

Department of Behavioral and Community Health
School of Public Health
University of Maryland College Park

Ph.D. Degree

PROGRAM GUIDELINES For Students Enrolling in 2018 & Beyond

The University of Maryland at College Park (UMCP) is located in Prince George's County, eight miles from the National Capitol Building in downtown Washington, D. C., and thirty miles from Baltimore. It is located in the midst of one of the greatest concentrations of research facilities and intellectual talent in the nation.

Area resources of particular interest to graduate students of the Department of Behavioral and Community Health include the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, the National Agricultural Library, the Health Services Research Library, specific libraries of the various National Institutes of Health, the libraries of five major Universities and three medical schools in Washington, as well as the libraries of the University of Maryland Medical School, the National Center for Health Statistics, and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Department of Behavioral and Community Health
1234 SPH Building - Valley Drive
University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742
Phone: (301) 405-2464, E-mail: ksharp1@umd.edu
June 2020
Enrollment in PhD program in 2018 and beyond

I. The UMCP School of Public Health

The UMCP School of Public Health is one of 13 colleges and schools on the University of Maryland at College Park campus. The mission of the College is to promote and protect the health and well-being of citizens of Maryland, the nation and the world through interdisciplinary education, research, public policy and practice. This mission is carried out through the different departments and institutes that compose the School of Public Health including: Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Family Science, Health Services Administration, Kinesiology, Behavioral and Community Health, and the Maryland Institute of Environmental Health. Additionally, the School has several centers and laboratories including the Center for Health Literacy, The Center for Health Equity, and The Prevention Research Center (the full list of centers is available at www.sph.umd.edu).

II. The Department of Behavioral and Community Health

The Department of Behavioral & Community Health is an autonomous department within the UMCP School of Public Health. The department conducts professional preparation programs at both graduate and undergraduate levels. The graduate programs are designed to prepare professional health educators with specific research skills and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical setting.

Resources within the department include the Center for Young Adult Health and Development (CYAHD), the Community Health Awareness, Messages Prevention (CHAMP) Program, and the Community THRIVES Lab.

The faculty of the DBCH is made up of individuals from diverse disciplines with multi-faceted interests. This diversity is a unique strength of the department and enhances the education graduate students receive. The faculty supports course work, research and practice experiences in many areas including health communication, stress management, health behavior, health policy, adolescent health, women's health, and minority health.

III. Admission Requirements

To be considered for admission into the doctoral program in Behavioral and Community Health applicants are reviewed with regard to the following criteria:

1. Quality of previous undergraduate and graduate course work (GPA)
2. Strength of GRE scores (taken within the previous five years)
3. Letters of recommendation from 3 persons competent to judge your probability of success in graduate school and that address your academic capabilities and potential
4. Congruence of professional goals with those of the program, as described in your statement of goals and interests

5. Relevance of work and research experience
6. Admission pre-requisites
 - Six (6) credits in Psychology, Sociology or Anthropology

We primarily admit full-time students; however, we do admit a limited number of outstanding part-time students who are able to maintain a high level of commitment and determination to obtain their degree through all phases of their program including the dissertation phase. All students must complete their degree in nine (9) years in accordance with University of Maryland Graduate School policy. Students must advance to candidacy within 5 years of enrolling in the program and then complete their dissertation within 4 years of advancing to candidacy.

Submit on-line (www.sophas.org) to the Schools of Public Health Application System. A **COMPLETE** application includes the following:

- On-line application for admission
- GRE scores, submitted electronically to SOPHAS (DO NOT select a department code)
- Official undergraduate degree transcripts, with undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 and graduate GPA of at least 3.5
- Three letters of recommendation
- A statement of goals and interests
- A resume or curriculum vitae

Complete applications must be submitted by November 15th for best consideration for funding. The final deadline for all others is **February 15th**. We offer fall admission only; there is no spring admission.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Apply early! Applications not submitted by February 15th will not be considered.

Students who are admitted without an MPH degree and wish to pursue an MPH degree in the Behavioral and Community Health within the DBCH may do so if they decide to pursue the master's degree within their first 30 credits (the core courses). However, students must formally apply through SOPHAS and understand that admission to the MPH program is not guaranteed nor is funding promised through their PhD application. The only credits that could be used for both the MPH and the PhD are the 30 core credits which are shared by both degree programs. Students must finish all MPH degree requirements before continuing with any PhD program coursework or independent studies.

