



**Department of
Public Health Sciences**

PhD Program in Prevention Science and Community Health

**Doctoral Student Handbook
2020 - 2021**

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Graduate Programs in Public Health: Mission, Values, and Goals

Mission

The mission of the Graduate Programs in Public Health is to develop leaders who can translate knowledge into policy and practice to promote health and prevent disease in human populations.

Values

The values of the Graduate Programs in Public Health support our mission and guide our collective daily activities. They include:

- **Physical and Mental Health:** A fundamental right of every human being
- **Health Equity:** A commitment to ensure the health of all populations, including the most vulnerable and underserved
- **The Freedom of Inquiry:** To think, to question and to challenge form the basis for all our educational, research and service activities
- **Diversity and Mutual Respect:** Promote and celebrate individual and collective distinctions among our students, staff, faculty and community partners
- **Personal and Professional Integrity:** Ethical behavior guides the activities of our students, staff, faculty and community partnerships
- **Community and Organizational Partnerships:** Participatory collaboration with diverse and fully engaged stakeholders to promote health and social change

Goals

- To provide engaging educational opportunities preparing leaders to maximize the health and well-being of individuals, communities and populations
- To mobilize a diverse student body to address complex public health issues, including issues affecting vulnerable and underserved populations
- To foster an environment in which students and faculty collaborate on rigorous scientific investigations addressing public health issues, with an emphasis on vulnerable and underserved populations
- To engage with communities, professionals, leaders and others as partners in improving the health of populations, including the most vulnerable and underserved
- To create public health educational opportunities for public health and health professionals and the broader community

Program Competencies

Upon completion of the Doctorate in Prevention Science and Community Health degree, all graduates will be able to:

- Describe the core disciplines of public health and how they apply to improving population health
- Apply epidemiologic methods to the measurement and study of population health and the prevention of infectious and chronic disease
- Articulate research questions that advance scientific knowledge and develop a proposal for extramural research funding
- Development and implement data collection/management methods and tools needed for prevention science and community health research
- Design and adapt a preventive intervention based on available etiological research
- Master principles of designing, conducting, and analyzing data from a randomized clinical trial of a preventive intervention
- Master techniques for designing and carrying out procedures for translating evidence-based interventions into community practice
- Apply state-of-the-science statistical methods and manage/manipulate datasets in statistical software such as SPSS, SAS, Mplus and R
- Provide consultation to health professionals in conducting prevention or community research, and be prepared to work collaboratively with scientists and practitioners in other fields
- Recognize potential ethical issues and employ ethical conduct of research in prevention science/community health studies

Introduction

Welcome to the Doctoral program in Prevention Science and Community Health! As a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) student in prevention science and community health, you will need to familiarize yourself with procedures and requirements that are set forth by both our Department, the Miller School of Medicine's Office of Graduate Studies, and the University of Miami's Graduate School. This student handbook is meant to serve as an introduction and basic overview of these requirements as well as provide information on communications and logistics to assure your success as a student. It is important to note that, although this handbook is meant to provide you with basic information and general requirements of the doctoral program, it is not intended to be used in isolation. Rather, this handbook should be used in conjunction with the UM Graduate School bulletin. In this regard, it is also highly recommended that you become familiar with the information that is on our Program website,

<https://graduatestudies.publichealth.med.miami.edu/academic-programs/doctoral-degrees/phd-prevention-science-and-community-health/index.html>, as well as the information on the University

of Miami Graduate School's website, located at <https://www.grad.miami.edu>. Many of the required forms (e.g., admission to candidacy, certificate of defense and formatting of the dissertation) to be completed during your doctoral program can be found on this site.

<https://www.grad.miami.edu/policies-and-forms/index.html>.

Student Responsibility

All graduate students at the University of Miami are subject to the general standards and requirements of the University and its various departments in regard to attendance, examinations, payment of fees, and conduct, as well as to the specific requirements of the Graduate School. The graduate student is expected to assume the initiative in completing all requirements at the time specified.

To preserve its ideals of scholarship, conduct, and character, the Graduate School reserves the right and the student by his/her registration concedes the right to require the withdrawal of any student for any reason deemed sufficient by the Graduate School at any time.

It is the responsibility of the student to be informed concerning all regulations and procedures required. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because a student pleads ignorance of the regulation or asserts that he/she was not informed of it by an advisor or other authority. The student should become familiar with the [Academic Bulletin](#), including:

1. The section presenting the requirements for the degree to be undertaken;
2. The offerings and requirements of the major department;
3. The Graduate Student Honor Code.

