (including FAQ categories in the Prospective Students section).

When do I receive my actual diploma?
Please find the answer at the Registrar’s website.

When is my degree posted on my transcript?
Please find the answer at the Registrar’s website.

Does the Epi Option for my MS or PhD degree show up on my diploma and/or transcript?
For MS and PhD students who have completed the Epi Option, this credential will be noted only on your transcript (not on your diploma).

When is my commencement ceremony at the Kohl Center?
Please find the answer at the Commencement website: https://commencement.wisc.edu.

How/when do I need to order my commencement attire?
Please find the answer at the Secretary of the Faculty website: https://commencement.wisc.edu.

Is there a department commencement celebration in addition to the campus-wide Kohl Center ceremony?
Yes! The department has continued the great tradition of honoring our graduates in a more intimate fashion prior to the larger, campus-wide Kohl Center commencement ceremonies. The MS/PhD graduation event is held once a year in May for MS and PhD graduates who have graduated in the fall term, spring term, or the upcoming summer term (for example, for Academic Year 2018-19 Graduation, we honored the graduates of Fall 2018, Spring 2019, and Summer 2019).

Faculty, staff, students, and the graduates’ families are invited to this celebration. Event typically occurs on the Friday of Spring Commencement weekend. Please confirm dates/times/locations with staff prior to making any plans.

Please note that Commencement ceremonies at the Kohl Center may or may not fall on the same day of this department graduation event. Please confirm dates/times/locations of the Kohl Center commencement ceremonies and of our department graduation events prior to making any plans.

Is there anything else?
Expect the Graduate School to send you a link to take an exit survey. You will also be contacted by the Graduate Programs Coordinator to do a brief exit interview to help us improve the Program.
What can I do to stay in touch with the department and/or students/faculty after I graduate?
We strongly encourage our graduates to stay in touch with the department and each other after graduation since it is a great way to build your professional network. There are many ways you can stay connected! Please contact the Graduate Programs Coordinator (pophealth@mailplus.wisc.edu) to find out how you can stay in touch with us, and about special events in the Department! You are always welcome!

Alumni are also an invaluable source of feedback and program improvement, so you can expect us to contact you periodically. Please keep us updated on your address and employment situation.
Chapter 5: Academic Guidelines and Procedures

5. A. Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress

Guidelines for Satisfactory Progress

Students must satisfy the following conditions to make satisfactory progress in the Program:

1) Maintain a minimum cumulative graduate GPA of 3.25 in all graduate work (including transfer/equivalency courses).

2) Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 or better in all course work completed while enrolled in the Population Health Graduate Program.

3) Maintain a minimum term GPA of 3.0 or better in all course work completed for each enrolled term.

4) Meet Graduate Program grade requirements. No grade lower than a B in Population Health core courses (PHS 795, 796, 797, 798, 551 and 552) will be accepted for the degree.

5) Attend courses and the Monday and Wednesday seminars on a regular basis. If illness or other circumstances intervene, the student must notify his or her advisor as soon as possible.

6) Satisfy all program deadlines and time limits as outlined in the Academic Guide.

7) Remove Incomplete (I) grades within one semester or by the time specified by the course instructor if that is later.

8) Maintain no more than six credits of Incomplete (I) grades during any semester.

9) Non-dissertators must maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of two graduate credits during fall and spring semesters (this is not considered full-time status; simply the lowest number of credits allowed). Dissertators must maintain continuous enrollment in three 990 graduate credits during fall and spring semesters (this is considered full-time status).

10) Research, teaching, or project assistants, trainees, and other fellows must satisfy the Graduate School items #8 and #9 above AND any additional enrollment requirements based on their position. See your appointment letter and the Graduate School’s Academic Guidelines: https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/.

11) MS students must pass their thesis defense within two years of completing all coursework.

12) PhD students must:

- Pass Qualifying Exam by the end of their third year if full-time students, or fourth year if part-time students, as outlined in Academic Guide.
- Pass Preliminary Exam within four (full-time students) to six years (part-time students)
of matriculation.