If an admitted PhD student decides to pursue an MPH degree in Behavioral and Community Health further along in their program (after the first 30 credits), he/she must formally apply through SOPHAS and understand that admission to the MPH program is not guaranteed nor is any additional funding. In addition, the student must finish all degree requirements for the PhD before starting any coursework for the MPH degree. If a

student decides to apply to the MPH program five years or more after their received their PhD, he/she must repeat the 30 core credits.

III. Degree Requirements

General Information

All part-time and full-time students must advance to candidacy within five years of admission to the doctoral program. To be advanced to candidacy the student must have completed all coursework and have successfully completed the qualifying examination. Doctoral Candidates must then complete the dissertation requirements within a four year period following admission to candidacy. Thus, a student admitted to candidacy any time in the fall semester should be prepared to graduate no later than December four years later.

Doctoral Program Courses

Program Co-Requisites:

Nine (9) credits of coursework in a minimum of two different health topical areas (e.g., smoking, alcohol, nutrition, etc.) These courses may be completed either prior to or following admission and must be completed prior to qualifying examination. They do not count as doctoral curriculum credits, and do not have to be graduate level courses.

Core Courses: (37 credits)

Credits

SPHL 600w	Foundations of Public Health	3
SPHL 602w	Epidemiology and Biostatistics	4
SPHL 603w	Applied Data Lab	1
SPHL 611w or 612w	Public Health Ethics or Research Ethics	1
MIEH 600w	Foundations of Environmental Health	3
HLSA 601w	Introduction to Health Systems	3
EPIB 697	Public Health Data Management	3
HLTH 609	Journal Club (must take at least once, but may repeat)	1
HLTH 625w	Community Assessment Through Qualitative Methods	3
HLTH 665w	Health Behavior I	3
HLTH 672	Public Health Informatics	3
HLTH 710w	Methods and Techniques of Research	3
HLTH 776	Community Health Program Evaluation	3
HLTH 780w	Community Health	3

PhD Advanced Theory: (3 credits)

HLTH 666	Health Behavior II	3
----------	--------------------	---

PhD Advanced Epidemiology: (3 credits)

EPIB XXXw Any advanced epidemiology course 3

PhD Advanced Research Methods & Statistics: (12 credits)

HLTH 652	Quantitative Research Methods I in Public Health	3
HLTH 653	Quantitative Research Methods II in Public Health	3
HLTH 711	Advanced Methods of Research	3
HLTH 712	Applied Research Methods in BCH	3

Qualifying Examination (QE)

All courses with the exception of HLSA 601, MIEH 600 and EPIB 697 must be completed with a grade of B-or better in order to take the QE.

The QE must be taken either in the semester the student is completing her/his coursework or the next semester. Students must pass all sections of the examination before advancement to candidacy and before commencement of dissertation research. The Graduate Program Director must have approved a completed program of study before the Qualifying Examination. Refer to the Qualifying Examination Guidelines for additional information (available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section).

Individualized Research Plan/Advanced Electives: (15 credits)

HLTH 898 Independent Study/Mentored research experience (6 credits)

One 3-credit 600-level or higher elective in each of the following areas: (1) theory (2) research methods (3) statistical analysis

Advance to Candidacy

Once the Qualifying Examination and the Individualized Research Plan/Advanced Electives are completed, doctoral students must apply for Advancement to Candidacy using the Graduate School's required form, which is available at www.gradschool.umd.edu.

Independent Doctoral Dissertation Research: (minimum 12 credits)

HLTH 899 Doctoral Dissertation Research

TOTAL CREDITS = 82

NOTES:

(1) The majority of core courses may be waived without substitution. This excludes: HLTH 609, HLTH 672, HLTH 776 and EPIB 697. See course specific waiver processes below.

(2) Course specific waiver processes:

(a) SPHL 600 – MPH or MSPH degree from an accredited SPH

(b) HLTH 665 and HLTH 625 – Waiver packet (include cover sheet, syllabus of previous course and how all UMD course competencies have been met). Submit to advisor for review. If approved, then submit to course instructor and then submit to Director of Graduate Studies.

