



GILLINGS SCHOOL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH  
Health Policy and Management

**DOCTORAL PROGRAM  
IN  
PUBLIC HEALTH EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP (DrPH)**

**HANDBOOK**

*Academic Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures*

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL**

***2024-2026 Academic Years***

*Revised August 29, 2024*

*Electronic version also on Canvas in DrPH Program Site*

These *Guidelines and Procedures* describe rules, regulations, policies, and procedures for the Doctoral Program in Health Leadership (DrPH), as established by the Department of Health Policy and Management and by the actions of the Administrative Board of the Graduate School. Each student should become familiar with the material pertaining to this program, and, together with a faculty advisor, make certain that the selected plan of study complies with the pertinent requirements.

In any instance of discrepancy between these guidelines and the Graduate School Handbook, the Graduate School Handbook takes precedence. The Handbook is on the Web: <http://handbook.unc.edu>

### Accreditation

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, masters, education specialist, and doctoral degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-479-4500 for questions about the accreditation of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

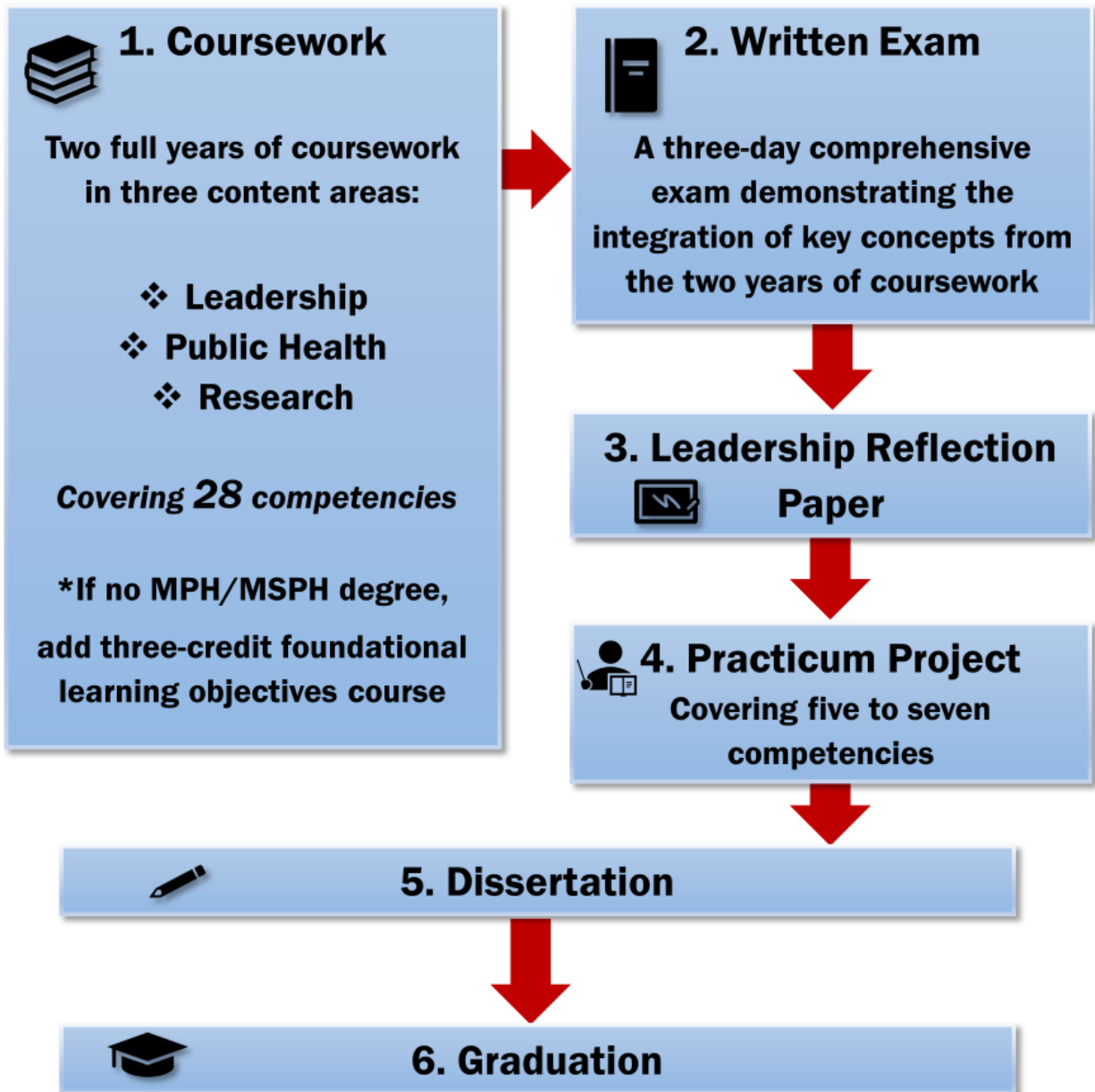
The Gillings School is fully accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). CEPH is an independent agency, recognized by the US Department of Education to accredit schools and programs of public health.

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## The 6 steps to a Gillings DrPH in Public Health Executive Leadership



GILLINGS SCHOOL OF  
GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Program Goal

The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) provides professional training preparing students to participate in and lead evidence-based practice and generate practice-based evidence; lead and effect change across systems, disciplines, professions and sectors; analyze, develop, implement and evaluate policies, programs and services that promote health, and communicate and promote public health as a common good. Graduates typically are employed by operating and managing community or public health programs at the local, state, national or international level and leading organizations and collaborations. A program of study leading to the DrPH degree is offered by the Department of Health Policy and Management in a synchronous online learning and periodic in-residence weeks format. Beginning in the academic year 2025-2026, the DrPH program will be offered jointly between the Departments of HPM and Public Health Leadership and Practice (PHLP).

The goal of this DrPH program is to accelerate the learning, knowledge and skill acquisition of highly motivated, mid- to senior-level leaders committed to improving the public's health such that they can maximize their positive leadership impact in their respective organizations, their field and across the broader systems that influence good health and wellness.

### Students

The program is designed for mid-to-senior level professionals working *at that level* for at least five years *and* having completed a graduate degree at least five years prior to enrollment. They should be working full-time with the potential, ambition and drive to become more influential health leaders. Work examples include, but are not limited to, local, state, tribal, territorial and international health officials; managers in government agencies; leaders within nonprofit, for-profit and non-governmental organizations; program officers and other managers working for foundations; as well as others working within the health field, which may include entrepreneurs and individuals working in nontraditional settings affecting the health of the public.

The DrPH program is focused on developing leaders who will improve the public's health in the United States and around the globe. This leadership focused doctoral program and its curriculum is relevant to people who work domestically and internationally. While most students are from the US, many students work and live overseas. Because graduates will lead applied efforts to improve the public's health, cohorts do not include individuals who intend to focus predominantly on research or aspire to academic teaching positions.

### DrPH Program Governance

All responsibility for the academic conduct, standards and requirements of the doctoral program rests with the faculty of the Department of Health Policy and Management (HPM) through its duly appointed and elected officers and representatives, in accordance with other school and university policies.

### Program Directors

The directors of the DrPH program are responsible for all administrative affairs of the program, including administration of academic conduct, standards and requirements. In addition, the directors are responsible for recommending admissions and financial support, matching dissertation chairs with the student, approving DrPH dissertation committee chairs and

members, advising these committees on interpretation of policies and requirements, ruling on all petitions in accordance with School of Public Health and Graduate School guidelines and fulfilling any other administrative duties or responsibilities delegated by the Department Chair.

**Program Directors:**

John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH

Professor of the Practice

Co-Director, Doctoral Program in Public Health Executive Leadership

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Assistant Professor

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Department of Public Health Leadership and Practice

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### Advisory Committee

The DrPH Advisory Committee advises the co-directors about all issues related to the DrPH program (e.g., admissions, curriculum, policy). The members, as of July 2024, are:

Joe Barker, DrPH, MPH (DrPH Cohort 14)

Emilee Coulter-Thompson, DrPH, LMSW (DrPH Cohort 15)

Sandra B. Greene, DrPH (DrPH Faculty)

Susan Helm-Murtagh, DrPH, MM (DrPH Cohort 2 and DrPH Faculty)

Tyonne Hinson, DrPH, MSN, RN, NE-BC (DrPH Cohort 9 and DrPH Adjunct Faculty)

Thomas C. (Tom) Ricketts, PhD (Faculty)

Mayra Serrano, DrPH, MPH (DrPH Cohort 14)

Stephanie Watson-Grant, DrPH (DrPH Cohort 7; Adjunct Faculty)

Ciara Zachary, PhD, MPH (Faculty)

### Graduate School Handbook

Additional information on the governance of and regulations for doctoral study are contained in the [Graduate School Handbook](#). Students are responsible for being familiar with its contents, and complying with rules, regulations, policies, procedures and deadlines. The core regulations have been incorporated in part in these Guidelines and Procedures, but additional, essential regulations are given only in the Graduate School Handbook. In instances of discrepancy between these Guidelines and Procedures and the Graduate School Handbook, the Graduate School Handbook takes precedence.

### Class Size

Typically, fifteen students are admitted annually.

### Program Costs

[Tuition and fee](#) costs vary year to year for in state and out-of-state students. Students pay per credit hour and take approximately 18 credit hours in each of years 1 and 2. In the following years, students generally take between 6-15 credit hours to finish their dissertation. In addition to tuition and the cost of books, students must provide their own computers and web cams per program specifications (information is provided to students separately and updated as necessary as the technology changes). Students will also be responsible for travel, lodging and food expenses related to three annual visits to campus (or an alternate location) in each of the first two years.