All graduate students are required to sign the acknowledgement and receipt form contained in [Appendix A](#) of the Prevention Science and Community Health Student Handbook which provides a web link to the [Prevention Science and Community Health Student Handbook](#), the [Graduate School Honor Code](#) and the [Academic Bulletin](#).

Code of Ethics

The Graduate Programs are committed to fostering an environment that supports the promotion of public health values and is conducive to professionalism and ethical standards for the responsible conduct of science and education. In addition to the values listed on page 3 of this Epidemiology Student Handbook, graduate students agree to abide by the [Graduate Student Honor Code](#).

The University of Miami expects all graduate students to adhere to the highest standards of ethics and academic integrity. All forms of academic fraud are strictly prohibited. These include but are not limited to plagiarism and/or cheating (whether it be in an examination, dissertation, thesis, research paper, research project, form of creative expression, experimental data, or any other academic undertaking) submitted for evaluation, presentation, or publication meets these standards.

Plagiarism is explicitly outlawed at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, and each student who enters our programs signs a statement acknowledging this fact. **All students will be asked to sign and return the Acknowledgement of Plagiarism Policy located in [Appendix B](#) of this Epidemiology Student Handbook.** Students who are found to have plagiarized may be asked to withdraw from their degree program. Plagiarism is not always easy to define; students who are unsure whether a particular practice is acceptable are urged to discuss the issue with the faculty instructor or mentor.

Additionally, graduate students are expected to respect and appreciate the diversity of the community and to respect the rights of others, be they property, privacy, opinion, or expression. Students found to be in violation of these standards are subject to disciplinary actions by the student's program and/or the Graduate School through the process described in the [Graduate Student Honor Code](#). All graduate students are bound by the rules and regulations of the University of Miami that apply to them.

Photography/Video Release

During the course of the year, you may be photographed or video-taped at various University sponsored events. With your consent, the photograph or video may be released for use on the Department of Public Health Sciences' webpage, social media pages, brochures, newsletter, or other media. These materials will be used primarily to highlight our Department's student activities and successes. Please acknowledge consent of use of photography on **Appendix A**.

Stages in the Doctoral Degree

After admission to the Doctoral Program, there are two major stages in your program to be completed prior to obtaining your Ph.D. degree. These stages are *Pre-Candidacy* and *Candidacy*. Lack of progress throughout the program without documented reasons may be grounds for program dismissal.

Pre-Candidacy

As a Pre-Candidate, your major tasks are to complete the departmental course requirements, and successfully pass the written (and oral) Qualifying Examination requirements. You must also write a qualifying paper and submit for publication at least one journal article.

Candidacy

As a Candidate, your major tasks are to: (1) develop (and have approved by your Committee) a written dissertation proposal that describes your research plan, (2) execute your research plan, and (3) successfully present and defend your dissertation to your dissertation committee, and receive their approval for your dissertation. The dissertation will consist of three publishable manuscripts on a single topic, with an introductory chapter that introduces and connects the three chapters. You are strongly encouraged to submit these papers for publication, with collaboration from your dissertation committee.

In general, the doctoral program takes a total of 4-5 years to complete if you entered the program with a Master's of Public Health degree (or other relevant master's degree). The time frame needed to complete the degree largely depends on how soon you complete and pass your qualifying examinations, complete your Dissertation Proposal, and complete and defend your Dissertation. Although this time frame differs for every student, a typical timeline might be: matriculation in the fall term with a relevant Master's degree or pre-requisite coursework; forming the Dissertation Committee and successfully completing the qualifying paper and exam by the end of Year 2 (second summer semester); and completing the dissertation, including the final oral defense and written document, by the end of Year 4 or the beginning of Year 5.

Time Limits for Degree Completion

A student must complete the qualifying paper and examination within 3 years from the date of original enrollment. The program must be completed within 8 years from the date of original enrollment.

Steps for Advancing to Candidacy

The process of transitioning from Pre-Candidate to Candidate is referred to as “advancing to Candidacy.” The three primary requirements for advancing to Candidacy are: (1) research rotations during Year 1, (2) acquiring the necessary number of Departmental course credits, and (3) successfully submitting the qualifying paper and passing the written and oral Qualifying Examinations.

Requirement 1: Research Rotations

Incoming students will not select a research advisor initially. Rather, each incoming student will be required to complete three rotations during her/his first year in the PhD program. The first rotation will last from August through December, the second from January through March, and the third from April through June. Each rotation will be housed within the research team headed **by a UM faculty member. (These faculty members do not necessarily have to be housed within the Division of Prevention Science and Community Health, or even within the Department of Public Health Sciences.)** Following their first year in the program, students will be required to choose a research advisor. This advisor can be, but does not have to be, a faculty member in the Department of Public Health Sciences.