(c) HLTH 710 – Waiver exam (must score 80% or higher) administered in August the week before classes begin.

(d) HLTH 780 – Waiver packet (include cover sheet and documentation of “community engagement” experience [e.g., Peace Corps member, previous job as community organizer]). Submit to Director of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Program Committee will review the packet.

(e) SPHL 611 or 612 – Waiver packet (include cover sheet, syllabus of previous course and how all UMD SPHL competencies have been met). Submit to advisor for review. If approved, then submit to course instructor and then submit to Director of Graduate Studies.

(f) EPIB XXX – Waivable only if at least two epidemiology courses have been taken (i.e., foundations + another topic and/or population-specific epidemiology)

(g) SPHL 602 and SPHL 603 – MPH /MS/ PhD students who have earned at least a “B” in both a graduate level introductory epidemiology course and an introductory biostatistics course at an accredited school of public health or other accredited program of public health within the 36 months prior to matriculating may waive out of SPHL602. Students who have taken graduate level introductory courses in both epidemiology and biostatistics from a non-accredited program, taken the courses more than 24 months prior to matriculating, or who will serve as TA’s for SPHL 602/603, are **required** to pass a waiver examination for SPHL602 (70% or better) or take SPHL602*. There will be no exceptions. The waiver exam is offered twice a year. One is offered during the week (in the fall semester) before classes start to allow students to register in the event they do not pass the placement exam. The second one is given at the end of the spring semester. Students are permitted to take it **once**. Students will be provided a list of topics in order to prepare for the exam. SPHL602 and SPHL603 are integrated, what students learn in SPHL602 will be applied in SPHL603 using the SAS Point-and-Click program. It is recommended that PhD and MS students who must take SPHL602 also enroll in SPHL603. Course waivers may be requested using the *SPH Course Waiver* request form.

(h) MIEH 600 – MPH or MSPH from an accredited SPH

(i) HLSA 601 – MPH or MSPH from an accredited SPH

(3) Current pre-reqs that may be altered with new curriculum:

(a) HLTH 665 and HLTH 710 are pre-reqs for HLTH 776

(b) HLTH 710 is a pre-req for HLTH 711 and HLTH 712

- (c) HLTH 665 is a pre-req for HLTH 666
- (d) SPHL 602/603 (or another graduate level biostatistics foundations course) is a pre-req for HLTH 652
- (e) HLTH 652 is a pre-req for HLTH 653

(4) Doctoral students may take a maximum of two 400-level courses in program. All electives must be taken subsequent to admission.

Independent Doctoral Dissertation Research: (minimum 12 credits)

HLTH 899 Doctoral Dissertation Research

IV. Completing Coursework

Course Waiver/Substitution Policies

Students are expected to demonstrate competency in the areas covered by the following coursework, prerequisites, co-requisites, and the equivalent of the DBCH Core course work. If prior equivalent coursework has been taken, any combination of the Core courses and co-requisites may be waived without substitution except for the following courses: HLTH 609, HLTH 672, HLTH 776 and EPIB 697. If Advanced Theory and Applications, Advanced Epidemiology or Advanced Research Methods and Statistics courses are waived, they must be substituted. Waivers and substitutions must receive approval from the student's advisor, the instructor of course, and the DBCH Director of Graduate Studies. It is **strongly recommended** that newly admitted doctoral students submit any waiver or substitution paperwork to their assigned advisor for the initial review early in the summer prior to enrolling because the waiver/substitution process can take anywhere from 2 days to 8 weeks. All waiver/substitution requests must be processed within the student's first semester of enrollment. To begin the waiver/substitution process, print out the **REQUEST FOR WAIVER/SUBSTITUTION** cover sheet for each course request. The cover sheet is available on the DBCH website. Go to www.sph.umd.edu/bch and look under the GRADUATE section.

Program Plan of Study

The PhD Program Plan is intended to help students work out a time line for completing the PhD degree. Students should consult the Projected BCH Course Offerings on our department website (www.sph.umd.edu/bch > GRADUATE > PhD > Projected Course Offerings) and the UMD Schedule of Classes at www.testudo.umd.edu in order to help them plan out their courses.