- Pass dissertation defense within five years of becoming a dissertator.

**Probation/Dismissal Policy**

Not meeting guidelines for satisfactory progress can result in immediate dismissal from the Program or a semester of probation (followed by dismissal, if satisfactory progress is not achieved). Students placed on probation will remain on probation for one semester and will be reviewed by the Steering Committee following the probationary semester. Students may be dismissed or allowed to continue by the Graduate Program Steering Committee based upon review of progress during the probationary semester.

**5. B. Epidemiology Option**

MS and PhD students may elect to complete an Option in Epidemiology.

- The words “Option: Epidemiology” will appear on students’ transcripts on the line underneath their major. The Option does not appear on the diploma.
- Students wanting to add the Epidemiology Option should notify the Graduate Program Office.
- It is recommended that verification of requirements for the Epidemiology Option have been completed (by a course audit) before students’ warrants are requested.

**MS Option in Epidemiology Requirements**

To complete the option, the student must:

1) Complete the following required courses:

   - **POP HLTH 795** Principles of Population Health Sciences (3 cr) **Fall**
   - **POP HLTH 797** Introduction to Epidemiology (3 cr) **Fall**
   - **POP HLTH 451** Introduction to SAS Programming for Population Health (2 cr) **Fall**
   - **POP HLTH 551** Introduction to Biostatistics for Population Health (3 cr) **Fall**
   - **POP HLTH 552** Regression Methods for Population Health (3 cr) **Spring**
   - **POP HLTH 798** Epidemiologic Methods (3 cr) **Spring**
   - **POP HLTH 805** Advanced Epidemiology: Causal Inference in Epidemiologic Studies (3 cr) **Fall**
   - or-
   - **POP HLTH 806** Advanced Epidemiology: The Practice of Epidemiology (3 cr) **Spring**
   - **POP HLTH 820** Research Seminar (1 cr)
   - **POP HLTH 990** Research (1-5 cr)

2) Complete a minimum of one credit in the responsible conduct of research/ethics (selected from the program’s list of approved courses in the Degree Requirements section)

3) Complete two approved epidemiology electives for 4-6 credits (selected from the program’s list of approved epidemiology electives below).

4) Complete a thesis addressing an epidemiologic research question (determined by the thesis committee chair)

5) Have a member of the epidemiology faculty as the chair of the thesis committee.
PhD Option in Epidemiology Requirements

To complete the option, the student must:

1) Complete the following required courses

- POP HLTH 795 Principles of Population Health Sciences (3 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 796 Introduction to Health Services Research (3 cr) Spring
- POP HLTH 797 Introduction to Epidemiology (3 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 451 Introduction to SAS Programming for Population Health (2 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 551 Introduction to Biostatistics for Population Health (3 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 552 Regression Methods for Population Health (3 cr) Spring
- POP HLTH 651 Advanced Regression Methods for Population Health (3 cr) Fall
- POP HLTH 798 Epidemiologic Methods (3 cr) Spring
- POP HLTH 805 Advanced Epidemiology: Causal Inference in Epidemiologic Studies (3 cr) Fall
- or-
- POP HLTH 806 Advanced Epidemiology: The Practice of Epidemiology (3 cr) Spring
- POP HLTH 820 Research Seminar (1 cr)
- POP HLTH 990 Research (1-5 cr)

2) Complete a minimum of one credit in the responsible conduct of research/ethics (selected from the program’s list of approved courses in the Degree Requirements section)

3) Complete three approved epidemiology electives for 6-9 credits (selected from the program’s list of approved epidemiology electives in below)

4) Complete a dissertation addressing an epidemiologic research question (determined by the dissertation committee chair) and

5) Have a member of the epidemiology faculty as the chair of the dissertation committee.

