

STUDENT HANDBOOK
PhD Program
School of Public and Community Health Sciences
University of Montana
Updated: May 26, 2020

PhD in Public Health Degree Program Standards

General Description

Ph.D. degree training typically consists of two years of course work and one-three years of research leading to the completion and defense of a Ph.D. dissertation.

Graduation Requirements

1. Successful completion of all Graduate School requirements for the Ph.D. Current Graduate School requirements for the Ph.D. degree are found on the Graduate School web site, [Completing Your Degree](#). Successful completion of at least 60 graduate semester credits. No more than 36 credits of research and dissertation may be applied toward the 60-credit requirement for the Ph.D.
2. Successful completion and defense of a research dissertation as defined by the Graduate School.
3. Please note other Graduate School requirements for graduation:
 - Filing of application for graduation (due Jan 16 for May Graduation).
 - Electronic submission of dissertation thesis one week prior to defense; the Committee Chair signifies committee approval for defense.
 - June 19- Final deadline for completion of all requirements for May graduation.

Transfer Credits - Advance Standing

Students entering the doctoral program with a Masters degree could transfer up to 15 credits of successfully completed classes. Transfer credits should map to Ph.D. competencies. Students entering the program with a Masters of Public Health (MPH) degree are not required to take electives, and can transfer 21 credits from their prior MPH program rather than 15 credits. Students can also transfer in any of the PhD Core courses taken prior to entering the Ph.D. program, and these credits will not count toward the 15/21 credit transfer maximum.

Course Waivers

Students may petition the Ph.D. Program Coordinator for waiver of course requirement for which they have equivalent preparation. Waiver of a course does not reduce total credit requirements for the degree.

Academic Standing - Progress Towards the Degree

Students should refer to The University of Montana [Graduate School Academic Policies](#)

A graduate student who fails to maintain the required minimum GPA will:

1. Be warned by the Ph.D. Program Coordinator.
2. Be placed on probation if the GPA is less than 3.0.
3. Be dropped from the graduate program in the second year or thereafter, if the deficiency is not resolved.

Reinstatement can be made on the basis of a petition approved by the Ph.D. Program Coordinator, SPCHS Chair, and Graduate School.

Students receiving financial aid must register for a minimum of 7 credits per semester. Students not receiving financial aid must register for a minimum of 4 credits per semester. Students must register for at least 3 credits, or petition the Graduate School to take only one credit in their final term.

In addition, progress towards the completion of their dissertation will be regularly assessed by the student's Advisory Committee and Ph.D. Program Coordinator. Failure to make adequate progress towards completion of this degree requirement could lead to warnings, probation, and ultimately to dismissal from the program.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

General Information

- Graduate students typically register for 9 to 12 credits per semester during the first two years of the program when they are enrolled in academic courses. In later years, students register for a maximum of 9 credits of research or dissertation each semester. Students do not need to enroll during the summer session.
- Graduate students should not enroll for more than 9 credits in any semester in which they are enrolled in PUBH 690 or 699 (Research or Dissertation credits).
- Graduate students may enroll for a course as *Audit only* with prior approval of the Ph.D. Program Coordinator.
- With permission of the course instructor and the student's Research Advisor, graduate students may enroll in *complimentary* courses (those taken *in addition to* the requirements for the degree) on a Credit/No Credit basis.
- Students who complete the requirements for the Ph.D. during summer session must enroll for 3 credits of dissertation during summer session. Students who miss the deadline for completion of degree requirements at the end of a semester and will defend early in the next semester may register for 3 credits of dissertation for that semester.

Recommended Curriculum Sequence

Version A: Student entering Fall even year

Year 1: Fall	Cr.	Year 1: Spring	Cr.
*PUBH 525 Multi-cultural Public Health	3	*PUBH 612/613/614 ³	3
*STAT 451 & 457 Statistical Methods I	4	*STAT 452 & 458 Statistical Methods II	4
Elective ⁴	3	*PUBH 640 Qualitative Research Methods	3
Year 2: Fall	Cr.	Year 2: Spring	Cr.
*PUBH 620 Adv Quant Methods I	3	*PUBH 621 Adv Quant Methods II	3
PUBH 692 or PUBH 690	3	*PUBH 612/613/614 ³	3
Elective ⁴	3	Elective ⁴	3
Year 3: Fall	Cr.	Year 3: Spring	Cr.
PUBH 690/699 Research/Dissertation ⁵	5	PUBH 690/699 Research/Dissertation ⁵	9
PUBH 694 Seminar (Informational)	1		
Elective ⁴	3		
Year 4: Fall	Cr.	Year 4: Spring²	Cr.
PUBH 699 Dissertation ⁵	8	PUBH 699 Dissertation ⁵	8
PUBH 694 Seminar (Research Progress)	1	PUBH 694 Seminar (Dissertation)	1
Credit Summary	Cr.		