The PhD Program Plan template (www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section) should be filled out and/or updated by the advisor and the student during their pre-registration advising meetings. These meetings should be occurring before every fall and spring semester and every summer and winter session. Once completed, the student

submits an electronic or hard copy of their updated program plan to the Director of Graduate Studies in order to obtain clearance to register for classes. **Students and their advisors are responsible for keeping the student's program plan up to date. If it is not up-to-date, students risk not graduating when planned or expected.**

It is nearly impossible to provide a recommended course sequence for doctoral students because every student is different. Some students have a MPH and can waive nearly all the core courses, some students with a MPH want to repeat courses they can waive because they want/need the review, some students are full-time, but their TA/RA contract has different requirements for how many credits they must take each semester, etc. With all that said, here are a few important points everyone should stick to:

- All students should take HLTH 710 their first fall semester
- All students should take HLTH 652 and HLTH 712 the fall semester before they take QE
- All students should take HLTH 653 and HLTH 711 the spring semester before they take QE
- HLTH 666 should not be taken during the first year of the program

Individual Progress Meetings

In addition to maintaining an up-to-date program plan, students will also be required to meet annually each spring with their advisor, the Graduate Studies Director, the Chair, and 3-4 other departmental faculty. The primary purpose of these meetings is to make sure the student is making satisfactory progress. Faculty will provide an assessment of the student's progress and make recommendations for improvement, if needed. The meetings are intended to be somewhat formal so students should be prepared to discuss their progress in the program and goals for the following academic year. Additionally, students should feel free to bring up any issues, questions or concerns they have about the program and/or their progress in the program.

Meeting Program Benchmarks

The following tables illustrate program benchmarks students are expected to reach and by when. If a student does not reach a benchmark by the expected date, he/she will be put on departmental probation for one year. Students should meet the missed requirement within the one year probationary period. If a student misses two consecutive benchmarks, he/she will be dismissed from the program. In some instances, course availability may make it difficult for FT students to complete their formal coursework during the expected time period. If this occurs, special exceptions will be made for those students.

Full-Time Doctoral Student with a MPH Upon Enrollment

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th+
	year	year	year	year	year	year	year	year
Complete the majority of formal coursework		x						
Complete the qualifying exams		x						
Advance to candidacy			x					
Complete/defend a dissertation proposal			x					
Complete/defend the dissertation				x				
Complete the program/graduate				x				

Full-Time Doctoral Student without a MPH Upon Enrollment								
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th+
	year	year	year	year	year	year	year	year
Complete the majority of formal coursework			x					
Complete the qualifying exams			x					
Advance to candidacy				x				
Complete/defend a dissertation proposal				x				
Complete/defend the dissertation					x			
Complete the program/graduate					x			

Part-Time Doctoral Student with a MPH Upon Enrollment								
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th+
	year	year	year	year	year	year	year	year
Complete the majority of formal coursework			x					
Complete the qualifying exams			x					
Advance to candidacy				x				
Complete/defend a dissertation proposal					x			
Complete/defend the dissertation						x		
Complete the program/graduate						x		

Part-Time Doctoral Student without a MPH Upon Enrollment

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th+
	year	year	year	year	year	year	year	year
Complete the majority of formal coursework				x				
Complete the qualifying exams				x				
Advance to candidacy					x			
Complete/defend a dissertation proposal							x	
Complete/defend the dissertation								x
Complete the program/graduate								x

V. Independent Study Credits (HLTH 688, HLTH 898, HLTH 899)

Some students elect to take independent study (IS) credits in order to fulfill an elective or to get additional research or other types of professional experience. IS credits are variable meaning they vary from 1-6 credits depending on the amount of work and time involved. IS work is designed to be led by the student with minimal guidance from the faculty sponsor. If you wish to register for IS credits, you must submit an IS Contract (available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch >GRADUATE > Important Forms) with all required signatures to the Director of Graduate Studies. When submitting an IS contract, you must include an updated, approved program plan with IS credits entered in the appropriate place or simply in the notes field if the IS credits are not fulfilling a program requirement.