During each rotation, students will be expected to participate in research within the faculty member’s research program. This research participation can include (but is not limited to) participating in data collection, observing intervention activities (where applicable), collaborating on statistical analyses, and preparing manuscripts and grant proposals. Rotations are intended to immerse students within a variety of research programs, to familiarize them with the research process, and to help them select the research program that they would like to work in for the remainder of their PhD studies. **The student and the rotation member are required to sign a contract that lists the deliverables and expectations for the rotation period. This contract will also be signed by the PhD program director.**

Requirement 2: Selecting a Faculty Advisor

At the end of Year 1, students should select a faculty research advisor who will supervise the remainder of their doctoral research. The advisor is expected to support the student’s stipend through research grants or discretionary accounts. Students may also serve as teaching assistants (see Teaching Assistantships, below) to cover part of their stipends.

Note that the faculty advisor DOES NOT have to be housed within the Department of Public Health Sciences – but students selecting advisors outside DPHS should seek approval from the Program Director.

Students and their advisors will sign yearly contracts detailing the terms, deliverables, and expectations for the collaboration. The PhD program director will also sign the contract. Changes in

the terms of the contract must be agreed upon by the student and the faculty advisor, and approved by the PhD program director. Disputes between students and faculty advisors will be handled by the PhD program director and the director of graduate studies. Disputes must be initiated in writing and will be granted a formal hearing.

Requirement 3: Completing the Course Requirements

As a Pre-Candidate, a total of 59 course credits must be completed. Students must continually maintain a GPA of 3.0 over all courses. A student will be notified that he/she is not making sufficient progress if his/her cumulative GPA falls below 3.00 in any semester or if a single grade below a “C” is obtained in any course. Notification will be given by written letter from the Graduate Programs Office immediately following the close of the deficient semester. The cumulative GPA must be raised to at least a 3.00 by the end of the next semester in which registration occurs or the student will be required to withdraw from the Graduate Program. No longer than 2 summer sessions or one fall or spring semester may pass without registration once a student has been placed on academic probation.

A minimum of 2 biostatistics courses (i.e., EPH 601, EPH 602) at the master’s level are required prior to entering the doctoral program. In very unusual circumstances, students who do not meet these requirements will have to complete them after being admitted to the doctoral program (which will increase the duration for completing the doctoral program) with a special waiver by the PhD Admissions Committee. **Pre-requisite coursework completed during the doctoral program (i.e. EPH 601, EPH 602) will not count as accumulated credit toward completion of the PhD degree. Coursework completed in a previously earned degree cannot count for credit towards earning the PhD degree.**

In addition, based on CEPH accreditation requirements, students entering the prevention science doctoral program without prior and approved public health training are required to complete EPH 600 Introduction to the Science and Practice of Public Health during their studies. Credits from this course will not count as accumulated credit toward completion of the PhD degree.

Coursework requirements for the doctoral program include:

Year 1, Fall

1. EPH 617 Introduction to Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (3 credits)
2. EPH 700 Professional Development Seminar Series (1 credit)
3. EPH 717 Integrating Behavioral Health Theories and Models into Prevention Science (3 credits)
4. EPH 651 Research Methods (3 credits)
5. EPH 703 Advanced Statistical Methods I (4 credits)

Year 1, Spring

1. EPH 705 Advanced Statistical Methods II (3 credits)
2. EPH 700 Professional Development Seminar Series (1 credit)
3. EPH 625 Research Ethics (3 credits)
4. Elective #1 (3 credits)

Summer Semester

1. EPH 604 Clinical Trials (3 credits) (Summer I)
2. EPH 623 Determinants of Health and Health Disparities Across the Life Course (3 credits) (Summer I)
3. Elective #2 (3 credits)

Year 2, Fall

1. PSY 633 Structural Equation Modeling OR EPS 673 An Introduction to Structural Equation Modeling for Multivariable Data (both 3 credits)
2. EPH 731 Designing and Adapting Preventive Interventions (3 credits)
3. EPH 700 Professional Development Seminar Series (1 credit)
4. EPH 752 Advanced Research Methods (3 credits)
5. Elective #3 (3 credits)

Year 2, Spring

1. EPH 656 Qualitative Research Methods (3 credits) – *this course is offered every other year*
2. EPH 700 Professional Development Seminar Series (1 credit)
3. **BST 650 Longitudinal and Multilevel Data Analysis (3 credits)**
4. EPH 732 Implementation Science Theories and Methods (3 credits)
5. EPH 647 Community Based Participatory Research (3 credits)

Year 2, Summer

Qualifying Exam takes place during the summer of Year 2.