Approved Epidemiology Option Electives

The courses listed below represent the approved epidemiology option electives. The MS with the epidemiology option requires two of these courses totaling at least 4 credits, and the PhD requires three of these courses totaling at least 6 credits. Students may submit requests in writing to the Graduate Program Director through the Graduate Programs Coordinator proposing other courses that should be considered as fulfilling this requirement. For instance, POP HLTH 650 courses with a primary focus on epidemiologic issues/methods may be acceptable. Some 699 offerings may also be appropriate. Requests must include a course syllabus or outline as well as the rationale for why the course should be approved as an elective for the Epidemiology Option. Please note that it is advised that students confirm the availability of their preferred courses for the term noted within the Class Search. For example, not every class is offered each year or sometimes a course will be offered during a different term.

- PHS 621 Intro to Nutritional Epidemiology (1 cr)
- PHS 636 Public Health Genomics (1 cr)
- PHS 650 (sec 074) Special Topics in Environmental Health Epidemiology (2 cr)
- PHS 650 (sec 084) Connections: Epidemiology, Past, Present and Future (1 cr)
PHS 713 Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS (1 cr)
PHS 750 Cancer Epidemiology (2 cr)
PHS 784 Public Health Surveillance & Analytics (3 cr)
PHS 789 Principles of Environmental Health: A Systems Approach (3 cr)
PHS 791 Physical Activity Epidemiology (3 cr)
PHS 801 Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases (3 cr)
PHS 805 Advanced Epidemiology: Causal Inference in Epidemiological Studies (3 cr)*
PHS 806 Advanced Epidemiology: The Practice of Epidemiology (3 cr)*
PHS 807 Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology (2 cr)
PHS 810 Global Health Epidemiology (2 cr)
PHS 847 Cardiovascular Epidemiology (1 cr)
PHS 849 Genetic Epidemiology (3 cr)
PHS 955 Seminar in Physical Activity Epidemiology (1 cr)
MM&I 603 Clinical and Public Health Microbiology (5 cr)

* Note that either PHS805 or PHS806 is required for the Epidemiology option. The other can count as an elective.

5. C. Enrollment Credit Requirements

Read all the categories to see if more than one category applies to you. If more than one category applies, you must follow the instructions for the one that requires the higher number of credits. **Students must/will be removed from payroll if they do not comply with these campus registration requirements.** In all cases, courses numbered below 300, audits, and pass/fail (990s are okay) do not satisfy these enrollment requirements. Generally, summer enrollment is not required unless you are a RA, a trainee, or are defending/graduating. Please note that sometimes students need to have full-time status for purposes of financial aid, fellowships, scholarships, external funding, or other reasons only you would know; consider these possible factors when deciding how many credits to take.

**Non-dissertators** – at least two credits every fall and spring semester; this is not considered a full-time load if you require full-time status for some reason.

**Dissertators** -- exactly three 990 research credits every fall and spring semester (or the eight-week summer session if you are a summer RA, a trainee, defending or graduating); this is considered full-time status.

**TAs/PAs** – at least two credits every fall and spring semester for non-dissertators (this is not considered a full-time load if you require full-time status for some reason); exactly three 990 research credits every fall and spring semester for dissertators (this is a full-time load); there are no enrollment requirements for summer as long as you were enrolled (and did not graduate) in the previous spring semester or will enroll in the fall – if you do not satisfy this criterion you may not be eligible for a summer TA/PA position. A table specifying credit requirements can be found at: [https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/?policy=enrollmentrequirements](https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/?policy=enrollmentrequirements).

**RAs/Trainees/Fellows** – must carry a full load each term (including summer); for non-dissertators this would be at least 8 credits every fall and spring semester and at least two credits during the eight-week summer session (these two summer credits constitute full-time enrollment for loan deferral); for dissertators this would be exactly three 990 research credits every fall, spring, and eight-week summer session.
**Graduating Students** – at least 2 credits for MS students (this is not considered a full-time load if you require full-time status for some reason) and exactly three 990 research credits for PhD dissertators (this is considered full-time status); this requirement applies for the eight-week summer session if you plan to finish after the summer window.