BCH Independent Study Policy:

1. We recognize that students vary in the amount of time required to complete work;
2. We feel that the estimated number of hours of total student effort required to complete a 1-credit independent study should be 25 hours; for a 2-credit hour independent study 50 hours; for a 3-credit hour independent study 75 hours; and for a 4-credit hour independent study 100 hours;
3. These are estimated levels of effort and the **required work and deliverables for the course should be consistent with these estimates**; and these must be agreed upon by both the faculty member and the student prior to taking on the independent study.
4. These estimates notwithstanding, we recognize that individual work time varies among students assigned the same task.
5. These hour estimates are for the semester in which the course is taken. For example, a 3-credit independent study taken over Winter Term's 3 weeks should produce a weekly estimate of student hours dedicated to the course of 75 hours / 3 weeks or 25 hours per week. The same course, taken over a fifteen week semester should require 75 hours / 15 weeks or 5 hours per week.

VI. Travel Funding

The Department of Behavioral and Community Health is committed to assisting students who need travel funds to present their scholarship at scientific conferences. The amount of funds in the account will vary year to year with lesser amounts during lean years and greater amounts during robust years. The past three years the total amount in the fund has been \$5000.00

POLICY:

Travel Support will only be provided for graduate students who:

- Are presenting a paper/poster (first author is preferable) at a scientific/scholarly conference and/or
- Are attending a scientific/scholarly training that is essential to their professional development and/or
- Have defended their project/thesis/dissertation proposal, are in the job market, and want to use the conference's employment services/networking opportunities

Eligibility for Travel Support:

- All BCH graduate students currently enrolled and in good standing
- Approval of travel by the student's faculty advisor
- Filing of a travel fund application that includes a copy of the paper's abstract and proof of acceptance (if appropriate) statement of why travel is required (or verification) and completed the Graduate School's Goldhaber Travel Award Form (if applying)

Trip Maximums:

- Domestic travel = \$400
- International travel = \$600

Duration of Program Maximums:

- MPH students, over the duration of their degree, a total allocation of \$500
- PhD students, over the duration of their degree, a total allocation of \$1,500

We ***strongly encourage*** that students plan carefully to use their travel funds so that they can travel throughout their duration as a graduate student.

Travel awards are constrained to cover **ONLY**:

- Conference registrations (Early bird is preferred)
- Cost of abstract submission
- Flights (booked sufficiently in advance to achieve good rates)
- Hotel costs
- Mileage if driving to out-of-state conference
- Poster production

All funds must be approved by the faculty advisor and the department as "appropriate and reasonable."

VII. Dissertation Funding

The Department of Behavioral and Community Health is committed to assisting students who need matching funds to complete their projects or dissertations. The departmental project/dissertation fund will vary year to year with lesser amounts during lean years and greater amounts during robust years.

Please Note: Not all faculty have sufficient matching funds to support students. Students should not automatically expect to receive a match. A request for funding rather than a demand for funding should be made by the student.

POLICY:

Project/Dissertation (P/D) support will only be provided for graduate students who:

- Have matching funds from their advisor or another faculty member or significant merit as determined by the Graduate Program Committee (GPC); and
- Have successfully defended their project/thesis/dissertation proposal

Eligibility for P/D Support:

- All BCH graduate students currently enrolled and in good standing
- Approval of fund request by the student's faculty advisor
- Filing of a P/T/D fund application that includes a copy of the P/T/D's abstract, proof of matching funds, statement of why funds are requested and what specifically the funds will be spent on

P/T/D Maximums:

- MPH students = \$250.00
- PhD students = \$500.00

Students may apply **only once** for funds even if they receive multiple fund infusions from their advisor or another faculty member.

Examples of how P/D awards can be spent:

- Participants/subject incentives
- Travel costs related to data collection (e.g., gas to get to/from Baltimore for interviews with participants)
- Survey copying/production
- Undergraduate assistant

All funds must be approved by the faculty advisor and the department as "appropriate and reasonable."

V. Applying for Advancement to Candidacy

Once the Qualifying Examination and the individualized research plan credits are completed, doctoral students must apply to the Graduate School for advancement to Doctoral Candidacy. The form to be used for this is: APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY. The form is available on the Graduate School website (www.gradschool.umd.edu). Once completed, the form should be signed by your advisor and then submitted to the Department Graduate Studies Director for approval before sending it to the Graduate School.