Year 3, Fall

1. EPH 830 Doctoral Dissertation (pre-candidacy) or EPH 840 Doctoral Dissertation (post-candidacy) (3 credits)
2. EPH 701 Innovations in Prevention Science Methodology (1 credit)

Year 3, Spring

1. EPH 830 Doctoral Dissertation (pre-candidacy) or EPH 840 Doctoral Dissertation (post-candidacy) (3 credits)

Year 4, Fall

1. EPH 830 Doctoral Dissertation (pre-candidacy) or EPH 840 Doctoral Dissertation (post-candidacy) (3 credits)
2. EPH 701 Innovations in Prevention Science Methodology (1 credit)

Year 4, Spring

1. EPH 830 Doctoral Dissertation (pre-candidacy) or EPH 840 Doctoral Dissertation (post-candidacy) (3 credits)

Electives can include:

1. COM 698 Using Communication to Change Health and Environmental Behavior: Theory and Practice
2. EPS 674 Introduction to Multilevel Modeling
3. EPH 652 Health Policy
4. EPH 628 Social Epidemiology
5. EPH 626 Methods of Environmental Epidemiology
6. CTI 601 Introduction to Clinical and Translational Research
7. CTI 602 Writing for Translational and Clinical Science
8. PhD Courses from DPHS Epidemiology or Biostatistics programs
9. PhD courses from Community Well-Being, Developmental, Clinical, or Health Psychology programs
10. Other courses as determined by advisor

Note: PhD students should not take master's-level elective courses. Our experience is that these courses are not rewarding for PhD students.

Note: PhD students cannot use their tuition fellowship to take undergraduate or language courses.

All structured courses toward the PhD program must be taken for a letter grade and cannot be taken pass/fail. Research credits at the 800 level (i.e., EPH 830, 840, and 850) and seminar credits (i.e., EPH 700/EPH 701 Professional Development Seminar) are only completed as pass/fail.

Independent credit registrations (i.e., EPH 782 Advanced Independent Study) may be completed with permission of the Prevention Science Program Director and selected faculty supervisor. Grade assignment will be pass/fail (S/U). The option for letter grade assignment in EPH 782 may be discussed with the faculty supervisor and Prevention Science Programs Director, if desired.

Requirement 4: Submitting the Qualifying Paper and Successfully Passing the Qualifying Examinations

The Qualifying Examinations are traditionally administered after the second year of the doctoral program, although this time frame is flexible. The exams are only offered once per calendar year, usually in May or June. It is recommended that students who plan to take the Qualifying Examinations consult with their faculty advisor and discuss preparatory coursework and readiness for taking the examination several months in advance of the scheduled examination date.

Qualifying Examination Format and Structure

In general, the exams are intended to ensure students have sufficient competency in the broad areas of prevention science and community health to be prepared for a career in this field. These broad areas include study design, statistical methods, and other analytic approaches.

The Qualifying Examination is not designed to be a recitation of a collection of facts presented in a specific course, but rather is designed to probe the student's ability to identify important issues

when presented with a problem, generate a series of arguments relevant to these issues, and be able to formulate a well-reasoned approach based on the arguments being presented. These exams are also designed to evaluate a student's knowledge of basic and advanced conceptual, methods, and biostatistical issues.

The written exam will occur first, and the oral examination is generally held within 2 weeks of the written exam. In-class examinations are restricted, timed and will be proctored by examination committee members and program administration. Students are not permitted to access the internet or any electronic devices (e.g. cell phones, tablets, laptops), other than what is provided by the program for the exam. During the in-class examination, students are only permitted to exit the exam room for restroom breaks, brief food preparation (students bring their own lunch/snacks), and previously approved accommodations by the relevant university office, as appropriate. Any individual break taken from the exam counts against the total time allotted to complete the exam.

A take-home examination may be included as a second portion of the written examination process. The take-home examination is timed and requires independent work by the student. Students may not consult with other persons during the take-home examination but consultation of literature sources is permitted and sources must be appropriately cited (per University guidelines). Take-home exams are returned to the program via email submission at a prescribed date and time. Failure to meet the required submission deadline will result in points deducted from the exam score.

After completion of the written portion of the exam, the student's qualifying exam committee will review and grade the written exam and then meet with the student for an oral examination. The primary purpose of the oral examination is to have the students defend their responses to the written exam, although new questions may be asked by the Committee. Students are generally notified of the exam results within one week of completing the oral examination.