**Full-time** – for non-dissertators, at least eight credits every fall and spring semester and at least four credits for the 8-week summer session; for dissertators, exactly three 990 research credits for every fall, spring, or eight-week summer session; please see the Graduate School’s Academic Guideline’s for exceptions to these rules: [https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/](https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/).

**Part-time** – for non-dissertators, less than eight credits every fall and spring semester and less than four credits for the 8-week summer session; for dissertators, exactly three 990 research credits for every fall, spring, or eight-week summer session (by principle, dissertators can’t be part-time).

**International Students** – you must have full-time status every fall and spring semester (see full-time status); full-time status for summer is not required unless you also fall into another category that does require it. Please see further requirements for those working on an F-1 visa at [https://iss.wisc.edu/students/current-students/f1-information/](https://iss.wisc.edu/students/current-students/f1-information/).

**Overload Students** – this is more than fifteen credits for the fall or spring term OR more than eight credits for the eight-week summer session; dissertators cannot have an overload; please see the Graduate School’s Academic Guideline’s Overloads section for more information: [https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/](https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/).

**Audit Students** – course audits are not free; they do not count toward program requirements and they do not count toward the credit requirements listed above. Please see the Graduate School’s Academic Guideline’s Auditing Courses section for more information: [https://kb.wisc.edu/ls/page.php?id=26734](https://kb.wisc.edu/ls/page.php?id=26734).

5. **D. Equivalency Credits and Waivers**

**Graduate Work from Other Accredited Graduate Institutions**

The MS/PhD Population Health Graduate Program will consider accepting a **maximum** of 12 credits of work completed as a **graduate student** at the UW-Madison or another accredited institution. Exceptions will not be granted.

The proposed equivalency or transfer credits must be a graduate course and no older than five years old at the time of admission into the program. Credits cannot be split for a proposed course and the number of credits that are accepted cannot be more than the number of credits assigned for the UW-Madison course equivalent (if one exists). In addition, a grade of “B” or better must be earned for each proposed course.

Requests for equivalency credits from other accredited graduate institutions are reviewed only **AFTER** admission into the Graduate Program. Students requesting a course equivalency, substitution or waiver must submit a **Course Transfer, Substitution & Waiver Form** (available from the GPC) for each requested course along with a course description and syllabus. These requests
will be presented to the Curriculum Committee for final approval/denial. Typically, credits earned at another accredited graduate institution count towards program electives and not required courses.

Special Student Credits

UW-Madison special students (i.e., non-degree seeking; not admitted to the Graduate School) may enroll in Population Health Sciences courses on a case-by-case basis with permission of the instructor and space permitting. The MS/PhD Population Health Graduate Program will consider applying no more than 12 UW-Madison special student credits toward completion of the MS or PhD degrees. Exceptions will not be granted. These must be graduate level courses taken after receiving an undergraduate degree.

Required courses completed as a special student within five years of application and with a grade of “AB” or “A” may be applied toward required courses upon request to the Graduate Programs Coordinator. Applicable required courses completed with a “B” grade or below and/or that are less than five years old can be submitted to the Graduate Programs Coordinator but will be reviewed by the Director of the Graduate Programs.

Requests for special student transfer credits as electives are reviewed only AFTER admission into the Graduate Program. Elective courses completed as a special student must be at a graduate course and no older than five years old at the time of admission into the program. Credits cannot be split for a proposed special student elective course. In addition, a grade of “B” or better must be earned for each proposed special student elective course. Students requesting a special student elective course to transfer are asked to submit their request in writing to their advisor and the Graduate Programs Coordinator.

VERY IMPORTANT: In all cases of credit being granted for courses taken as a special student, the student must pay the difference in tuition for the terms in question. Credits earned in a University Special student semester still appear in the transcript history as “University Special” student, but the Registrar’s Office will add a statement in the beginning of the transcript stating, “All credits taken in {term} as a University Special student have been accepted by the Graduate School toward a degree program” after the student has paid the difference in tuition.