VI. Dissertation Requirements

General Information

All Doctoral degree students are required to complete a dissertation [HLTH 899 Doctoral Dissertation Research (12 credits)]. All dissertation credits will be given an Incomplete Grade until the research is completed. Normally, your faculty advisor is the default chair of your dissertation committee; however, if it is more appropriate to have another faculty member who is a better fit, be sure to notify your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies that you made this change. This new faculty member/chair will become your faculty advisor and you will register for dissertation credits under his/her section number.

No student may formally propose a dissertation topic until advancement to candidacy.

A. Designing the Dissertation Research Project

1. **Selecting a Dissertation Topic:** A dissertation begins with a question about some (any) aspect of public health, health behavior, or health education. The purpose of the dissertation research study is to attempt to find the answer to that question.

2. **Developing a Dissertation Proposal:** After selecting a dissertation topic, a written proposal that details the research plan and exactly how it will be conducted is submitted. Students may also want to consider the manuscript option. Guidelines for the manuscript format are available on the department website under the GRADUATE section.

3. **Requesting Approval of a Dissertation Proposal:** The proposal must be approved by a committee of five faculty members, at least three of whom must be DBCH faculty. All must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Maryland. One will be the dissertation advisor who will chair the committee. The Graduate Dean's Representative must be outside the DBCH and be a member of the University's Graduate Faculty and must be a tenured professor.

Since this committee must approve the research, it is a good idea to determine the members early and seek advice in designing the research. Committee member selection should be done in consultation with the dissertation advisor.

When the proposal is ready for final review, schedule a meeting with the dissertation proposal committee. At this meeting the proposal may be approved as is, totally rejected, or require certain changes. In the latter two cases, the proposal would need to be reworked for another review. (NOTE: The limit is two formal proposal meetings.) Schedule the proposal meeting at least ten working days in advance and electronically send the **DEFENSE MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT FORM** (www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section) to the Director of Graduate Studies for distribution to all Department faculty and graduate students, who may attend this meeting. At that

time, provide a copy of the complete proposal to each member of the committee. The Graduate Studies Director **does not** need a copy of your proposal.

When the proposal is approved, the members of the committee will sign a **PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM** (available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section). The dissertation advisor will then forward to the Department Graduate Studies Director to sign and place in your file.

If the research project involves human subjects, IRB approval must be obtained **after the proposal** has been approved by the dissertation committee. For complete details, see: **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO RESEARCH/PROJECTS INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS** available on the University of Maryland website (www.umd.edu – look under Research).

Soon after the proposal is approved and human subjects approval is obtained (and no later than 90 days prior to the final defense), students should request Graduate School approval of their dissertation examining committee. Ideally this should be the same committee that approved the dissertation proposal. Again, all must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Maryland. One of these five will be the dissertation chair. The Graduate Dean's Representative must be outside the DBCH, be a member of the University's Graduate Faculty and be a tenured professor. The form to be used for this purpose is titled **NOMINATION OF THESIS OR DISSERTATION EXAMINING COMMITTEE** and is available on the Graduate School's website (www.gradschool.umd.edu). Once this form has been submitted, the Graduate School will send a **REPORT OF THE EXAMINING COMMITTEE** form to the dean's representative and the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the dissertation defense. The chair will bring this form to the final defense meeting and committee members will sign this form once the dissertation has been defended and requested changes, if any, have been made.

B. Completing The Dissertation Research Project

After the dissertation research project has been approved, proceed with the research. It is expected that the conduct of the project will be according to what was approved by the committee. Before making any changes in the nature of the research, approval of your dissertation committee is required. Once the research is completed, the student is required to prepare a written report to cover all aspects of the project.

C. Defending The Dissertation

Once the committee has been approved by the Graduate School, schedule the oral defense meeting. (Note: No dissertation defense meetings can be scheduled during the last week before regular Graduate School deadlines for submitting all requirements.) A **DEFENSE MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT FORM** (available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section) must be sent electronically at least ten days prior of the defense date to the Director of Graduate Studies for distribution to all BCH faculty and

graduate students, who may attend this meeting. At this time, be prepared to give each member of the committee a complete copy of the dissertation to review. Any member of the faculty or any graduate student may attend this meeting.

