



SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

PhD in Community Health

Program Guide and Degree Requirements 2024-2025



<https://ohsu-psu-sph.org/phd-community-health/>

Community Health

Information in this document is updated annually. Please refer to the document for the year you entered the PhD program, as the degree requirements listed are your programmatic contract. Some institutional information and contacts may change while you are enrolled; check the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health website and online resources referenced throughout this document for the most current information.

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Community Health Program Listserv

(for admitted students, alumni and program faculty)

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This document is also available at the SPH website. Forms and other online resources referenced can be accessed from the SPH website.

1.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The OHSU-PSU School of Public Health (SPH) PhD program in Community Health is intended to provide students with advanced training in conducting research and developing public health instruction skills, with a specific focus on the structural, social and behavioral determinants of health. The program curriculum is complemented by an interdisciplinary faculty that have educational backgrounds in public health and in other disciplines including communication, social work, and sociology. The curriculum includes intensive training in research methodology, epidemiologic research design, qualitative approaches, statistical analyses, theory, as well as two years of a doctoral seminar course and elective courses to form a focused area of emphasis.

The PhD program in Community Health is one of three doctoral programs within the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health, which has the following overarching Mission Statement:

“Educate future public health leaders, and advance public health scholarship and practice, in collaboration with our communities to promote health and social equity.”

OHSU-PSU School of Public Health Core Competencies: All graduates of the School of Public Health will act ethically and demonstrate cultural humility to 1) Integrate social determinants into public health science, practice and policy; 2) Engage with communities to improve population health; and 3) Apply public health knowledge and skills to eliminate health inequities.

2.0 PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The Community Health doctoral curriculum is designed to provide training and mastery around a set of six program level learning objectives:

- 1) Identify gaps in the field of Community Health by critically analyzing relevant peer-reviewed literature.
- 2) Apply appropriate theoretical frameworks to topics relevant to the field of Community Health, including pedagogical theory in the context of teaching.
- 3) Utilize pertinent research design, analytic methods, and interpretation of results to address timely research questions in the field of Community Health.
- 4) Evaluate the impact of social, cultural and contextual factors on health outcomes.
- 5) Effectively disseminate Community Health knowledge and research findings to public, professional, and student audiences using multiple modes of communication.
- 6) Demonstrate ethical conduct and cultural competence in research design, analysis, dissemination, and critique.

3.0 PROGRAM FACULTY

Faculty members participate in the Community Health PhD program through teaching, advising, mentoring, and governance. The core faculty in the Community Health group in the School of Public Health have expertise in multiple domains related to social epidemiology, social determinants of health, community-based research, and population health inequities; they are listed on the School of Public Health faculty web page. Many other School of Public Health, PSU and OHSU faculty teach required and elective courses, and may participate in advising, mentoring, and student supervision for academic committees and research projects. Students should feel free to approach any faculty with questions and inquire about their research and consult with them on issues of professional development; core faculty should be consulted regarding the course of study.

3.1 Faculty Advisor

Upon entry to the doctoral program, each student is assigned an advisor from among the School of Public Health faculty whose work overlaps with the student's stated research interests. Faculty advisor duties include but are not limited to:

- Assisting students with their transition to doctoral student life.
- Meeting with student regularly (recommended 2 times per month) throughout the academic school year to provide overall mentoring—including help with goal-setting and review of educational/degree, research and service/professionalism activities.
- Mentoring students on research activities throughout their course of study and aiding students in the establishment of a dissertation committee and selection of a chair (not necessarily the faculty advisor) and committee members.
- Serving as the director of Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) student duties when applicable.
- Notifying students of relevant School of Public Health, community level, and national professional development events and services and advocating for student participation.
- Providing timely support and guidance to advisees when students are in academic or personal difficulty.

Positive relationships between doctoral students and their advisors are a central factor in successful progress and timely program completion. During the course of study, a student may identify an alternative faculty advisor and may switch advisors if the new faculty advisor agrees to assume the role. A student should discuss any wishes to change their primary advisor with the Community Health Doctoral Program Director for advice and to help facilitate the process.

3.2 Program Director

The PhD in Community Health Program Director is the first point of contact regarding program-level requirements, procedures and policies, leaves of absence, complaints, student progress, including DARS requests, and any other program-level administrative matters. Students should feel free to approach the Program Director about anything, but particularly about issues that are specific to the CH program such as coursework.

4.0 OVERVIEW OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Students will take a series of health and research methods **core courses** as well as **elective courses** to form an area of emphasis related to the student's interests and approved by the student's advisor. Upon successful completion of coursework, students must pass a **comprehensive exam** comprised of both written and oral components. Students will **complete and defend a dissertation proposal** before **advancing to candidacy**. Candidates will then design, implement, and analyze a research project. The final product is a **written dissertation with an oral defense** of the dissertation work. In summary, the award of the PhD degree in Community Health from the OHSU-PSU School of public health is the culmination of the following benchmarks:

1. Coursework requirements completion including dissertation credit hours
2. Comprehensive examination
3. Dissertation proposal and defense
4. Advancement to candidacy
5. Doctoral dissertation and defense

5.0 COURSEWORK

5.1 Required and Elective Courses

The PhD program in Community Health includes a total of 108 required credits: 31 required community health course credits, 6 doctoral seminar credits, 23 required methods credits, at least 21 elective credits (at least 8 elective community health course credits, at least 6 elective methods credits, at least 3 600-level elective credits), and at least 27 dissertation credits (PHE 603).