5. E. Developing Pop Hlth 699 Independent Reading Agreements

The maximum number of Pop Hlth 699: Independent Reading, credits that may be applied toward a Population Health degree is three for masters and six for Doctoral students. Students are free to take more than three (MS) or six (PhD) 699 credits. However, the credits taken beyond these credit maximums will not count towards their degree.

There must be an agreement between the student and faculty member of record documenting the type, scope, and amount of work that will be completed. Generally, the 699 course agreement is an agreement for the student to read and/or write topic papers that would be worth 1-2 credits. As a rule of thumb, 15-45 hours of work/discussion constitute 1 credit; 30-90 hours of work/discussion constitute 2 credits; and 45-135 hours of work/discussion constitute 3 credits.

The 699/990 Authorization Form must be submitted to the Graduate Program Office to file in the student’s academic folder. It is not possible to register for Pop Health 699 or 990 without first submitting a signed Course Advising Form and a signed 699/990 Authorization Form.
are available through the department website.

To be authorized the student must:
- Obtain the consent of the instructor with whom they will be studying
- Submit the signed Course Advising Form AND the signed 699/990 Authorization Form to the Graduate Program Office
- Register for the course

5. F. Registering for Research Credits (Pop Hlth 990)

The maximum number of Pop Health 990 research credits that may be applied toward a Population Health degree is five for masters and eleven for Doctoral students. Students are free to take more than five (MS) or eleven (PhD) 990 credits, however, the credits taken beyond the credit maximum will not count towards their degree.

Generally, 990 credits are reserved for thesis or dissertation research and are typically taken for 2-3 credits (although as high as 8 credits is permitted). As a rule of thumb, 15-45 hours of work/discussion constitute 1 credit; 30-90 hours of work/discussion constitute 2 credits; and 45-135 hours of work/discussion constitute 3 credits.

It is not possible to register for Research 990 credits without first submitting a signed Course Advising Form and a signed 699/990 Authorization Form. The forms are available through the department website.

To be authorized, students must:

1) Obtain the consent of the instructor with whom they will be studying.
2) Submit the signed Course Advising Form AND the 699/990 Authorization Form to the Graduate Programs Coordinator and await a response indicating they have permissions to enroll.
3) Register for the course.

5. G. Requesting a Leave of Absence

Leave of absence (a break in enrollment of one or more terms) is not possible according to Graduate School rules. However, a student can submit an application for readmission within 5 years (MS) or 10 years (PhD) of dropping out. This involves paying the $71 application fee, re-entering basic information, and then selecting the "readmission" option on the application site. Once this is done, the Grad School checks student eligibility, and then sends the request to the department for approval. It should be noted that dissertators who are more than 5 years post prelim may have to retake this examination.

5. H. Requests for Exemptions or Changes to Program Requirements

Requests for course substitutions, exemptions, or other changes to the stated MS or PhD program requirements must be presented in writing to the Director of the Graduate Programs through the Graduate Programs Coordinator. The Director will review and determine the acceptability of all program proposals and proposed changes and exemptions.
5. I. Grievance Policy

With few exceptions, students should take the following steps to address a grievance related to a course grade or other Graduate Program related issue:

1. First, express the concern/s to the person directly responsible for the action at issue.

2. If the direct interaction with the person directly responsible for the action does not result in a satisfactory solution of the conflict, if the student does not believe that such a direct approach will work, or if the student feels uncomfortable making the attempt, the next step is to address the concern with the person holding supervisory responsibility (the Course Director in the case of a grievance with a teaching assistant, research program Director, Graduate Program Director or Department Chair) for the unit or area in which the student is located or in which the action occurred.