In addition to these two required exams, students will be required to write a qualifying paper. This paper should address key issues, advances, and problems in the student's area(s) of interest, and it should demonstrate mastery of the field and a vision for the direction the field is going (or could potentially go). *The qualifying paper must be submitted by July 15th of the student's second year, unless the deadline is changed by the committee and approved by the PhD program director.* Qualifying papers will be evaluated by the student's qualifying exam committee. Students will be encouraged to submit their qualifying papers for publication, possibly with faculty members or other students as coauthors.

Intention to Take the Qualifying Exams and General Timelines

All students must notify the PhD Program Director of their intention to take the exams before the end of the spring term of the year they plan to take the exam. Students who intend to take the exam will then be notified with specific details pertaining to the written and oral exams.

Students will have only two chances to take the qualifying exams. Students who fail the qualifying exams twice will be dismissed from the program.

Grading Process

Each exam question will be read and graded by the faculty member who wrote the question. Faculty in leadership roles at the Graduate School may choose to recuse themselves from grading the qualifying exams. If they recuse themselves, such faculty will nominate another faculty member who will grade their exam questions. Each question will be graded on a three point Likert scale (0 = fail, 1= conditional pass, 2 = pass). The faculty member grading each question will assign a final grade for each student's answer and will make a recommendation of pass, conditional pass, or fail. In the case of a conditional pass, the Examination Committee will meet to review the exam and approve any conditions for the student to pass the exam. Following this meeting, the following materials will be made available to students to review in the Office of the Graduate Program Administrator: (a) the overall results, and breakdown of results per content area--pass, conditional pass, or fail; (b) the requirements of a conditional pass or next step for failed exams (if necessary); and (c) a copy of student answers with graders' comments (if available).

Criteria for Qualifying Exam Grades

There are three possible outcomes for the written and oral qualifying exams: pass, conditional pass, and fail.

- An **unconditional pass** requires that the student be rated as passing on all questions.
- A **conditional pass** can occur when the student has failed or conditionally passed some of the questions, but is rated as passing on at least 50% of the questions. For a conditional pass to be granted, no more than 25% of the questions can be rated as failed. Students who receive a conditional pass will be required to satisfy a condition in the area in which they received a score of conditional pass and fail. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, taking courses for credit, completing exercises in addition to the course for credit, tutorials, independent remedial work guided by the examination committee and/or taking another exam. Any conditions that are imposed must be satisfied before students are admitted to candidacy and can begin working on their dissertation proposal. Furthermore, students should complete the conditions(s) before the qualifying exams are offered again. It must be emphasized that the conditional pass must be replaced with a pass before the exam is offered again – or else the conditional pass becomes a fail. Failure to meet this deadline will result in retaking the entire examination. Students who receive a conditional pass on their first exam attempt are required to score a full unconditional pass on their second exam attempt. Failure to secure a full unconditional pass on the second attempt results in dismissal from the program.
- A **fail** requires a failing score on more than 25% of the questions. Students who fail will be required to complete remedial work (ex. retake classes, other requirements) in a specified timeframe outlined by the Examination Committee and then sit for the exam a second time at a regularly scheduled exam time. Failure to secure a full unconditional pass on the second attempt results in dismissal from the program.

Appeals Procedure

Students may appeal the decision on the results of their exam. Students wishing to do so should submit a formal written request to the Chair of the examination committee within 30 days of receiving the results of the qualifying examination. If no appeal is filed within 30 days, the student forfeits the right to appeal the qualifying exam result. Appeals will be evaluated by the committee, by the division director, and by the chair of the Department of Public Health Sciences.

Teaching Assistantship

During Years 2, 3, and 4, students are encouraged serve as teaching assistants for master's level courses. Please refer to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for TA Service (PhD Students), for additional information.

Formally Advancing to Candidacy

When a Pre-Candidate has satisfied all the requirements and is ready to advance to candidacy, the student should complete an Application for Admission to Candidacy for the PhD Form, which is available at <https://grad.miami.edu/policies-and-forms/forms/index.html> and submit this application through Dynamic Forms. The Graduate School has strict deadlines for completing the requirements to advance to Candidacy, and it is the responsibility of the student to check the website of the Graduate School and/or speak to the Doctoral Program Administrator regarding these deadlines. Per University policy, no student may receive the degree in the same semester or summer session in which he or she is admitted to candidacy.

Formation of the Dissertation Committee

In preparation for the Dissertation, students, with consultation and collaboration from their faculty advisor/Prevention Science Program Director, will choose a Dissertation Chair. The student, should then, in consultation and collaboration of their Dissertation Chair (and their faculty advisor, if needed) choose the remaining dissertation committee members. Upon formation of the Dissertation Committee, the Dissertation Committee Form should be completed and submitted to the Graduate School via Dynamic Forms. This form can be found at <https://grad.miami.edu/policies-and-forms/forms/index.html>. If the composition of the Dissertation Committee changes at any point during the dissertation process, students must resubmit the Committee Composition Change Request Form (through Dynamic Forms) to reflect the revisions.