## Financial Aid

Most students fund the program themselves (self-funded with or without educational loans) or with employer contributions. There are very limited school awards available for this program, and the maximum usually does not exceed \$5,000 in any given year. It is important that prospective students have a funding plan in place when considering application.

UNC Scholarships and Student Aid has information on [financial assistance](#). When seeking out these resources, please note the DrPH program credit hours (3 to 7 credit hours per semester) often do not meet full-time status and as a primarily distance program, resources for residential students do not apply.

The University does have special [military tuition benefits](#).

As a state school, there are certain requirements to be met for [in-state residency](#) and students should be aware of those when they apply and register for classes.

## Admission Requirements

- A prior master's or doctoral degree (not necessarily in public health) earned *at least* five years prior to enrollment.
- Significant post-graduate experience in the health field, including at least five years in a mid-to-senior level leadership position, preferably with substantial management and leadership responsibility.
- Demonstrated potential, with motivation to obtain senior-level positions and passion to improve the public's health.
- Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or better in prior graduate study.

While all students are expected to be academically qualified for doctoral level study, special emphasis is placed on work history, demonstrated leadership, and a practice-oriented career commitment.

**Also note:** Students without a Master of Public Health (MPH) or Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) from a Council on Education Public Health (CEPH) accredited school or program of public health must successfully complete an additional three credit foundational learning objective course (which is offered online) or waive out of the requirement. This course ([SPHG 600](#)) need not be completed before matriculating, but it must be completed before graduation; most students take the course in the summer *prior* to their first fall semester.

## DrPH Advising and Chairs of Dissertation

The program directors serve as the faculty advisor for the program, guide the students in interpreting course and program requirements, and help to identify potential dissertation chairs. Students generally identify dissertation chairs in the late spring or summer of their first year, based on mutual scholarly and practice interests (see more about the dissertation process below). The chair will assist the student in their dissertation research and help identify other dissertation committee members. In addition, the HPM academic coordinator is available to work with students on general program matters and course registration issues.



## Program Design

In each of the first two years, students come to Chapel Hill for five days in mid-August, between fall and spring semesters (mid-December), and between spring and summer semesters (mid-May, usually right after Mother's Day/spring commencement). Note that travel may be required on Mother's Day or other holidays. At times, an alternate site may be chosen, which may require travel outside the U.S. or North Carolina. The program has historically gone to London every other year in May and consideration is being given to traveling to a low to moderate income country in the future. The next trip is anticipated in May 2025. Students are given ample time to make travel arrangements in these cases. Otherwise, learning takes place away from the UNC campus. Students connect to faculty and peers mainly via computer.

The DrPH program is a year-round program. In the first two years, students have class almost every week of the year (including summers), except for about three weeks in December/early January.

We make substantial use of technologies (Zoom for videoconferencing and Canvas for learning management system) that allow students and faculty to interact productively and that support live video, audio, and data sharing. The technologies can also be used to connect guest speakers with students without having to bring everyone together in the same room. NOTE: Students must have a reliable Internet connection. It is recommended that students use headsets or earbuds if they choose to connect to class audio using their computers, especially if they will be in a noisy environment during class. Connecting via phone is also an option, but it is recommended that international users connect via computer audio to avoid unexpected phone charges.

The executive format functions as follows: During their first visit in August, students begin their studies with a week on campus during which they are oriented to the program, the Department, School, and the University. They are introduced to the first semester curriculum and are trained in using the software and library resources. The students then return home for the balance of the semester.

Students receive material (recorded videos, narrative case studies, datasets, readings, etc.) via the Web each week. They study these materials on their own but must have completed required tasks before a regularly scheduled class session when they will convene live via Internet video. These three-hour synchronous learning sessions are divided into the components of the curriculum and led by faculty members responsible for each component, sometimes including guest speakers.

First-year students meet for class on Tuesdays; second-year students meet for class on Wednesdays. Class times typically are 4-7 pm Eastern Time. Students are expected to be in attendance for all class sessions and arrange work, travel and personal commitments around class time.

Students return to Chapel Hill between semesters to conclude work on the preceding semester and begin work on the next semester's curriculum. This process is repeated throughout the first twenty four months of the curriculum. All students move through the curriculum together at the same pace. Every DrPH course in the first two years is required of every student; we do not waive students out of coursework. Some students are experts on some of the subject matter taught in courses. Nonetheless, every student must take all the same courses. We want students to share their expertise with others in the cohort. We believe active interaction among students is an important part of good adult learning.

The focus in the third year is on writing the dissertation, although students are also free to take electives. We expect students to do their best to proceed through the program with their cohort and to defend their dissertation within five years of matriculation. At the discretion of the program director and dissertation chair, that time frame may be extended, but in no event will students be permitted to extend their time more than eight years from matriculation without a Graduate School exception.

Note that participation in the doctoral program *requires* attendance at six on-campus sessions during years 1 and 2 of the program. (It is possible that not more than once each year, the on-campus visit will take place in a location outside Chapel Hill, including elsewhere in the U.S. or abroad.) Exceptions to attendance will be made only in the case of 1) illness or death in the family, 2) mandatory organizational obligation (one time only), acknowledged in writing by employer, or 3) challenges with obtaining an entry visa. **We understand that important professional and personal opportunities may conflict with scheduled on-campus sessions. However, priority must be given to attendance at on-campus sessions. Only in rare cases will other extraordinary circumstances be considered by the program directors.**

Similarly, *on-time* attendance is required at all weekly class sessions throughout years 1 and 2 of the program. Students are expected to arrange travel, vacation and work commitments to accommodate class session times. *Failure to attend class sessions and/or on-campus (or scheduled off-site, in-person sessions held at alternative sites) as specified or chronic tardiness for class sessions may disqualify a student from continuation in the program.* Classes are set up in sequence and each is offered only once a year. Therefore, if a student does not complete a class on schedule, they will have to wait one year before the course is offered again.

## Academic Calendar

This program consists of three semesters in the first two years of coursework, making it a calendar year program. Here is the official [University Academic Calendar](#), however, it is important to note that the DrPH *class* semesters are adjusted from the University calendar. For the class schedule see [Appendix B](#). Please note that the registrar calendars are the calendars we follow for important registrar events (e.g., registration, dates to drop classes, etc.) In addition, the program does not have final exams. All class syllabi indicate all assignments and final papers (if any).



# DRPH DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

## Competencies

The UNC Doctoral Program in Health Leadership is designed to give students certain competencies through their coursework and the completion of their dissertation. Competencies define what students should know and be able to do upon completion of their degree program. Competencies guide our curriculum planning process and serve as a measure against which student achievement is assessed. The competencies offered in this program include foundational DrPH competencies identified by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) required by the School's accrediting body, and additional competencies designed to impart the skills and knowledge needed for a leadership concentration. These later competencies were identified by members of the DrPH Advisory Committee and feedback from past cohorts. Please refer to the competency matrix ([Appendix A](#)) to review the learning experiences through which students in the DrPH develop and attain these competencies.

## Coursework

The program curriculum is summarized in the table below and in [Appendix B](#) for first year students and [Appendix C](#) for second year students. A checklist for degree requirements is included in [Appendix D](#). Students in this degree program must also demonstrate core public health competencies, as described in the [Gillings Schoolwide Handbook](#).

### DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN PUBLIC HEALTH EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP (DrPH) CURRICULUM

#### CONTENT AREAS

(Credit hours in parentheses)

	LEADERSHIP	PUBLIC HEALTH	RESEARCH*
<b>Year 1</b>			
<b>Fall</b>	HPM 820: Organizational Leadership Theory and Practice (2) HPM 810: Leadership in Public Health Law and Ethics (2)** HPM 970: Training and Pedagogy for Health Leaders (1)	HPM 860: Population Perspectives for Health and The Research Process (2)***	
<b>Spring</b>	HPM 965: Cultural Humility for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Health Leaders (1)**	HPM 966: Systems Thinking and Collective Impact (1)	HPM 953: Essentials of Practice-based Research (2) ** HPM 951: Literature Review and Appraisal (2)
<b>Summer</b>	HPM 823: Global Health (1)**	HPM 963: Program Evaluation for Health Leaders (2)*** HPM 969: Program Planning and Design (1)	HPM 945: Dissertation Preparation and Planning (2)

	LEADERSHIP	PUBLIC HEALTH	RESEARCH*
<u>Year 2</u>			
<b>Fall</b>	HPM 958: Financial Leadership (3)	HPM 964: Leadership for Effective Implementation(1)	HPM 956: Fundamentals of Research Methods and Analysis (3)
<b>Spring</b>	HPM 959: Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (2) HPM 968: Managing the Health Workforce (1)	HPM 759: Health Policy Analysis and Advocacy for Health Leaders (2)**** HPM 967: Quality Improvement (1)	
<b>Summer</b>	HPM 962: Marketing and Public Relations for Health Leaders (2) HPM 957: Crisis Leadership (1)	HPM 940: Leadership in Health Informatics (1)****	
<u>Year 3</u>			
<b>Fall</b>			HPM 994: Doctoral Research and Dissertation (3)
<b>Spring</b>			HPM 994: Doctoral Research and Dissertation (3)
<b>Summer</b>			

\* First year research courses help with dissertation proposal preparation. Second year courses focus on conducting the dissertation.

\*\* Also under "Public Health."