3. Grievances that cannot be resolved through either or both of the first two steps should be presented to the Population Health Graduate Program Steering Committee in writing. The Steering Committee will follow open meetings policies when reviewing grievances and may move to go into closed session for these discussions pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 19.85(1)(f). Decisions arrived at during closed session will be announced in open session and will be documented in the minutes. The committee may request additional written information from both parties or may invite the student to answer questions during the meeting.

4. The Steering Committee will recommend options for resolution. At that time, the student may accept and act on the recommendation/s or take further action outside the department as outlined in the Graduate School’s Academic Guidelines, Grievances and Appeals at [https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/?policy=grievancesandappeals](https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/?policy=grievancesandappeals).

It is expected that students will follow the procedures outlined above before seeking assistance from outside the department.

5. J. Minor in Population Health (Non-Population Health Majors Only)

PhD students enrolled in other programs may pursue a minor in Population Health. A minimum of 9 credits of course work consisting of required 3-credit courses and 1-3 credits of a Population Health elective must be completed. The minor will consist of the following Population Health Sciences courses:

- Pop Hlth 795 Principles of Population Health Sciences (3 cr) **Fall**
- Pop Hlth 797 Introduction to Epidemiology (3 cr) **Fall**
- At least one of the following research methods courses:
  - Pop Hlth 796 Introduction to Health Services Research (3 cr) **Spring**
  - Pop Hlth 798 Epidemiologic Methods (3 cr) **Spring**
- Students are strongly recommended to take Pop Hlth 552 Regression Methods for Population Health (3 cr) or Pop Hlth 651 Advanced Regression Methods for Population Health (3 cr) as an elective. However, other Population Health elective courses can be considered.
A likely course sequence for the minor in Population Health would be as follows:

Fall Semester: Pop Hlth 795  
               Pop Hlth 797  
Spring Semester: Pop Hlth 796 OR Pop Hlth 798  
               Pop Hlth Elective

Students who request exemptions and/or substitutions for required minor courses must appeal to the Director of the Graduate Program through the Graduate Programs Coordinator. In this case, the appeal must include a Proposed Minor Program Plan, which must be approved and signed by the Graduate Program Director.
Chapter 6: Student Resources

6. A. Financing Your Education

Please see the Financing Your Education section on the department website for more information about the following:

- General Financial Information
- Assistantships, Traineeships, and Fellowships
- Scholarships and Financial Aid
- Tuition and Fees

6. B. Career Development

Please see the Career Development section on the department website and the Planning Your Path to Graduate School Success section on the Graduate School website http://grad.wisc.edu/pd/ for more information about Career Paths, Professional Development and Job Search.

6. C. Student Directory/Profiles

We encourage every student to participate and create a student profile within our online student directory. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and experiences representing states throughout the nation as well as countries around the world. The profiles of our students illustrate the breadth of their knowledge, experiences, and interests that are leading them to become outstanding researchers and public health practitioners. These profiles also serve the purpose of providing the following benefits:

- Help students connect with one another to build community
- Help faculty put names with faces which builds community
- Those with on-campus funding opportunities can search here for potential student hires
- Employers can look here to recruit upcoming graduates for "real world" jobs
- Students gain experience cultivating their professional image

6. D. Student Connections

**Student Groups**

Please see the Student Connections section on the department website for helpful links and more information about the Population Health Student Organization (PHSSO) and Other Student Groups

**News and Events**

There are many places where students can learn about program-related news and events. Please see the Home page and Current Students section on the department website for helpful links and more information about items such as Department News/Events, Campus Seminars of Interest, and Population Health Annual Poster Session

6. E. Forms

Please see the Forms section on the department website for links to all forms.
Chapter 7: Faculty and Program Governance

7. A. Faculty (including Faculty and Committees)

**Population Health Sciences Departmental Faculty**

All tenured or tenure-track faculty with full or partial appointments in the Department of Population Health Sciences are referred to as "Departmental Faculty." Tenured or tenure-track faculty members are those with one of the following titles: Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor. Note that faculty with Affiliate, CHS and Adjunct titles are not Departmental faculty, although they may be Population Health Graduate Program faculty (see below). After Departmental Faculty retire or resign from the University, they retain Departmental Faculty Status for one year.