Composition of the Dissertation Committee

Dissertation committees must have at least **four** members. Other requirements with regards to the composition of the Dissertation Committee Members are as follow:

- 1) The Chair of the Dissertation Committee must have a primary/secondary and Graduate Faculty appointment at the University of Miami (not necessarily in the Department of Public Health Sciences).
- 2) At least two of the additional committee members must have a Graduate Faculty Appointment in the Department of Public Health Sciences.
- 3) The fourth, "outside" member of the Committee can be external to the Department (i.e., elsewhere at UM) or outside the university. The student must obtain approval from the Dissertation Chair for this fourth member.

- 4) Students are strongly encouraged to have at least one basic researcher (e.g., etiologist, epidemiologist, developmental psychologist) and at least one interventionist, implementation scientist, or community researcher on their committees.

Eligibility for Service on Dissertation Committees

Nominations for faculty to engage in dissertation committee service are made by means of the Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Ph.D., which must be signed by the Graduate Program Director and the PhD Program Director. All nominations must be approved by the Graduate School and are subject to the guidelines of the Graduate School.

The Dissertation Proposal

Following the formation of their dissertation committee, doctoral students are required to satisfactorily develop their dissertation proposal. During the defense of the proposal, the student presents their dissertation proposal to the dissertation committee. It is expected that students will give their presentation within 6 to 12 months of successful completion of the Qualifying Examination. Failure to do so shall result in intensive scrutiny regarding the reasons for lack of timely progression. Students are required to be registered for at least one credit during the term in which they present their proposal.

The Written Dissertation Proposal

The written proposal should include the following elements and should be between 5-10 pages using standard font and format:

- 1) **Summary Abstract** (1 page)
- 2) **General Literature Review**
- 3) **Overall Research Questions and Hypotheses**
- 4) **Integrative Plan for the 3 manuscripts (how they will be tied together)**
- 5) **Research Methods (including source of data for secondary analyses)**
- 6) **Data Analytic Plan for each manuscript**
- 7) **References**

While every proposal should contain all the required elements, the particular emphasis, subject matter and page lengths will depend upon the nature of the proposed research.

Format and Structure of the Oral Proposal

The oral presentation and submission of a written dissertation proposal implies prior planning and review by the student's dissertation chair, as well as consultation with other members of the student's dissertation committee. Both the student and mentor share responsibility for informing members of the dissertation committee about progress or modifications in the research protocol. The oral proposal defense should proceed only when all committee members indicate that the student is ready to propose.

The Oral Presentation of the Dissertation Proposal

Although the format and specific content of the oral presentation of the dissertation proposal is up to the Chair and the Committee, the oral presentation of the dissertation proposal should include a statement of research questions and/or hypotheses and the following elements:

- 1) A rationale for the questions, including the public health significance or implications

- 2) The degree to which the research draws upon appropriate theoretical or conceptual models
- 3) Adequacy of the study design to address the research questions
- 4) Data gathering approaches - the degree to which the data gathering approaches address threats to validity of the research (for secondary analyses, this refers to the ability of the available data to answer the research questions proposed)
- 5) Data analysis plan, including implications for inference and generalizability
- 6) Strengths and limitations of the study

Following the presentation, the Committee members will have an opportunity to ask questions and then decide whether the student has passed, passed with conditions, or failed the dissertation proposal oral defense. It is expected that no more than two attempts at this stage will be required for the student who expects to achieve a doctoral degree. Upon satisfactorily defending the dissertation proposal, the student can begin carrying out their research plan.

The Dissertation

After successful development and defense of the dissertation proposal, the student is ready to execute their research plan. This phase generally takes 6 to 12 months. It is expected that the student meet with his/her Dissertation Chair during this time to ensure the accurate and timely completion of their research plan. Detailed formatting requirements are provided, please see <https://grad.miami.edu/electronic-thesis-and-dissertation/index.html>. Students are strongly encouraged to consult this site often for all stages of their dissertation to ensure all Graduate School requirements are met. Dissertations previously submitted electronically are also available at this site. Please contact the Doctoral Program Administrator for a complete list of student names/dissertation titles available on this site. (Please note that the three manuscripts should appear as chapters in the dissertation, which will be submitted to the Graduate School as a single document.)