\*\*\* Also under "Research."

\*\*\*\* Also under "Leadership."

## Applied Practice Experience (Practicum) and Reflection Paper

DrPH students are expected to engage in one or more applied practice experiences (APE) in which they must complete at least one project that is meaningful for an organization and that advances public health practice. The APE provides students an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills being acquired through their coursework and further develop and demonstrate attainment of program competencies. Relevant organizations include governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial or for-profit settings, and may be the student's own work setting (but NOT part of their usual job duties). The work product may be a single project or a set of related projects that demonstrate depth of competence. It may be a discrete experience or integrated into program coursework.

The APE must be approved, in advance, by the program directors, and must cover between five to seven foundation and/or concentration-specific competencies. At least one must be from the leadership, management and governance domain or from the unique to UNC DrPH program competencies domain found in [Appendix A](#). In addition to the APE deliverable, a separate APE reflection paper is required.

Students may identify projects in classes to meet their APE requirement, if the project identified is an application of the classroom learning to a "real world" setting (including the student's worksite that would not be a normal part of their job responsibilities or for another external organization).

Alternatively, students can design their own APE not directly tied to any specific class if the APE meets the other requirements.

(Note: the APE is oftentimes referred to as the practicum.)

## Final Leadership Reflection

As this is a leadership focused doctoral program, students begin their coursework by developing their personal leadership framework (fall, year 1 in HPM 820). Students are required to write a separate leadership reflection paper at the end of their second summer to describe how their leadership framework has changed over the two years of DrPH coursework.

## Culminating Experiences

The DrPH program requires two culminating, integrative learning experiences: the successful completion of a written comprehensive exam and a dissertation.

### Written Comprehensive Examination

A written comprehensive examination is administered at the end of the second year of the program after a student successfully completes all coursework, usually in late August. The examination integrates key concepts from the overall program curriculum.

Students have three days in which to take the exam. The exam components include health services research methods, finance and strategy and integrated public health practice and leadership drawing from all coursework. Students are given sample exam questions in the Spring semester of their second year. Advance readings for the actual examination are provided to students at least one week before the exam period starts and the process is discussed at the beginning of the summer semester before the examination. Note that this and all other examinations are given under the University Honor Code.

Students are expected to read, understand, and follow the policies set forth in the [Instrument of Student Judicial Governance](#). A Department-specific policy governing the comprehensive exam is contained in a separate document available from the HPM academic coordinator.

### Dissertation

The DrPH dissertation is the ultimate academic demonstration of a student's competency. It requires the student to apply key aspects of the curriculum to improving the understanding or resolving of an important public health-related issue.

The dissertation requires that the student identify a public health issue or problem of interest to them that they can personally impact, complete a literature review to understand what is known about the problem and what still needs studying, design a research study to further the knowledge on that topic, synthesize the results into actionable findings, and develop a plan for change that the student is intending to implement. At a minimum, this requires the students to use all or parts of these CEPH foundational competencies:

- Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed method, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue (Competency 2 demonstrated in their methods section);
- Propose human, fiscal, and other resources to achieve a strategic goal (Competency 12 demonstrated in their plan for change);
- Design a system-level intervention to address a public health problem (Competency 14 demonstrated in their plan for change); and
- Integrate scientific information, legal and regulatory approaches, ethical frameworks, and varied stakeholder interest in policy development and analysis (Competency 16 demonstrated throughout the dissertation paper).

In addition, the dissertation requires the student to use all or parts of these concentration competencies:

- Apply systems thinking approaches to learn about and inform collaborative action targeting complex public health problems (demonstrated in their topic, methods, and discussion chapters) and
- Apply the principles of implementation research and practice to successfully integrate evidence-based public health practices into community settings (demonstrated in their plan for change).

Students integrate these competencies by 1) designing a coherent research proposal, 2) writing a coherent dissertation paper that demonstrates their ability to apply that knowledge into a plan for change and 3) delivering a coherent oral defense of their dissertation work which includes a presentation and question and answer session with their dissertation committee and members of the academy. Ultimately the dissertation committee of five members, at least three of whom are Gillings faculty, determines whether the dissertation product meets the standards of the academy.

Students are strongly encouraged to publish their research, which is usually done after defending their dissertation, so the field can benefit from the research and its findings. Students must register for dissertation credits (HPM 994 for 3 credits) each fall and spring semester after they complete their coursework, until they defend their final dissertation. Students need at least two semesters of HPM 994 to graduate (6 credits). Students do not need to register for HPM 994 in the summer semesters unless they plan on defending their proposal or final dissertation in the summer session.

### Dissertation Committee

Students must have a five-member dissertation committee.

- The chair must be a faculty member in HPM AND be either a “Regular Graduate” (AKA: tenure track) professor OR a professor with “Special Appointment”. To see who qualifies, go to the [graduate school faculty designation page](#) and search the name of your potential faculty chair in the “List of regular graduate faculty” and “List of special appointed regular graduate faculty.”
- Two additional members MUST be from the Gillings School of Global Public Health AND be either a “Regular Graduate” (AKA: tenure track) professor OR a professor with “Special Appointment”. To see who qualifies, go to the [graduate school faculty designation page](#) and search the name of your potential faculty committee member in the “List of regular graduate faculty” and “List of special appointed regular graduate faculty.”
- The remaining two committee members may be from anywhere in the University, another university, in a field of practice relevant to your dissertation, or your place of employment (but can't have a conflict of interest).

We DO encourage that you get people from the “field” who know your topic, who can assist you in recruitment of subjects, and who can help you formulate and implement your plan for change. These outside practitioners must be approved by the program directors and the graduate school. If approved, the graduate school will appoint the practitioners as fixed term graduate faculty for purposes of participating on a dissertation committee. Generally, the outside practitioners need to have a terminal degree (highest degree in their field), although exceptions can be made when the person is uniquely qualified to serve on the committee. To have these outside practitioners approved, send an email to the dissertation chair, program director, and academic coordinator along with a resume/cv/biographical sketch and a paragraph outlining the expertise the outside

practitioner(s) bring to your topic area. Also, please disclose any relationship(s) you may have with the proposed committee member.

### Guidelines for the Dissertation

Students have flexibility in designing a dissertation project, but all will highlight a potential strategy for addressing a current or past health policy or public health issue, leadership or organizational issue or problem. The dissertation will outline a plan to guide implementation of systems, organizational or policy change. The objective of the DrPH dissertation is to combine research with an understanding of the role of leadership in creating an implementation plan to improve the public's health.

Students have two options for dissertation formatting. One is the traditional, single monograph DrPH dissertation. The second option is to prepare three manuscripts for publication, tying them together with opening and closing chapters for submission to the UNC Graduate School. Those who are interested in the three-paper option should consult with the program directors and dissertation chair to determine whether the alternative is feasible and desirable in their case. Choosing between the traditional DrPH dissertation format and the three-paper option requires consideration of the number of research questions that merit separate treatment in stand-alone manuscripts. There should be agreement at the end of a successful oral proposal defense as to what the format will be. The three-paper option is not appropriate for all students, and the choice of whether to use this option does not reflect the quality of the dissertation.

### IRB

The University's [Institutional Review Board](#) must review *all* research involving human subjects (including dissertations and class research projects). Students must submit to the IRB, even if the planned research may be exempt as defined for certain human subjects research by the Code of Federal Regulations. **Only** the IRB can determine whether research is exempt. It is essential to receive IRB approval prior to beginning research. Approval is not given retroactively for any research.

The University requires that all faculty, staff and students who are engaged in the planning, conduct or analysis of research at UNC-Chapel Hill involving human subjects complete an [Training Initiative \(CITI\)](#). ***This training will occur in conjunction with HPM 956 during fall semester of year 2.*** The Collaborative IRB is a web-based training package on issues relating to human subjects research. The CITI web site is maintained by the University of Miami, with content developed by a national consortium. CITI contains modules on topics like informed consent, vulnerable populations, ethical principles, and IRB regulations. Each module has a short quiz at the end to assess understanding. Thousands of institutions worldwide are using CITI for their mandatory training.

### Conflict of interest

The University requires students engaged in research to successfully complete an [online training on conflict of interest](#) every four years. Students who are engaged in research for their dissertation which involves people, resources or intellectual property associated with their workplace may have a financial conflict of interest. The student will be required to disclose that potential conflict to the University and may need to work out a management plan with the University to manage their potential conflict. ***This training will occur in conjunction with HPM 945 during summer semester of year 1.***

## Outline of single monograph HPM DrPH dissertations

Chapter 1: The Topic. The topic must be *innovative* and *significant*. “Innovative” means the dissertation must either identify new approaches to existing or past problems or apply existing approaches to new problems. “Significant” means that the dissertation’s implementation plan must have the potential to create one or more important improvements in the health of the public, or that the identification and understanding of past failures and successes illuminates principles of organizational change or policy implementation that have application in improving future health policy.

Most dissertations will focus on either:

- A change in an organization or a set of organizations that improves the organizations’ ability to improve the public’s health; or
- Program development, policy development or implementation of evidence-informed strategies at the local, regional, state, or national level aimed at improving the public’s health.

The topic must be able to be stated as a research question.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. The dissertation must produce a scholarly analytical synthesis that demonstrates the student’s ability to critically evaluate the relevant literature on the issue or problem. The primary goal of the literature review is to identify the state of current knowledge on the research topic that helps to identify the research question for the dissertation.

Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter identifies and describes the appropriate tools to study the issue being examined. It usually includes a conceptual model on which the topic is being examined. The methods used in the dissertation fall under the general rubric of “mechanisms for social change” and may include one or more of the following, as is appropriate for the topic: quantitative data analysis (including large data sets), qualitative analysis, mixed methods, or policy analysis.

Chapter 4: Results. This chapter describes the results of the analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion. This chapter discusses the results in context of the research question, the implications for practice and/or policy and future research and study limitations.

Chapter 6: The Plan for Change (e.g., Implementation Plan). This section is the centerpiece of the DrPH dissertation and should be comprehensively detailed. This chapter includes recommendations and an explicit strategy for addressing the issue with a focus on the resources, players and contextual parameters affecting the change and should include a proposed evaluation methodology. Students should identify an appropriate framework to ground their plan for change. For example, students who are trying to change their own organizational policies or practices may choose to use Kotter’s 8 steps for transforming organizations. Those who want to change public policies may use a policy advocacy framework. Others who want to implement best practices identified during the dissertation may choose to use an implementation framework. Students may use more than one type of change framework for their plan for change. The plan for change should be built around the chosen change framework and include both the components the student plans to implement, as well as the components that others will need to implement. It is intended for the student to implement the plan for change, although that is not required for completing the program.



The plan for change should combine the various elements of the curriculum in a coherent and comprehensive strategy for making organizational or policy change. Topics covered in the curriculum that should be incorporated as applicable include communications, informatics, policy analysis, social forecasting, scheduling, negotiation, assessment, planning, assurance, public relations, marketing and evaluation.

Appendices: For details not included in the main text, such as informed consents, research tools (surveys, focus group discussion guides, detailed supporting tables/figures, etc).

### Outline of Three Paper Option DrPH Dissertations

Chapter 1: General introduction to the research. The topic must be innovative and significant as with the traditional dissertation.

Most dissertations will focus on either:

- A change in an organization or a set of organizations that improves the organizations' ability to improve the public's health; or
- Program development, policy development, or implementation of evidence-informed strategies designed to improve the public's health.

This chapter should include an overview of the aims, main supporting literature, study rationale, and methods.

Chapters 2-4: One manuscript per chapter. Each manuscript should be a journal length paper that is written and formatted according to target journal requirements.

Chapter 5: Conclusions. This final chapter describes the contribution of the three papers as a whole.

Chapter 6: The Plan for Change (Implementation Plan). This section is the centerpiece of the DrPH dissertation and should be comprehensively detailed. This chapter synthesizes findings across dissertation papers and includes recommendations for change. The plan for change should include an explicit strategy for addressing the issue with a focus on the resources, players, and contextual parameters affecting the change. Students should identify an appropriate framework to ground their plan for change. For example, students who are trying to change their own organizational policies or practices may choose to use Kotter's 8 steps for transforming organizations. Others, who want to change public policies may use a policy advocacy framework. Others who want to implement best practices identified during the dissertation may choose to use an implementation or dissemination framework. Students may use more than one type of change framework for their plan for change. The plan for change should be built around this change framework and include both the components the student plans to implement, as well as the components of the plan that others will need to help implement. It is intended for the student to implement the plan for change, although that is not required for completing the program.

The plan for change should combine the various elements of the curriculum in a coherent and comprehensive strategy for making organizational or policy change. Topics covered in the curriculum that should be incorporated as applicable include communications,

informatics, policy analysis, social forecasting, scheduling, negotiation, assessment, planning, assurance, public relations, marketing, and evaluation.

Appendices: For details not included in the Chapters 2-4 journal articles, but necessary for the detail traditionally included in a dissertation, students should use additional appendices.

## Oral Comprehensive Examinations – The Dissertation *Proposal Defense* and The Final Defense

The committee reviews and approves the dissertation proposal, provides guidance to the student in conducting the dissertation, and ultimately judges whether the dissertation meets the criteria for scholarly work as outlined above.

The dissertation proposal defense ideally occurs in the spring or summer semester of the second year. This will help keep the student on track to complete the program in three years.

Specific areas of focus include the significance and appropriateness of the issue chosen, the appropriateness and execution of any conceptual model identified, the methodology used, whether the results logically follow from the findings, the completeness and feasibility of the proposed implementation strategy and evaluation plan.

For all dissertations, the committee should be able to answer relevant questions about the dissertation, such as:

Overall Dissertation Evaluation Criteria:

- Considered as a whole, is the dissertation, its methods, and findings significant and innovative?
- Is the literature review thorough and applicable, and has it been synthesized effectively?
- Are relevant leadership theories cited and explained?

Needs or Problem Statement:

- Is the need for the project clearly identified?

Goals and Evaluation Criteria:

- Does the dissertation include a description of policy goals and relevant evaluation measures (e.g., cost, resources needed to implement, feasibility of implementation, political feasibility)?

Data or Policy Analysis:

- Have appropriate research and data analysis methods been employed? (For example, has the student used appropriate quantitative, qualitative, or policy analysis methods to evaluate competing options?)
- Does the project describe how populations and communities will be affected by the change? Are the pros and cons in terms of effect on populations thoroughly analyzed?
- Are considerations of the ethical implications of the change adequate and appropriate?

Recommendations:

- Are the recommendations reasonable and based on the research findings?
- Are the recommendations likely to lead to health improvements?

Implementation Plan (“Plan for Change”):

(Students should address some or all the following, as appropriate to the dissertation):

- What resources (financial, human, and other) are/were needed to implement and maintain the change?

- Has the student grounded their plan for change in an appropriate change framework?
- Have the effects of the laws and policies that bear on this issue been adequately addressed?
- Are/Were the relevant policy makers and stakeholders identified? What are/were their positions? Has the student described a plan to obtain stakeholder support and/or reduce stakeholder opposition?
- Is/Was the proposed schedule for the plan for change realistic? Does/Did it make sense in the context of the project's budget and resources?
- Have the appropriate policy analyses, social forecasts, assessments, negotiations, communications, and other applications methods been identified and integrated appropriately into the plan?

NOTE: Most students are not able to implement their plan for change before they defend their dissertation. Thus, the dissertation committee members must assess the potential “real world” utility of the plan for change, and whether it can be implemented in the future. Students are expected to implement their plan of change, even if it's after they graduate. This is one of their contributions to the field.

Dissertation chairs have some leeway in the actual format of the final oral dissertation defense. However, the following process is typical:

#### Doctoral Defenses—Procedures

1. Convene the defense with introductions (as needed), greetings/welcome, and procedure/plan for proposal or final defense.
2. Hold optional closed executive session of committee to clarify any remaining initial concerns before commencing defense.
3. Candidate's presentation, 20-30 minutes. Questions from committee/audience should be held to the end of the presentation, unless for clarification only.
4. Committee members should be provided with electronic copy of any slides.
5. Questions to candidate first from committee, then audience, if any, (for the final defense), or Questions to candidate first from audience, if any, then from committee, and the questions from the committee can be either in (a) open or (b) closed session.
6. Candidate excused from room following all questions.
7. Hold closed executive session of committee to discuss the dissertation and the defense; additional requirements, if any; and outcome.
8. Invite candidate back into the meeting and brief on the outcome.
9. If successful defense, obtain signatures on doctoral dissertation completion form and dissertation cover sheets. (The candidate is responsible for ensuring that the chair and committee have the proper dissertation forms to sign.)
10. Detailed feedback by doctoral committee chair immediately, or within 1-2 days, regarding any corrections, necessary changes, elaborations, and any additional work required for dissertation.
11. Assure that the committee delegates authority to chair to determine whether the necessary revisions are successfully completed.

#### Chair responsibilities for the Defense:

1. Assure that all committee members are on board ahead of the final defense. If a favorable outcome, albeit with minor changes or elaborations, is not a forgone conclusion then do not hold defense.
2. Run defense efficiently, fairly, and comprehensively.

3. Take notes during defense of all committee member (and audience) questions to provide feedback to candidate. This is particularly important regarding corrections, changes, elaborations, and any additional work required.



4. Celebrate completion of doctoral studies!

**Note: Candidates must be registered for HPM 994 during the semester they defend. If the student plans to defend during the summer, they must be registered for dissertation credit hours during the summer session.** Dissertation credit hours are 3 credits.

(Source: adapted from John Paul, PhD)

### Progress Report for Students Enrolled in Dissertation Hours (HPM 994)

It is the student's responsibility to keep their dissertation chair and DrPH program director informed of their progress and any situations that cause deviations from their dissertation timeline. It is good practice to keep in touch with the chair at least monthly. Often, students set up regular meeting times with their chair—such as once or twice per month—to check in and report on progress.

**Students registered for HPM 994 must complete a bi-annual progress report and submit it to their dissertation chair and the DrPH program director at the end of May and December every year.** The report form will be sent to students by the program directors.

***Students are expected to move with their cohort and to defend their dissertation within three to four years of matriculation. Extension of the program beyond five years is not guaranteed and is subject to the discretion of the program director and dissertation chair. When there are extenuating circumstances, it may be possible to extend work in the program to not more than eight years from matriculation, unless an exemption is obtained from The Graduate School.***

### Dissertation Grading Rubric

The following grading rubric has been approved for guidance to faculty and students in assigning grades for HPM 994 Dissertation credits.