All Departmental faculty members are considered Population Health MS/PhD Program Faculty. Only Departmental faculty may serve as academic (initial course) advisors and thesis/dissertation committees require a departmental faculty member as either Chair or co-Chair. A list of Departmental Faculty is available at [https://pophealth.wisc.edu/people](https://pophealth.wisc.edu/people).

**Population Health MS/PhD Program Faculty**

The Population Health MS/PhD Program Faculty consists of all Departmental faculty in the Department of Population Health Sciences as well as nominated tenured and tenure track faculty from elsewhere in the university. Many Population Health Program faculty are also associated with other graduate programs and/or have affiliate appointments in Population Health Sciences. However, note that departmental affiliates are not automatically Population Health MS/PhD Program Faculty.

Membership in the Population Health Program faculty will be initiated and reviewed by members of the Steering Committee (the executive committee of the graduate program). Departmental faculty, Population Health Program faculty, and graduate students may suggest additional members to the Population Health Program Steering Committee. Nominees who are not already faculty in another graduate program also need to be voted on for affiliate status in Population Health Sciences, by the PHS Executive Committee. Membership in the Program faculty is subject to change over time to reflect changes in the campus and in the Population Health Sciences Department, and to meet the needs of particular students.

Graduate Program Faculty may serve as dissertation or thesis committee chairs. However, when the chair is not Departmental faculty, a Departmental faculty co-chair needs to be designated.

A list of Population Health MS/PhD Program Faculty is available at [https://pophealth.wisc.edu/grad/faculty](https://pophealth.wisc.edu/grad/faculty). However, please check with the Graduate Studies Coordinator for updates.

7. B. Program Governance and Faculty Committees

The MS/PhD Program in Population Health integrates faculty from across the University to train students in Population Health. The program is housed administratively within the Department of Population Health Sciences. The Chair of the Department of Population Health Sciences serves as or appoints the Director of the Graduate Program. All Program Committees report to the Steering Committee. In the case of the Curriculum Committee, it reports to both the Steering Committee and the Department Executive Committee. Committee governance responsibilities are described in the
following section.

**Population Health Steering Committee**

The Graduate Program Director will chair the Steering Committee. The Committee will include at least five members of the Departmental Faculty plus at least two members of the Program Faculty with core appointments outside the Department of Population Health Sciences and the Graduate Programs Coordinator. These members are voting members. In addition, the student organization will nominate a Population Health Graduate Program student to serve as a (non-voting) member.

The Steering Committee:

- Reviews program goals and performance and makes recommendations to the chair and Graduate Program Director for changes and improvements.
- Periodically updates the program requirements.
- Review program faculty membership annually and modify list if necessary.
- Receives, reviews, and makes recommendations on program-related student issues.

**Curriculum Committee**

The Chair of the Department of Population Health Sciences, in consultation with the Graduate Program Director, appoints a Department of Population Health Sciences faculty member to serve as Chair of the PHS Curriculum Committee. The Committee will include at least seven voting members drawn from the Department’s faculty, instructors of required courses, affiliate faculty and possibly other faculty and staff involved in teaching and mentoring of Population Health, Epidemiology or MPH students. At least one member will be a faculty member of either the Population Health or Epidemiology Program Faculty with a core appointment outside the Department of Population Health Sciences. The PHSSO will nominate and select students from each academic program to serve on this committee. In addition, the Graduate Programs Coordinator will be a voting member ex officio. Appointed members will serve three-year terms (subject to renewal) to be staggered so that no more than 1/3 of the membership turn over each year. The Population Health Sciences Student Organization will select student representation.

The Curriculum Committee reports to the Executive Committee of the Department of Population Health Sciences and to the Population Health and Epidemiology Steering Committees.