Scheduling the Dissertation Defense

After the Dissertation Chair agrees that the student is ready to defend his/her dissertation and all members of the Dissertation Committee have read the dissertation and provided feedback to the Chair and student (generally within 4 weeks of receipt of the dissertation document), the student can schedule his/her dissertation defense with all committee members. Students are responsible for setting their defense date within the stated Graduate School deadline for the semester they plan to defend. A deadline is set and stated on each semester's Academic Calendar, available at <https://grad.miami.edu/electronic-thesis-and-dissertation/defense-and-submission-deadlines/index.html>.

It is expected that the student e-mail a copy of the dissertation to all Committee members 4-6 weeks prior to the oral defense. After the oral defense date is scheduled, the student is to notify the Doctoral Program Administrator as to the defense date of the dissertation. The student will then submit the Defense Notice Form to the Graduate School. (through Dynamic Forms). A copy of the form is provided at: <https://grad.miami.edu/policies-and-forms/forms/index.html>. The Doctoral Program Administrator will e-mail the Department notifying all faculty, students, and staff of the defense of the dissertation. It is the responsibility of the student to work with the Doctoral Program Administrator to secure space for the defense as well as to secure the necessary equipment (e.g., projector), if needed. Please note that dissertation defenses are public events and are open to faculty, students, and members of the general public.

The Oral Defense of the Dissertation

In addition to the requirements for the proposal, the oral dissertation defense (usually 1 hour, but can be longer or shorter at the discretion of the Dissertation Chair) should include:

- 1) The results for each of the research questions or aims, including a description of the statistical methods used
- 2) A discussion of the study findings
- 3) Conclusions
- 4) Limitations of the study
- 5) Recommendations for future research

Following the presentation, as per Graduate School requirements, the Chair will those non-committee members present to leave the room. At this time, the Committee will have an opportunity to ask questions about the dissertation, the defense, and other related issues. Following the questions, the student will be asked to leave the room to allow the members of the Dissertation Committee to discuss his or her performance. The Committee will decide whether the student has passed or failed the dissertation defense. Following this decision, the Committee will invite the student to return and inform her/him of the Committee's decision. If the student is not successful in defending the dissertation, the Chair and the Committee members will inform the student as to what the next steps are in his/her program of study. If a student is successful, the Certificate of Defense Form must be completed, signed by the dissertation committee members (student circulates electronically to the committee via Dynamic Forms).

Completion and Publication of the Dissertation

There are several steps students must take in the final stretch towards completing the dissertation and getting it published. It is strongly recommended that students visit the Graduate School website at <http://grad.miami.edu/electronic-thesis-and-dissertation/post-defense-essentials/index.html> for more detailed guidance on the parameters for completing the dissertation.

Formatting Your Dissertation

All doctoral dissertations must be formatted according to University of Miami Graduate School requirements. All formatting requirements are available at https://www.grad.miami.edu/assets/pdf/2019_formatting_guidelines.pdf. This site also includes examples, templates and necessary forms required during the dissertation process. Previously submitted dissertations are listed in the University Dissertation Library (EDT).

Publishing Your Dissertation

Students are strongly encouraged to speak to their Chair and other dissertation members about submitting peer-reviewed manuscripts for publication during their dissertation and immediately following their defense. <http://grad.miami.edu/electronic-thesis-and-dissertation/copyright-and-publishing-information/index.html>

Deadlines for Completing the Final Requirements

The University of Miami has strict deadlines for each term by which you must have completed all of your final requirements, including turning in the correct number of dissertation copies and electronic submission to the Graduate School. These deadlines can be found at

<http://grad.miami.edu/electronic-thesis-and-dissertation/defense-and-submission-deadlines/index.html>.

Additional Requirements of Candidates

In addition to the required coursework, the successful completion of the qualifying examinations, the teaching assistantship, successfully defending the dissertation proposal, and successfully defending the dissertation, doctoral students are required to complete the following requirements:

- 1) The Departmental Grand Rounds consists of a series of educational lectures in the area of epidemiology and public health. Speakers at the Grand Rounds include both Department faculty and speakers from other institutions around the country. Students are expected to attend most of the Department Grand Rounds. Students may also elect to attend other lecture series offered by the Department or other Departments on the medical campus (e.g. Distinguished Lecture Series, Biostatistics Roundtables).
- 2) Students must submit at least one first-authored manuscript for publication during their doctoral program. The manuscript does not have to be accepted for publication (in order to graduate), but it does have to be deemed publishable by the student's faculty advisor or mentor

Graduate Student Financial Support

The Department of Public Health Sciences has limited resources with respect to student financial support. The University will provide doctoral students with a tuition scholarship during their doctoral program (student must remain in good standing during their studies to receive tuition support). Additionally, students will receive a one-year stipend of \$31,000 (effective June 1, 2020) for their first year of study only. After this time, students must work with their faculty advisor to find funding from a Department faculty member (or another faculty member in other departments) to support their stipend for the remaining years of their doctoral program. Additionally, students are strongly encouraged to work with their faculty mentor to seek their own funding (e.g., F31 or F30 dissertation awards through NIH, fellowships through foundations such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, or other training fellowship across campus such as the fellowships from the Developmental Center for AIDS Research).