Grade	Plan/Timeline	Communication and Organization	Products
H	<p>Student:</p> <p>Negotiates a realistic timeline for completing their dissertation work that fits with their work/study/life situation and is agreed to in writing with their chair. For students working full-time, negotiates a realistic plan for that semester based on current work situation.</p> <p>Works with their chair in a timely manner if that plan requires revision.</p>	<p>Student:</p> <p>Initiates regular communications with their chair (at least monthly) and with the committee as appropriate.</p> <p>Responds to requests from their chair within 48 hours or as otherwise agreed.</p> <p>Proactively engages chair in problem solving.</p> <p>Organizes meetings effectively (e.g., materials in advance, clear agenda, well-formed questions, and potential solutions)</p>	<p>Products:</p> <p>Are well written, well-conceived and delivered on time, if not early.</p> <p>Reflect <i>excellent</i> integration of the doctoral coursework and guidance given by the chair and committee.</p> <p>Incorporate any additional knowledge they need for their dissertation project.</p> <p>If student successfully defends the dissertation and/or receives an award for their dissertation work, an H should be considered for the defense semester.</p>
P	<p>Student:</p> <p>Negotiates a realistic timeline for completing their dissertation work that fits with their work/study/life situation and is agreed to in writing with their chair. For a students working full-time, negotiate a realistic plan for that semester based on current work situation.</p> <p><i>Usually</i> works with their chair in a timely manner if that plan requires revision.</p>	<p>Student:</p> <p>Initiates regular communications with their chair (at least monthly) and with the committee as appropriate.</p> <p>Responds to requests from their chair within 48 hours or as otherwise agreed.</p> <p><i>Most often</i> proactively engages chair in problem solving.</p> <p>Organizes meetings effectively (as noted in the section above) if not consistently.</p>	<p>Products:</p> <p>Are <i>generally</i> well written, well-conceived and are <i>usually</i> delivered on time.</p> <p>Reflect <i>good</i> integration of the doctoral coursework and guidance given by the chair and committee.</p> <p>Incorporate additional knowledge they need for their dissertation project.</p> <p>Are <i>appropriate</i> for doctoral independent work.</p>

Grade	Plan/Timeline	Communication and Organization	Products
L	<p>Student:</p> <p>Negotiates a realistic timeline for completing their dissertation work that fits with their work/study/life situation and is agreed to in writing with their chair. For a student working full-time, negotiates a realistic plan for that semester based on current work situation.</p> <p>Does <i>not</i> renegotiate their timeline with their chair in a timely manner if that plan requires revision.</p>	<p>Student:</p> <p>Does <i>not</i> initiate regular communications with their chair (at least monthly).</p> <p>Regularly does <i>not</i> respond to requests from their chair within 48 hours but does within a couple of weeks. Exceptions to this can be made if an emergency or other situation where this timeframe for response is not realistic and the chair knows about it (e.g., full-time job and responding to a pandemic, outbreak, or other crisis).</p> <p>Regularly does <i>not</i> bring potential solutions to chair when problem solving.</p> <p>Does not organize meetings effectively</p>	<p>Products:</p> <p>Are often <i>not</i> well written, well-conceived and are often delivered <i>late</i>.</p> <p>Take considerable rework to integrate the knowledge that was to be acquired during the doctoral coursework and guidance given by the chair and committee.</p> <p>Incompletely incorporate additional knowledge they need for their dissertation project.</p>
F	<p>Student has <i>not</i> negotiated a realistic timeline for completing their dissertation work that fits with their work/study/life situation. For student working full-time, does <i>not</i> negotiate a realistic plan for that semester based on current work situation.</p>	<p>Student:</p> <p>Does <i>not</i> initiate regular communications with their chair (at least monthly).</p> <p><i>Fails</i> to respond to requests from their chair at all (i.e., requests simply go unanswered).</p>	<p>Products:</p> <p>Have not made agreed-upon progress on the dissertation as negotiated or re-negotiated with their faculty chair.</p> <p>Are <i>poorly</i> written, ill-conceived, and are delivered late, if at all.</p>

Grade	Plan/Timeline	Communication and Organization	Products
		<p><i>Fails</i> to engage in proactive problem solving, expecting the chair to do the work.</p> <p>Does not organize meetings effectively</p>	<p>Reflect <i>poor</i> integration of the doctoral coursework and guidance given by the chair and committee.</p> <p>Do not incorporate additional knowledge they need for their dissertation project.</p> <p>Do <i>not</i> demonstrate the ability to carry out independent research or an adequate ability to translate coursework into research that would be suitable for a doctoral degree.</p>

How to grade: Students meet most of the items in 2 of the 3 sections/columns for that letter grade.

If performance for one or more of the boxes is likely to be an L or F, the chair should have clear conversation with the student, and document in writing, required improvements and student should devise a performance improvement plan approved by the chair.



# GRADING AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Grading

The DrPH uses the graduate grading system with the [University Explanation of Grading](#). Please note that course syllabi give more details on what scores are tied to graduate grades for that class and give grading rubrics for assignments that help guide students in completing assignments.

## Policy on Repeating Course Enrollments

Although rare, there are instances where a student in HPM does not successfully complete a required course on the first attempt. If this occurs, the following procedures will apply:

*Step 1.* The student will meet with the program directors and instructor of the required course to determine whether it is appropriate and feasible for the student to repeat the same course. If the instructor determines the course is repeatable without any special modifications (e.g., alternative assignments or assessments that are not consistent with those required of other students in the course) then the student will re-enroll in the course in a subsequent semester. If the student believes repeating the course would create a hardship for any reason, the case will proceed to step four below.

*Step 2.* If the course is repeatable but requires modification of any assignments or assessments (for example, because assignments or assessments are re-used and the student has access to the answers; prompts for writing assignments are re-used and the student has previously written a paper on the same topic), and the instructor is willing to make such modifications, the student and the instructor will agree to alternative assignments and/or assessments. The terms of the agreement should be documented and signed by both the instructor and the student. An e-mail exchange in which both parties agree is sufficient. This documentation should be provided to the academic coordinator so that it can be included in the student's dossier. The student will re-enroll in the course in a subsequent semester and complete the course as modified in the agreement.

*Step 3.* If the course is not repeatable as determined by the instructor, but there is an approved substitute available that does not conflict with other required courses in the student's schedule, the student will enroll in the approved substitute and notify the program director. The HPM academic coordinator maintains a list of approved substitutes. The instructor may approve a substitute course that is not on the list with agreement from the program director; however, the HPM course exemption process maintained by student services must be followed.

*Step 4.* If the instructor and the student cannot come to agreement for any reason, the case will be reported to the program director and referred to the HPM Academic Appeals and Reinstatement Committee ("the committee") for resolution. The committee will solicit information from the student, the instructor, the program director, academic coordinator, student services and others as needed. This information may include, but is not limited to, the availability of any approved or potential substitute courses. The decision of the HPM Academic Appeals and Reinstatement Committee is final, and the student, instructor and program director will proceed as instructed by the committee.



The program director and student, in collaboration with academic coordinator, are responsible for implementing the resolution.

## Reinstatement and Readmission Procedure for Graduate Students

Students who receive nine credit hours of L (low pass), or who fail one course (F) are academically ineligible to continue in the program. If they want to continue, they must petition for reinstatement.

### Reinstatement Procedures

If a student's performance in the program leads to academic ineligibility to continue, the following policy applies:

If a student is interested in reinstatement, they may petition the department for reinstatement by submitting the [Request for Reinstatement to Graduate School Form](#) and an HPM specific reinstatement form (available from the program directors) to the HPM department chair. The department chair, or delegate, convenes the department's Student Appeals Committee to review the student's request.

The Student Appeals Committee is chaired by a full professor and includes an associate department chair and one additional member of the faculty. In situations where any of these individuals would have a conflict of interest, the committee chair will consult with the department chair to assign another faculty member(s) to the committee.

The committee gathers all relevant information from the instructor(s) who assigned the grade(s) that made the student ineligible, the DrPH program directors, the student, and others.

The committee makes a recommendation to the department chair to endorse or decline to endorse the student's request for reinstatement, and the department chair forwards their decision to the Graduate School. Final approval rests with the Graduate School.

Students should also refer to The Graduate School Handbook for the [grade appeals process](#).

### Readmission Procedures

Students are expected to continue with the doctoral program without interruption. If a break occurs for any reason, we cannot guarantee that a return to the program can be accommodated. Anytime a student is not enrolled during the fall and/or spring term, readmission is required. In that event, the student must reapply to seek readmission. Readmission is contingent on approval from the program directors and the Graduate School. The appropriate form must be completed by the student and submitted to the academic coordinator.

Readmission application forms can be found on the [UNC Graduate School form site](#).



# CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS

## Ethics and Academic Integrity

The *Policies and Procedures* chapter of the [Graduate School Handbook](#) contains detailed information about amorous relationships, illegal drugs, ethics, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Honor Code, non-discrimination, racial and sexual harassment, and the alcohol policy.

The [University Academic Integrity Standards](#) contains a standard honor code which outlines faculty and student responsibilities, procedures for reporting violations to the honor code and how offenses of the honor code are handled. It is important that you become familiar with these upon program entry.

## Harassment and Discrimination

The University's [Policy on Prohibited Harassment and Discrimination](#) prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of an individual's race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The policy document provides specific information for students who believe that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on one or more of these protected classifications.