Transfer credits ¹	15		
Core curriculum*	26		
Seminar	3		
Electives ⁴	0-12		
Research/Dissertation	Var.		
Total (minimum required credits)	60		

Version B: Student entering Fall odd year

Year 1: Fall	Cr.	Year 1: Spring	Cr.
*PUBH 525 Multi-cultural Public Health	3	*PUBH 612/613/614 ³	3
*STAT 451 & 457 Statistical Methods I	4	*STAT 452 & 458 Statistical Methods II	4
*PUBH 620 Adv Quant Methods I	3	*PUBH 621 Adv Quant Methods II	3
Year 2: Fall	Cr.	Year 2: Spring	Cr.
PUBH 692 or PUBH 690	3	*PUBH 640 Qualitative Research Methods	3
Elective ⁴	3	*PUBH 612/613/614 ³	3
Elective ⁴	3	Elective ⁴	3
Year 3: Fall	Cr.	Year 3: Spring	Cr.
PUBH 690/699 Research/Dissertation ⁵	5	PUBH 690/699 Research/Dissertation ⁵	9
PUBH 694 Seminar (Informational)	1		
Elective ⁴	3		
Year 4: Fall	Cr.	Year 4: Spring²	Cr.
PUBH 699 Dissertation ⁵	8	PUBH 699 Dissertation ⁵	8
PUBH 694 Seminar (Research Progress)	1	PUBH 694 Seminar (Dissertation)	1
Credit Summary	Cr.		
Transfer credits ¹	15		
Core curriculum*	26		
Seminar	3		
Electives ⁴	0-12		
Research/Dissertation	Var.		
Total (minimum required credits)	60		

¹ Assumes that the student transfers in 15 credits from a completed Master's program. Transfer credits should map to Ph.D. competencies. Students entering the program with a Masters of Public Health degree are not required to take electives, and can transfer 21 credits from their prior MPH program rather than 15 credits. Students can also transfer in any of the Core curriculum (*) that is taken prior to entering the PhD program, and these credits will not count toward the 15/21 credit transfer maximum.

² Assumes that the student completes the program in four years. If student research requires additional semesters, the student would continue to enroll in PUBH 690 Research credits. The UM Graduate School requires a minimum of three Research credits each semester to maintain continuous graduate student status.

³ Students must take 2 Specialty Epidemiology courses (e.g., PUBH 612: Neuroepidemiology; PUBH 613: Spatial Epidemiology; PUBH 614 Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology).

⁴ See list of approved electives, or as approved by Curriculum Committee. Students that have not previously had an introductory epidemiology course and/or a social and behavioral science course should take PUBH 510 and/or PUBH 540. Students entering the program with a Masters of Public Health degree are not required to take electives, and can transfer 21 credits from their prior MPH program rather than 15 credits. In

circumstances where a PhD student did not have an ethics course in their prior graduate training, the student will take an ethics course (PUBH 570 or equivalent) as one of their electives.

⁵ Ph.D. students enroll in PUBH 699 after completing the Comprehensive Exam. Prior to that, the appropriate research course to enroll in is PUBH 697. Students who do not complete their dissertation by the end of the semester are assigned a grade of N (course work continued into later semesters). Upon successful defense of the dissertation, the N grades for all semesters are converted to CR by the registrar.

Notes on Special Courses

PUBH 694 (Seminar)

- All graduate students are required to attend the seminars. Student attendance at scheduled seminars is monitored. While everyone will miss an occasional seminar due to certain conflicts, a consistent record of attendance is expected. Students are especially encouraged to attend seminars outside their area of specialization.
- Students register for 3 credits of Seminar, 1 credit for each semester in which they give presentations:
 1. An informational topic approved by the student's Research Advisor. This seminar normally is presented during the second year in the program.
 2. A progress report of the student's dissertation research. This research update seminar normally is presented during the third year in the program.
 3. Dissertation defense seminar.
- PUBH 594 is taken on a Credit/No Credit basis.

PUBH 690 (Research) and PUBH 699 (Dissertation)

- Ph.D. students enroll in PUBH 699 (Dissertation) after completing the Comprehensive Exam. Prior to that, the appropriate research course to enroll in is PUBH 690 (Research). Students who do not complete their dissertation activities by the end of the semester are assigned a grade of N (course work continued into later semesters). Upon successful defense of the dissertation, the N grades for all semesters are converted to CR by the registrar.

Other Program Requirements

The following additional program requirements will be administered by the Ph.D. Program Coordinator:

- Ph.D. students will meet with each core SPCHS faculty member during the first semester to learn more about their respective laboratories and research opportunities.
- Ph.D. students will complete on-line CITI modules on ethical conduct of human subjects' research. In addition to the Biomedical Research Human Subjects course, students will complete the Good Clinical Practice course and the Responsible Conduct of Research course. These trainings should be kept up to date throughout the student's course of study.
- In circumstances where a Ph.D. student did not have an ethics course in their prior graduate training, the student will take an ethics course (PUBH 570 or equivalent) as one of their electives.

Milestones

Students are expected to maintain "reasonable progress towards the degree" which includes not only the completion of coursework in a timely fashion with a 3.0 GPA or above, but also a series of procedures by certain deadlines eventually leading up to graduation. Below is a summary of those milestones. In the first semester of the program students will provide documentation to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator of having (a) met with all core faculty in the School of Public and Community Health Sciences; and (b) completed human subjects training (i.e., CITI). Regular annual progress towards the degree are assessed by the student's Research Advisor, the student's Advisory Committee, and the Ph.D. Program Coordinator.

Suggested Timeline Towards Graduation

Event	Guideline/Deadline
Meet with all core faculty	End of 1 st semester
Complete human subjects training	End of 1 st semester
Selection of Research Advisor	End of 2 nd semester
Appointment of Advisory Committee	Prior to 3 rd semester
Plan of Study	Prior to 3 rd semester
Research Proposal	Middle of 5 th semester
Comprehensive Exam	End of 6 th semester
Application for Graduation	1 semester prior to graduation
Dissertation Draft to Committee	2 weeks prior to defense
Public Notice of Defense	1 week prior to defense
Defense / Final Dissertation to Graduate School	To meet Graduate School Deadline
Final Dissertation to Graduate Program Coordinator	Following successful dissertation defense