Three things can happen at the oral defense:

- the dissertation can be accepted as is
- the dissertation can be rejected
- the dissertation can be accepted on the condition that certain changes be made within a specified time frame.

When final approval is granted, each committee member will sign the **REPORT OF THE EXAMINING COMMITTEE** form that will be sent from the Graduate School to the dean's representative and the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the dissertation defense. This form must be signed by all members and submitted to the graduate school approximately 4 weeks prior to commencement.

The final dissertation must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School approximately 4 weeks prior to commencement. In addition, students must submit the **ELECTRONIC THESIS AND DISSERTATION PUBLICATION FORM** (available at www.gradschool.umd.edu) to the Graduate School. Check deadlines on the Graduate School's website (see above link) to determine final dates for each semester.

D. Dissertation Proposal and Defense Meetings

Current Departmental regulations call for all dissertation research projects to comply with the following:

- (1) A formal announcement using the DEFENSE MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT FORM must be sent electronically to the Director of Graduate Studies at least 10 days prior to the final defense date.
- (2) All proposal and defense meetings take place in the SPH building. Students must request a conference room through their dissertation chair and/or the department coordinator.
- (3) The guidelines for the general content of the proposal are available on the department website (available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section). The content of the final dissertation is determined by the nature of the study and the student's dissertation advisor.
- (4) There is NO such requirement nor expectation that students must provide refreshments during meetings. This is an unnecessary cost and stress burden at a time that students should be focused on their scholarship and not on food allergies and grocery runs.

VII. Graduation Walking Policy

In order to walk across the stage at graduation, a student must have successfully defended and electronically submitted their dissertation to the Graduate School by the deadline set forth by the Graduate School. Students who successfully defend their dissertations before the SPH graduation ceremony, but miss the Graduate School's deadline to submit their electronically submit their final dissertation if they receive approval from the DGS. Please note that if the deadline for electronic submission is missed, a student's diploma will be dated August (if walking in May) or May (if walking in December).

VIII. Grievance Policy

In the event that a dispute arises between a student and a faculty member of the University of Maryland School of Public Health that cannot be resolved informally, the following policy has been created to help students find resolution. Disputes that are covered under this policy include any situation in which a student or group of students feel wrongfully treated that are not covered under other University of Maryland policy (e.g., the Arbitrary and Capricious Grading policy, www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog). It is expected that informal attempts should be made to resolve a complaint before formal grievance procedure is taken.

Please note: The BCH department is very supportive of students and appreciative of their input. Students have a very powerful voice in both the department and the school and should feel comfortable sharing their concerns. Additionally, we understand the importance of maintaining student confidentiality at all times.

If a student has a grievance about a faculty member, instructor, or a course, he/she should first meet with the instructor to discuss the complaint. If the grievance is not remedied to the satisfaction of the student, the student should talk to the chair of the department in which the course is offered. The student's confidentiality will be maintained if/when the chair speaks with the instructor about the grievance.

If a student has a grievance about a departmental policy, SPH policy, or any larger SPH issue, he/she should speak with the DGS in his/her department. If the DGS is unable to resolve the problem, the DGS will talk to the chair of the appropriate department for resolution options.

If a graduate student has a grievance or concern about a UMD graduate school or university policy/regulation, he/she should contact the Ombudsman's Office at the graduate school.

If the grievance is not remedied in any of the above situations, the student should contact Dr. Steve Roth, Associate Dean.

If a student is uncomfortable using verbal communication to express their grievance(s) in any of the above situations, he/she is welcome to use written communication.

It is expected that whomever the student talks to about their grievance will follow up with the student in a timely manner (i.e., two weeks). If this does not occur, it is recommended that the student follow-up with whomever they spoke to originally in order to obtain an update on the situation.

If these informal conversations do not remedy the situation, a formal complaint can be issued. This complaint should occur within 30 days of the alleged adverse action. The grievance must be in writing and include a detailed description of the complaint including the names of the parties involved and a summary of the actions taken to resolve the issue. The formal grievance should be addressed to the Dean of the School of Public Health and signed by the student(s). At that time, the Dean will decide how best to remedy the situation.