The PHS Curriculum Committee Charge:

- Considers curricular issues that affect the MS/PhD Graduate Programs in Population Health and Epidemiology, and the Global Health Certificate Program. Changes to program requirements are initiated and first approved by the respective Steering Committees, but subject to final review by the Curriculum Committee.
- Coordinates all new and continuing course offerings within the Department to ensure availability and compatibility with program requirements.
- Acts as liaison to other departments and faculty whose offerings are important to training students in the program.
- Approves and recommends new courses and course change proposals.
- Reviews course evaluations and grade distributions of each course offered through the Department of Population Health Sciences biennially and makes recommendations as appropriate. Additional information may be brought to the review.
• Reviews course syllabi and makes recommendations as needed, to assure compliance with standards set by the UW Curriculum Committee and the Provost.
• Approves course credit for non-PHS courses taken at other institutions or prior to enrollment in the Population Health or Epidemiology Graduate Programs. (UW substitutions while enrolled in these graduate programs are approved by the Graduate Program Director in consultation with course instructors.)

Qualifier Committee

The Committee must include at least three faculty members and the Graduate Programs Coordinator. All members are voting members. At least one faculty member will represent each subject area of the Qualifying Exam (HSR/Determinants, Epidemiology, and Biostatistics). One of the faculty members serves as the chair of the committee.

The Qualifier Committee:

• Develops and administers the annual PhD qualifying exam.
• Assures that the qualifying exam is representative of the Population Health PhD Program.
• Develops and annually reviews guidelines given to faculty for developing questions and to students for taking the exam.
• Develops and reviews rules for grading the qualifying exam.
• Historically tracks and annually reviews cumulative student pass/fail performance on the exam.

Population Health and Epidemiology Admissions Committee

The Committee includes at least seven voting members with at least one member of the Program Faculty with an appointment outside the Department of Population Health Sciences. There will be a MS/PhD student representative (who will not have voting privileges). The Committee Chair, in cooperation with the Graduate Program Director and Graduate Programs Coordinator, administer program and departmental funds that may be available to help fund students. At the discretion of the Committee Chair, certain issues may be put to the Committee via a secure website for deliberation when timeliness is at stake and/or when the volume of business is sufficiently small that calling a formal meeting of the Committee would not be deemed an efficient use of the Committee's time and effort. Applications received after the deadline will only be accepted from Medical Fellows and MDs and may be decided by the Director of the Graduate Program and the Chair of the Admissions Committee.

The Admissions Committee:

• Develops and implements annual recruitment plans.
• Selects new students for admission.
• Assigns initial course advisors for students accepted into the program

Student Review Committee

The PHS Student Review Committee is appointed and Chaired by the PHS Director of Graduate Programs to provide overall uniform written feedback to PHS students and their advisors in the context of expectations and opportunities.
The membership of the Committee includes the PHS Graduate Programs Coordinator and faculty from the Population Health and Epidemiology programs; the number of faculty will vary depending on workload. The committee meets in September each year to review progress and performance of all students enrolled in the Epidemiology and Population Health graduate programs in both the preceding spring and the current fall semesters.

The Graduate Programs Coordinator provides the committee with requested materials, which typically include transcripts, advising forms and seminar attendance. The review produces brief written feedback to each student and their advisor noting areas of progress and recommending topics for further advising discussion.

7. C. Departmental Directory

The department staff directory is available on the Population Health Sciences website and is updated regularly. Please notify Departmental Main Office if you have changes/corrections for staff directory entry and please notify the Graduate Program Office if you have changes/corrections for a student directory/profile entry (for more information please read section 6.C. of this Guide).
Chapter 8: Policies

The Department of Population Health Sciences endorses the policies of the Division of Student Life, the Graduate School and the School of Medicine and Public Health.

School of Medicine and Public Health policies can be found via: https://intranet.med.wisc.edu/academic-affairs/

Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards policies can be found via: https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/

Graduate School policies and procedures can be found via: https://grad.wisc.edu/academic-policies/

Please read over these policies carefully. Certain training modules are required and available at your MyUW website.