Students who want additional information regarding the University's process for investigating allegations of discrimination or harassment should contact the Equal Opportunity/ADA Office for assistance:

Equal Opportunity & Compliance Office  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
100 E. Franklin Street, Unit 110  
Campus Box 9160  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599  
Telephone: (919) 966-3576  
Fax: (919) 962-2562  
Email: [equalopportunity@unc.edu](mailto:equalopportunity@unc.edu)

Any administrator or supervisor, including a department chair, associate dean, or other administrator, who receives a student's complaint about prohibited harassment or discrimination must notify the Equal Opportunity/ADA Office within five (5) calendar days of receiving the complaint. If a student raises a claim of prohibited harassment or discrimination during an academic appeal, an investigation of the student's claim must be performed under the direction of the Equal Opportunity/ADA Office. The school or department must await the results of the harassment or discrimination investigation before deciding the student's academic appeal.

## Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Research Involving Human Subjects

The University's [Office of Human Research Ethics](#) is responsible for protecting human subjects and oversees the School of Public Health's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The School's IRB must review *all* research involving human subjects (including dissertations and class research projects). As described previously, students must submit to the IRB, even if they believe that their research

may be exempt as defined for certain human subjects research by the Code of Federal Regulations. *Only* the IRB can determine whether research is exempt.

It is essential to receive approval prior to beginning research. Approval will not be given retroactively for any research.

## Conflict of Interest

Additionally, all UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health faculty, staff and students involved in research must complete Conflict of Interest (COI) training. COI is a set of situations in which financial or personal considerations, circumstances, or relationships may compromise, may involve the potential for compromising, or may have the appearance of compromising an individual's objectivity in the pursuit of their research, teaching, or administrative duties. The bias that such conflicts may impart can affect many decisions – including the collection, analysis, interpretation of data, the sharing of research results, the choice of research protocols, the use of statistical methods and the mentoring and judgment of student work.

The training will inform the individual of the University's policies on conflict of interests, individual disclosure responsibilities and the federal regulations on financial conflict of interests. Training must be reviewed and completed at least every four years. **As part of HPM 945 in summer semester of year 1**, each student is required to take this [training](#).

The Gillings School [COI Committee](#) will assist in identifying, managing, reducing, or eliminating COI related to your dissertation work.

## HIPAA

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which regulates the exchange of health information that is often critical to research, became law in 1996. HIPAA privacy regulations do not replace existing human research participant protections. Rather, HIPAA presents additional requirements. The regulations apply to personal, health and demographic information in the records of health care providers, health plans and health care clearinghouses (so-called "covered entities), which include the UNC Health Care System, the School of Medicine and other health care providers such as private clinics and hospitals. These entities will refuse to share health records without demonstrated HIPAA conformity, such as a patient's signed authorization or a waiver of authorization from the researcher's Institutional Review Board (IRB). *Researchers whose work involves clinical trials, patient surveys, retrospective chart reviews, patient database mergers or other information from medical records should therefore know the HIPAA regulations.* [Online training](#) is available.

**As part of HPM 945 in summer semester of year 1**, each student should obtain training in the University's approved [ethics training course](#). After completing the online course, the student will be listed in the UNC Human Research Ethics Training Database. Should an actual certificate of training be required, this can automatically be generated from this database. The database can be accessed from the same OHRE URL listed above.

The length of time needed to complete the IRB approval process depends on the type of dissertation research. For example, approval of secondary data analysis or a study involving minimal risk to human subjects *may* be approved relatively quickly (e.g., within a week or two). Approval for collecting sensitive data about human subjects may require several revisions before IRB approval is granted (e.g., one to two months). If dissertation research will involve personal health information (PHI), then a student may also be required to complete [HIPAA training](#).

Therefore, plan so that the research is not delayed. In general, the process is:

1. Complete the proposal.
2. Submit completed IRB application online. This should be submitted either immediately after successfully defending the proposal, or after it is in relatively final form. Note: If significant modifications are made to the proposal, then IRB approval of the modification is required.

The IRB for the School of Public Health is the Non-Biomedical IRB (Committee E). For questions about the IRB process or how to complete aspects of the application, please contact the IRB office at 919-966-3113 or by [email](#). This [website](#) allows you to check the status of your review using your UNC ONYEN.



# FORMS

## Required Forms

Several forms must be completed and submitted to the Graduate School during the doctoral program. All required forms are available from the academic coordinator or

The [Graduate School Website](#). Students should check with the academic coordinator to ensure that the appropriate forms are filed on their behalf and at the appropriate times. **Students are responsible for initiating and ensuring follow through for all relevant forms. ALL FORMS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE HPM ACADEMIC COORDINATOR, Kim Sieler (krsieler@email.unc.edu, CB# 7411, Gillings School of Global Public Health, HPM, UNC-Chapel Hill, 27599). STUDENTS SHOULD NOT SUBMIT FORMS DIRECTLY TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL.**

Report	Filed after	Responsible party
1 Preliminary Doctoral Written Examination	Taking written comprehensive exams	Program Director
2 Doctoral Committee Composition <i>Note: When applicable, students are responsible for submitting forms to the HPM academic coordinator to have non-UNC faculty appointed to serve on their committees.</i>	Assembling a dissertation committee	Student, with Program Director approval
3 Approved Dissertation Project <i>NOTE: completed as same time as #4 below</i>	Defending the dissertation proposal (first oral examination)	Student, with chair approval
4 Oral Examination <i>NOTE: completed at the same time as #3 above.</i>	Defending the dissertation proposal (first oral examination)	Committee Chair
5 IRB Approval	Getting IRB approval	Student
6 Application for Graduation	Completing all requirements (except dissertation defense), about 3 months before graduation	Student
7 Final Oral Examination	Defending the final dissertation	Student with dissertation committee chair

1. [Report of Preliminary Doctoral Written Examination](#)  
(Part I: *Doctoral Exam Report Form; Completed by program director.*)  
**Filed after taking written comprehensive exams:** This form reports the results of the written comprehensive exam and is filed regardless of whether the outcome of the examination is a pass or fail. The directors of the DrPH program are responsible for filing this form for DrPH students and does so through the academic coordinator.
  
2. [Report of Doctoral Committee Composition](#)  
(Part I: *Report of Doctoral Committee Composition & Report of Approved Dissertation Project; Routed by student to all dissertation committee members with chair signing last*)  
**Filed after assembling a dissertation committee:** The doctoral dissertation committee must be approved by the director of the DrPH program, the chair of the dissertation committee, and the Graduate School. Often this form is completed at the same time as the oral defense of the dissertation proposal. The student is responsible for filing this form with the HPM academic coordinator. **NOTE:** non-UNC employees are required to complete a [non-disclosure form](#). It should also be submitted to the HPM academic coordinator.
  
3. [Report of Approved Dissertation Project](#) (NOTE: *this form is completed at the same time as #4 below*)  
(Part II: *Report of Doctoral Committee Composition & Report of Approved Dissertation Project; Routed by student to all dissertation committee members with chair signing last*)  
**Filed after defending the dissertation proposal (first oral examination):** The dissertation committee signs this form indicating approval of the proposed dissertation project. The working title of the dissertation is filed with the Graduate School. The student is responsible for filing this form with the HPM academic coordinator or must ensure that the chair submits the completed form to the HPM academic coordinator.
  
4. [Report of Oral Examination](#) (NOTE: *this form is completed at the same time as #3 above*)  
(Part II: *Doctoral Exam Report Form; Completed by dissertation committee chair*) **Filed after defending the dissertation proposal (first oral examination):** This form reports the results of the dissertation proposal defense and is filed regardless of whether the student passes or fails the examination. The Graduate School does not consider a student to have passed the oral examination, and therefore to be eligible for doctoral candidacy, until it receives this report. The dissertation committee chair is responsible for filing this form.
  
5. [IRB Approval](#)  
**Filed after defending the dissertation proposal:** See section on IRB.
  
6. [Application for Graduation](#)  
**Filed after completing all requirements (except final dissertation defense), about three months before graduation (please check [Graduate School Graduation Deadlines for the exact filing date](#)):** Degrees are awarded three times a year; May, August, and December. A student who expects to finish soon must notify the department and the Graduate School of their intention to graduate by applying for graduation on a specific date. **A student will not be eligible for graduation until a copy of the approved dissertation, properly formatted, is received by the Graduate School. (Note: students need to submit their dissertation directly to the graduate school, not to the HPM academic coordinator).**

7. [Report of the Final Oral Examination](#)

(Both Part III and Part IV: *Doctoral Exam Report Form*; Routed by student to all dissertation committee members, with chair signing last) **Filed after defending the final dissertation:**

The final oral examination takes place at the time of the dissertation defense. The dissertation committee chair is responsible for filing this form.

## Additional Forms

### Change of Advisor Request

This form is filed whenever the student requests a change in a dissertation committee member.



# GRADUATION

## Submission of Final Dissertation to Graduate School

Students must submit a completed copy of their dissertation to the graduate school by the submission deadline (which will vary depending on when the student is planning on graduating). There is a [dissertation guide](#) that has a check list, formatting information, and information on the submission process on the Graduate School site. **It is very important that the student precisely follows all formatting instructions** to avoid delays in the Graduate School acceptance of the final dissertation.