Website Quick Reference Guide

There are many helpful websites that you can visit, not the least of which is our own Department of Public Health Sciences homepage at <http://publichealth.med.miami.edu>. Below are also links to other useful websites that has pertinent information for doctoral students:

University of Miami Tools/Resources: <https://welcome.miami.edu/tools/index.html>

Graduate School website: <http://grad.miami.edu/about-us/welcome-and-overview/index.html>

Miller School of Medicine, Office of Graduate Studies: <http://biomed.med.miami.edu/>

Graduate School Helpful Links and Resources: <http://grad.miami.edu/about-us/resources/index.html>

Doctoral Student and Faculty Forms: <https://grad.miami.edu/policies-and-forms/forms/index.html>

Appendix A: Acknowledgment of Receipt and Review

I, (Print Name) _____

acknowledge receiving web link directions to access the 2020-2021 Department of Public Health Sciences Prevention Science and Community Health Student Handbook, the UM Graduate Academic Bulletin and University Graduate Honor Code. I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the requirements of the University of Miami, the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, and my graduate program of study.

Prevention Science and Community Health Student Handbook, 2020-2021

<https://graduatestudies.publichealth.med.miami.edu/assets/pdf/current-students-pdf/forms-handbooks/final-phd-prev-program-handbook-2020.pdf>

UM Graduate Academic Bulletin

<http://bulletin.miami.edu/graduate-academic-programs/>

UM Graduate Honor Code

https://doso.studentaffairs.miami.edu/assets/pdf/policies/student_rights_and_responsibilities_handbook.pdf#page=10

Photography/Video Release Consent

Yes ___ My photograph/video may be reproduced and released for use by the University of Miami's Department of Public Health Sciences.

No ___ My photograph may not be reproduced and released for use by the by the University of Miami's Department of Public Health Sciences.

Date _____

Signature

Appendix B: Acknowledgment of Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is a serious offense with serious consequences. Students who plagiarize can be dismissed from the University.

What is Plagiarism? Why is it Important? Merriam-Webster definitions for plagiarism:

- Using the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own words or ideas.
- Stealing and passing off-the ideas or words of another-as one's own.
- Using another's production without crediting the source.
- Committing literary theft.
- Presenting as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.¹

In university courses, we are continually engaged with other people's ideas: we read them in texts, hear them in lecture, discuss them in class, and incorporate them into our own writing. As a result, it is very important that we give credit where it is due. Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information. *Plagiarism is a violation of the scientific community's ethical standards and a violation of the University of Miami's Graduate Student Honor Code.*

How Can Students Avoid Plagiarism?

- **Learn what plagiarism is.** Many types of plagiarism exist-from cloning to recycling. [Know the types of plagiarism to avoid them.](#)
- **Understand how to cite your sources.** Confirm which style of citing sources your instructors expect as they have many to choose from. Know the style each instructor prefers. If you have a choice, choose one style and use it consistently.
- **Plan your assignment work.** Summarize your original idea and plan how you intend to express it. Create drafts and outlines, indicate what sources you intend to find, and explain how you intend to use them.
- **Know your subject.** The more familiar you're with the subject, the more likely you are to use your own words. The more sources you look at, the more familiar you'll become with the subject. Be sure to track your sources.
- **Take notes when you review sources.** Good note taking can help organize your thoughts and express someone else's ideas in your own words.
- **Cite your sources.** If you're unsure, err on the side of caution and cite your sources.
- **Be careful to clearly identify someone else's ideas and words.** Citing sources isn't enough. Be clear as to who said what. When it's due, give credit to your sources.

[How to Use SafeAssign to avoid plagiarism?](#) SafeAssign is a tool available in Blackboard to help promote originality and create opportunities to help students identify how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase. SafeAssign is based on a unique text-matching algorithm capable of detecting exact and inexact matching between a paper and source material. Assignments are compared against several databases containing millions of articles dating from the 1990s to the present. After the comparison, a report is generated that details the percentage of text in your paper that matches existing sources. Visit the Blackboard Help page to learn how to create a [SafeAssignment](#).

I, (Print Name) _____

acknowledge receipt of and understand the Plagiarism Policy.

Signature _____

Date _____