VIX. Summary of PhD Regulations

General Program:

- Each student is expected to propose an overall program plan by completion of 12 hours of coursework.
- Courses taken at a consortium school (<http://www.consortium.org/main.asp>) are considered UMCP courses if taken for academic credit. (Contact the Consortium Coordinator, Room 1113 Mitchell Building, 314-8239 to obtain "Permission to Enroll in the Consortium Program" form).
- Courses taken at a non-consortium school may be part of a Ph.D. program if: (1) the student has received prior approval to take the course; and (2) the course is taken for academic credit.
- A student has five years to be admitted to candidacy.
- A student has four years to complete the dissertation after admission to candidacy.
- Although the University has a time limit policy that allows for extensions, only those students making progress in the program (determined by the advisor and Director of Graduate Studies) will be supported for such a time limit extension.
- Any request for subsequent time limit extensions will require substantiation of the need and the reason for requiring such an extension; more than one extension is extremely rare.

Dissertation:

- Nomination of the dissertation examining committee must go to the Graduate School 90 days before the dissertation defense.
- A dissertation committee consists of five members, including the chair and at least 2 other members from the BCH. The approved proposal format is available from the DBCH website (www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section).
- A three chapter format is required for the proposal, with complete versions of the introductory and methods chapters.
- There is no overall page limit for the full proposal.

- Complete reference lists for the materials submitted, and all instrumentation proposed must accompany the proposal.
- All meetings, proposal and defense, will be open to graduate students and faculty
- All dissertation meetings must occur with appropriate announcement 10 working days in advance, and take place in the BCH conference room, 1234 SPH Building (or appropriate alternative location).
- To announce a meeting, an announcement must be emailed the Graduate Studies Director the announcement form which will be forwarded to department faculty and graduate students listservs.
- All five committee members must be present at the final defense meeting.

X. Program Checklist

Following is a checklist for the Ph.D. degree program which outlines, in sequence, a series of recommended steps for completing the degree program. This checklist may be used as a guide to help plan activities throughout the program. Each year, the Graduate School publishes a listing of key dates that a student is responsible for meeting (available at <www.gradschool.umd.edu>).

1. If eligible, submit a written request for waiver and/or substitution of any required course to your advisor prior to the first semester.
2. Before completion of the first 12 credit hours, prepare a program plan to be signed by your advisor and submitted to the Graduate Studies Director for your student file.
3. Complete all coursework. (Note: Advising is mandatory every semester; to be cleared for registration requires a newly-approved copy of your proposed plan of study, each semester.)
4. Meet with the Graduate Studies Director to arrange for qualifying examination.
5. Complete and pass all sections of qualifying examination.
6. Meet with faculty advisor to develop the individualized research plan.
7. After successfully passing qualifying examination and the 15 credits of individualized research/advanced electives, submit application for advancement to candidacy to the Graduate School.
8. In consultation with dissertation advisor, develop dissertation proposal.
9. Establish dissertation proposal committee and submit dissertation proposal to committee for approval.
10. Hold proposal meeting.

11. If human subjects will be involved, obtain Department and University human subjects approval.
12. Establish dissertation examining committee and submit form requesting appointment of doctoral dissertation examining committee to Graduate School (at least 90 days prior to your defense).
13. Complete research and prepare dissertation manuscript. Then, submit manuscript to dissertation advisor for review and revise as necessary.
14. Apply for diploma. **THERE IS A SPECIFIC DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING THIS FORM.** Consult the Graduate School Deadlines at <www.gradschool.umd.edu>
15. Submit dissertation manuscript to other members of your dissertation committee for review and revise as necessary.
16. Schedule and complete oral defense of doctoral dissertation.
17. Revise dissertation as necessary.
18. Submit your dissertation electronically and the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Publication Form to the Graduate School approximately 4 weeks prior to commencement. Be sure to meet the Graduate School's DEADLINE (look on www.gradschool.umd.edu).
19. Attend Departmental Graduation Luncheon to CELEBRATE!!!