# Appendix A: Degree Specific Competencies

Department: HPM

Degree: DrPH

Competencies	Course Number and Name	Course Number and Name	Course Number and Name	Course Number and Name	Other Learning Experience
<b>Data and Analysis</b>					
1. Explain qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods and policy analysis research and evaluation methods to address health issues at multiple (individual, group, organization, community, and population) levels	HPM 953 Essentials of Practice-based Research (P)	HPM 963 Program Evaluation for Health Leaders (R)	HPM 945 Dissertation Preparation and Planning (R)	HPM 956 Fundamentals of Research Methods and Analysis (R)  HPM 951 Literature Review & Appraisal (R)	Dissertation
2. Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue.	HPM 956 Fundamentals of Research Methods and Analysis (P)	HPM 945 Dissertation Preparation and Planning (R)	HPM 759 Health Policy Analysis and Advocacy for Health Leaders (R)	HPM 963 Program Evaluation for Health Leaders (R)  HPM 967 Quality Improvement (R)	Dissertation
3. Explain the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring, and evaluating policies and programs and to address a population's health	HPM 967 Quality Improvement (P)				
<b>Leadership, Management and Governance</b>					
4. Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders and other partners	HPM 969 Program Planning and Design (P)				Dissertation

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Other Learning Experience</b>
5. Communicate public health science to diverse stakeholders, including individuals at all levels of health literacy, for purposes of influencing behavior and policies	HPM 962 Marketing and Public Relations for Health Leaders (P)	HPM 860 Population Perspectives for Health andThe Research Process (R)	HPM 963 Program Evaluation for Health Leaders (R)		
6. Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values and potential contributions from multiple professions and systems in addressing public health programs	HPM 966 Systems Thinking and Collective Impact (P)	HPM 860/950 Population Perspectives for Health andThe Research Process (R)			Dissertation
7. Create a strategic plan	HPM 959 Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (P)				
8. Facilitate shared decision making through negotiation and consensus building methods	HPM 957 Crisis Leadership (P)	HPM 759 Health Policy Analysis and Advocacy for Health Leaders (R)	HPM 820 Organizational Leadership Theory and Practice (R)	HPM 968 Managing the HealthWorkfor ce	
9. Create organizational change strategies	HPM 968 Managing the Health Workforce	HPM 820 Organizational Leadership Theory and Practice (R)	HPM 940 Leadership in Health Informatics (R)		
10. Propose strategies to promote inclusion and equity within public health programs, policies and systems	HPM 965 Cultural Humility for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Health Leaders(P)	HPM 950/860 Population Perspectives for Health (R)			
11. Assess one's own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities including cultural proficiency	HPM 965 Cultural Humility for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Health Leaders (P)	HPM 820 Organizational Leadership Theory and Practice (P)			

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Other Learning Experience</b>
12. Propose human, fiscal, and other resources to achieve a strategic goal	HPM 959 Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (P)	HPM 968 Managing the Health Workforce (P)	HPM 958 Financial Leadership (P)		
13. Cultivate new resources and revenue streams to achieve a strategic goal	HPM 958 Financial Leadership (P)	HPM 959 Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (R)			
<b>Policy and Programs</b>					
14. Design a system-level intervention to address a public health issue	HPM 969 Program Planning and Design (P)				Dissertation
15. Integrate knowledge of cultural values and practices in the design of public health policies and programs	HPM 969 Program Planning and Design (P)				Dissertation
16. Integrate scientific information, legal and regulatory approaches, ethical frameworks, and varied stakeholder interests in policy development and analysis	HPM 759 Health Policy Analysis and Advocacy for Health Leaders (P)	HPM 810 Leadership in Public Health Law and Ethics (R)			
17. Propose interprofessional team approaches to improving public health	HPM 966 Systems Thinking and Collective Impact (P)	HPM 968 Managing the Health Workforce (R)	HPM 957 Crisis Leadership (R)		
<b>Education and Workforce Development</b>					
18. Assess an audience's knowledge and learning needs	HPM 970 Training and Pedagogy for Health Leaders (P)	HPM 759 Health Policy Analysis and Advocacy for Health Leaders (R)			
19. Deliver training or educational experiences that promote learning in academic, organizational, and community settings	HPM 970 Training and Pedagogy for Health Leaders (P)				

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Other Learning Experience</b>
20. Use best practice modalities in pedagogical practice	HPM 970 Training and Pedagogy for Health Leaders (P)				
<b>Unique UNC DrPH Program Competencies</b>					
21. Apply ethics principles and practices to the student's leadership approach	HPM 810 Leadership in Public Health Law and Ethics (P)				
22. Apply systems thinking approaches to learn about and inform collaborative action targeting complex public health problems	HPM 966 Systems Thinking and Collective Impact (P)				
23. Apply the principles of implementation research and practice to successfully integrate evidence-based public health practices into community settings.	HPM 964 Leadership for Effective Implementation (P)				
24. Apply quality improvement principles and practices into the student's leadership or work	HPM 967 Quality Improvement (P)	HPM 963 Program Evaluation for Health Leaders (R)			
25. Develop policy advocacy strategies at the legislative, administrative, or judicial levels to influence health policies	HPM 759 Health Policy Analysis and Advocacy for Health Leaders (P)				
26. Assess informatics needs in organizations and community-based settings to improve population health	HPM 940 Leadership in Health Informatics (P)				
27. Assess WHO health systems building blocks in an international context and identify system elements from different countries that could be used to improve access, quality, or health outcomes in home/work country	HPM 823 Global Health (P)				

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Course Number and Name</b>	<b>Other Learning Experience</b>
28. Formulate a strategy to address a systemic issue that undermines health at an organizational, community <i>or</i> societal level.	HPM 965 Cultural Humility for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Health Leaders (P)				

P=Primary, R=Reinforcing.

# APPENDIX B: Academic Schedule and Course Sequence: 2024-2027 (Cohort 20)

## YEAR 1: CLASSES ON TUESDAYS FROM 4:00 TO 7:00 PM EASTERN TIME

### FALL 2024

HPM 810: Leadership in Public Health Law and Ethics (2 credit hours)  
HPM 820: Organizational Leadership Theory and Practice (2 credit hours)  
HPM 860: Population Perspectives for Health/Research Process (2 credit hours)  
HPM 970: Training and Pedagogy for Health Leaders (1 credit hour)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
Campus Visit	August 12-16, 2024
First Day of Classes (online)	August 20, 2024
Last Day of Classes (online)	December 3, 2024

### SPRING 2025

HPM 966: Systems Thinking & Collective Impact (1 credit hour)  
HPM 951: Literature Review and Appraisal (2 credit hours)  
HPM 953: Essentials of Practice-based Research (2 credit hours)  
HPM 965: Cultural Humility for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Health Leaders (1 credit hour)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
Campus Visit	December 9-13, 2024
First Day of Classes (online)	January 7, 2025
Last Day of Classes (online)	May 6, 2025

### SUMMER 2025

HPM 945: Dissertation Preparation and Planning I (2 credit hours)  
HPM 969: Program Planning and Design (1 credit hour)  
HPM 823: Global Health Systems (1 credit hour)  
HPM 963: Program Evaluation (2 credit hours)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
Campus or International visit <i>(tentative)</i>	May 11-16, 2025 Tentative (London)
First Day of Classes (online)	May 20, 2024
Last Day of Classes (online)	August 5, 2025

## YEAR 2: CLASSES ON WEDNESDAYS FROM 4:00 TO 7:00 PM EASTERN TIME

### FALL 2025

HPM 956: Fundamentals of Research Methods and Analysis (3 credit hours)  
HPM 958: Financial Leadership (3 credit hours)  
HPM 964: Implementation Science (1 credit hour)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
Campus Visit	August 11-15, 2025

First Day of Classes (online)	August 20, 2025
Last Day of Classes (online)	December 3, 2025

### **SPRING 2026**

HPM 759: Health Policy Development and Advocacy for Health Leaders (2 credit hours)  
HPM 967: Quality Improvement (1 credit hour)

HPM 968: Managing the Healthcare Workforce (1 credit hour)  
HPM 959: Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (2 credit hours)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
Campus Visit	December 8-12, 2025
First Day of Classes (online)	January 7, 2026
Last Day of Classes (online)	May 6, 2026

### **SUMMER 2026**

HPM 962: Marketing and PR for Health Leaders (2 credit hours)  
HPM 940: Leadership in Health Informatics (1 credit hour)

HPM 957: Crisis Leadership (1 credit hours)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
Campus or International Visit	May 11-15, 2026
First Day of Classes (online)	May 20, 2026
Last Day of Classes (online)	August 5, 2026

### **FALL 2026 – SUMMER 2027**

Students must register for HPM 994 for each fall and spring semester until they defend their proposal. Students need at least two semesters of HPM 994 to graduate. Students do not need to register for HPM 994 in the summer unless they plan on defending their proposal or final dissertation in the summer session.

HPM 994: Doctoral Dissertation (3 credit hours)  
Elective course #1 (optional)  
Elective course #2 (optional)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
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\*Dates for onsite meeting, as well as the start and ending dates for the online classes in 2024-25 subject to change, based on University calendars. Check with program director before making travel plans.

# APPENDIX C: Academic Schedule and Course Sequence: 2024-2026 (Cohort 19)

## YEAR 2: CLASSES ON WEDNESDAYS FROM 4:00 TO 7:00 PM EASTERN TIME

### **FALL 2024**

HPM 956: Fundamentals of Research Methods and Analysis (3 credit hours)

HPM 958: Financial Leadership (3 credit hours)

HPM 964: Implementation Science (1 credit hour)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
Campus Visit	August 12-16, 2024
First Day of Classes (online)	August 21, 2024
Last Day of Classes (online)	December 4, 2024

### **SPRING 2025**

HPM 759: Health Policy Analysis and Advocacy for Health Leaders (2 credit hours)

HPM 967: Quality Improvement (1 credit hour)

HPM 959: Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (2 credit hours)

HPM 968: Managing the Healthcare Workforce (1 credit hour)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
Campus Visit	December 9-13, 2024
First Day of Classes (online)	January 8, 2025
Last Day of Classes (online)	May 7, 2025

### **SUMMER 2025**

HPM 962: Marketing and PR for Health Leaders (2 credit hours)

HPM 940: Leadership in Health Informatics (1 credit hour)

HPM 957: Crisis Leadership (1 credit hours)

Registration	(academic coordinator will notify)
Campus or International visit <b>(tentative)</b>	May 11-16, 2025 Tentative (London)
First Day of Classes (online)	May 21, 2025
Last Day of Classes (online)	August 6, 2025

### **FALL 2025 – SUMMER 2026**

HPM 994: Doctoral Dissertation (3 credit hours)

Students must register for HPM 994 for each fall and spring semester until they defend their proposal. Students need at least two semesters of HPM 994 to graduate. Students do not need to register for HPM 994 in the summer unless they plan on defending their proposal or final dissertation in the summer session.

Elective course #1 (optional)

Elective course #2 (optional)



# APPENDIX D: Degree Requirements Checklist (Cohorts 19, 20)

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
<b>Prerequisite</b>			
	SPHG 600/FLO*	Foundation Learning Objectives	n/a
<b>Fall, Year 1 (7 credits)</b>			
Leadership/PH	HPM 970	Training and Pedagogy for Health Leaders	1
Leadership/PH	HPM 810	Leadership in Public Health Law and Ethics	2
Leadership	HPM 820	Organizational Leadership Theory and Practice	2
Public Health	HPM 860	Population Perspectives for Health and The Research Process	2
<b>Dissertation Identification of dissertation topic (general description)</b>			
<b>Spring, Year 1 (6 credits)</b>			
Research	HPM 951	Literature Reviews & Appraisal	2
Research/PH	HPM 953	Essentials of Practice-based Research	2
Leadership /PH	HPM 965	Cultural Humility for 21st Century Health Leaders	1
Public Health	HPM 966	Systems Thinking and Collective Impact	1
<b>Dissertation Dissertation topic finalized, first draft of literature review completed</b>			
<b>Summer, Year 1 (6 credits)</b>			
Leadership/PH	HPM 823	Global Health	1
Research	HPM 945	Dissertation Preparation and Planning	2
Research/PH	HPM 963	Program Evaluation for Health Leaders	2
Public Health	HPM 969	Program Planning and Design	1
<b>Dissertation Draft Chapter 1 (Background and significance), revised Chapter 2 (Literature review)</b>			
<b>Fall, Year 2 (7 credits)</b>			
Research	HPM 956	Fundamentals of Research Methods and Analysis	3
Leadership	HPM 958	Financial Leadership	3
Public Health	HPM 964	Leadership for Effective Implementation	1
<b>Dissertation Draft Chapter 3 (Methods)</b>			
<b>Spring, Year 2 (6 credits)</b>			
Leadership/PH	HPM 759	Health Policy Analysis and Advocacy for Health Leaders	2
Leadership	HPM 968	Managing the Health Workforce	1
Leadership	HPM 959	Strategic Planning for Public and Non-Profit Organizations	2
Public Health	HPM 967	Quality Improvement	1

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
<i>Dissertation</i>	<i>Dissertation proposal defense, including research question, background and significance, literature review, methods, timeline</i>		
<b>Summer, Year 2 (4 credits)</b>			
Ldship/PH	HPM 940	Leadership in Health Informatics	1
Leadership	HPM 962	Marketing and Public Relations for Health Leaders	2
Leadership	HPM 957	Crisis Leadership	1
<b>COMPREHENSIVE EXAM – August</b>			
<i>Dissertation</i>	<i>Continue work on dissertation</i>		
<b>Year 3 &amp; 4 (variable credits if courses in addition to dissertation, otherwise 3 credits)</b>			
(Fall) Research	HPM 994	Doctoral Research and Dissertation	3
(Spring) Research	HPM 994	Doctoral Research and Dissertation	3
(Summer) Research	HPM 994	Only register if defending dissertation	3
(Fall of Year 4) Research	HPM 994	Must register if still working on dissertation	3
(Spring of Year 4) Research	HPM 994	Must register if still working on dissertation	3
<i>Dissertation</i>	<i>Fall Year 3: Data collection completed and perhaps analysis Spring/Summer: Analysis, Results, Recommendations and Plan for Change Spring/Summer/Fall: Dissertation Defense</i>		
	<b>Total Credit Hours 42+</b>		<b>42+</b>
<b>Date Passed/ Completed:</b>			
	Report of the Preliminary Written Exam (Comprehensive exam): Doctoral Exam Report Form Part I		
	Report of the Oral Examination (Dissertation Proposal Defense): (Doctoral Exam Report Form Part II		
	Report of the Final Oral Examination (Dissertation Defense): Doctoral Exam Report Form Part III		
	Approval of Final Electronic Dissertation: Doctoral Exam Report Form Part IV		
	Applied Practice Experience (Practicum Project) and Applied Learning Experience (Practicum) Reflection Paper Completed		
	Leadership Reflection Paper Completed		

\*Students who do not have a degree from an accredited school/program of public health will take the one 3-credit Foundational Learning Objective (FLO) course. Students can seek a waiver based on their work history, if they can show they have work experience that meets all the foundational learning objectives.

# Appendix E: Program Policies

## Written Comprehensive Exam #2024-1

### Policy Statement:

It shall be the policy of the DrPH program that the written comprehensive exam consists of three sections: methods, finance/strategy, and cross-coursework practical integration.

FURTHER, to pass the written comprehensive exam, a student must pass *each* section of the exam.

FURTHER, if a student doesn't pass one or more sections of the written comprehensive exam or fails to answer all questions in a section, the student is allowed to rewrite the section(s) and/or question(s) and is given sufficient feedback to know what needs to be corrected.

FURTHER, if a student doesn't pass each section after a rewrite, the student must wait at least three months after their rewrite to take a second written comprehensive exam<sup>1</sup> AND the student will only be required to retake the exam section(s) they failed by completing new question(s).

Further, should a student fail one or more sections of a second written comprehensive exam, they become academically ineligible in accordance with The Graduate School policy and would need to petition for reinstatement if the student desires to be reinstated.

### Background:

The program director needs a clear policy to guide their actions in administering the written comprehensive exam. This policy gives that direction.

### Process:

- A draft of this policy was discussed with the DrPH Advisory Committee on October 26, 2023.
- Final advisory committee input at DrPH Advisory Committee on February 1, 2024.
- Draft policy presented at HPM Executive Advisory Committee to the Chair on February 14, 2024.
- Final draft policy voted upon by faculty on March 4, 2024.

Policy approved on March 4, 2024

## Prerequisites in the Dissertation Course Series #2024-2

### Policy Statement:

It shall be the policy of the DrPH program to:

- require HPM 860: Population Perspectives for Health/Research Process as a prerequisite to HPM 951: Literature Review and Appraisal, allowing a student two weeks into the semester to finish an incomplete in HPM 860.
- Similarly, require HPM 951: Literature Review and Appraisal as a prerequisite to HPM 945 Dissertation Preparation and Planning, allowing a student two weeks into the semester to finish an incomplete in HPM 951.
- Finally, require HPM 945 Dissertation Preparation and Planning as a prerequisite to HPM 956 Fundamentals of Research Methods & Analysis, allowing a student two weeks into the semester to finish an incomplete in HPM 945.

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<sup>1</sup> Per Graduate School Guidelines, Doctoral Degree, Failure of Examinations: <https://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html> (accessed October 24, 2023).

Rare exceptions may be made only with concurrence of the DrPH program director and the faculty of the course in that following semester.

**Background:**

The DrPH program accelerates a student's dissertation proposal work to allow students to graduate in a three-year period. To do that, the program has a sequence of four courses that build upon each other. Not completing the prior course in a timely manner severely limits a student's ability to effectively participate in and complete the following course. The four-course sequence is:

1. HPM 860: Population Perspectives for Health/Research Process helps the student identify a research topic that sets the stage for their identifying a literature review question that can inform their dissertation research question. Not having a topic means a student can't complete a relevant systematic literature review for their dissertation, which is the second class in the series.
2. HPM 951: Literature Review and Appraisal gives the student the necessary background to identify their dissertation research question and aims based on what is currently known. Not having a completed literature review doesn't allow the student to complete the third class in the series.
3. HPM 945 Dissertation Preparation and Planning requires that a student have a complete draft of their dissertation proposal introduction/background, literature review, and research question and aims. While these do not need to be finalized, having a solid first draft is required to complete the fourth class in the series.
4. HPM 956 Fundamentals of Research Methods & Analysis allows students to identify their research methods, draft their data collection tools, and draft their IRB application, such that as they are transitioned to their dissertation chair, there is a solid draft proposal that can be completed and defended in either of the two remaining semesters of coursework.

Experience is demonstrating that students who take incompletes and can't finish their work within two weeks of the following semester are not able to fully participate in the following course, severely impacting their progress and not allowing their cohort mates to fully benefit from their contributions.

The implication of this policy is that a student will need to wait an entire academic year to pick up the missed course if they can't complete their incomplete within two weeks of the following semester.

This policy will encourage students to complete this course series on time and prioritize it over other course completion, which is less impactful to a student's progress if not completed.

**Process:**

- A draft of this policy was discussed with the DrPH Advisory Committee on October 26, 2023.
- Final advisory committee input at DrPH Advisory Committee on February 1, 2024.
- Draft policy presented at HPM Executive Advisory Committee to the Chair on February 14, 2024.
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