Students admitted with a Master's Degree in Public Health (MPH) take will take the required coursework as shown. Students admitted with an undergraduate degree or a graduate degree in a field other than Public Health will be required to take *EPI 612 Epidemiology I*, *PHE 511 Foundations of Public Health*, and *EPI 525 Introduction to Biostatistics* as electives.

Students must follow the requirements in place upon matriculation. Should program requirements change during a student's tenure, the student may discuss the possibility of adopting newer requirements with the Program Director; however, the allowance of any alterations from the program in place upon matriculation is at the Program Director's discretion.

5.1.1 Elective courses (21 credits)

Students must round out their required course of study with a selection of level community health-relevant courses and methods courses (see below). At least 3 credits of elective courses must be at the 600-level. All electives must be graduate-level courses. Students are encouraged to plan ahead for course availability and timing.

5.1.a Elective Community Health Courses (8 credits, a subset of the 21 credits)

Students will also take at least 8 credits of electives from graduate level courses offered at the

OHSU-PSU School of Public Health, or within other departments at OHSU or PSU on topics related to the area of emphasis selected by the student and approved by the student's advisor. These electives must be completed prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

5.1.1. Methods Course Electives (6 credits, a subset of the 21 credits)

In addition to the required methods courses, students must enroll in at least 6 credits of methods electives from graduate level courses offered at the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health or within other departments at OHSU or PSU if approved by the student's faculty advisor and the Program Director.

5.1.c. Other Electives (7 credits, a subset of the 21 credits)

The remainder of the 21 required elective credits may include additional Community Health and/or Methods credits and may also include other credits from courses in other relevant areas.

A breakdown of the coursework requirements is organized into a table on the following page.

Curriculum category	Credit hours
Required courses	60 credits
<i>Community Health Core</i>	31 of 60 credits
PHE 612 Advanced Principle of Health Behavior	3
PHE 546 Urban and Community Health	3
HSMP 671 Health Policy	3
PHE 622 Health & Social Inequalities	3
PHE 626 Teaching and Learning in Health Promotion & Social Work	3
HSMP 673 Values & Ethics in Health	3
ESHH 519 Climate Change & Public Health –or– ESHH 612 Global & Planetary Health Concepts	3
PHE 632 Developmental Origins of Health & Human Disease Epidemiology	3
HSMP 681 Population Health: Policy & Practice Implications	3
PHE 619 Mentored Teaching	4
<i>Methods core</i>	23 of 60 credits
PHE 520 Qualitative Research & Design	3
PHE 624 Philosophy through Power Calculations: Writing Methods Sections for Research Proposals	3
PHE 625 Advanced Methods Toolkit: Design, Sampling, Scale Development, & More	3
PHE 634 Social Epidemiology Methods & Theory	3
CPH 636 Community Based Participatory Research	3
BSTA 611 Estimation and Hypothesis Testing for Applied Biostatistics	4
BSTA 612 Linear Models	4
<i>Doctoral seminar</i>	6 credits
PHE 623 Doctoral Seminar in Health Research	1 x 6
Elective courses	21 credits
Must include at least 3 credits at the 600 level. May include independent research credits with approval of faculty advisor and program director.	
<i>Methods electives</i>	6
<i>Community Health electives</i>	8
<i>Other electives (which may include additional Methods & Comm Health electives)</i>	7
Dissertation	27 credits
Total minimum credits	108

5.1.2 Doctoral Seminar in Community Health

The Doctoral Seminar in Community Health (PHE 623) is required for first- and second-year doctoral students in the School of Community Health Doctoral program, and optional for students thereafter. Students will learn about the critical evaluation of health research, hypothesis generation, publication and review of submitted work, grant application, and the development of an independent research program. Weekly readings will involve seminal published peer-reviewed public health articles as well as readings on practical issues related to the conduct of research, ethics, genesis of research questions, and issues related to dissertation development.

5.1.3. Reading and Conference Credits

Students may enroll in up to 3 credits of reading and conference in the Academic Year quarter (excluding summer) either prior to or during the quarter the student takes their comprehensive exam.

5.1.4 Dissertation Credits

The dissertation is the doctoral student's most substantial achievement—a significant work of research built upon an immersion in the academic literature, informed theoretical reasoning, and original research and analysis.

During the research and writing of the dissertation, students will enroll in at least 27 By-Arrangement dissertation credits (PHE 603). Dissertation credits cannot be registered for until after the successful completion of the Comprehensive Exam. A student does not need to have defended the dissertation proposal in order to enroll in dissertation credits. A student may enroll in up to 9 Dissertation Credits to prepare their dissertation proposal. The remainder of the required Dissertation Credits (n=18) must be completed after the student has passed the dissertation proposal defense.

5.2 Program Learning Objectives and Curriculum Map

The table on the next page demonstrates how each of the required courses maps to the 6 Learning Objectives for the PhD program in Community Health.

Program Competencies	Courses Contributing to the Competency
1. Identify gaps in the field of Community Health by critically analyzing relevant peer-reviewed literature.	PHE 520 Qualitative Research Design (R)* PHE 623 Doctoral Seminar (R) PHE 624 Philosophy through Power Calculations: Writing Methods Sections for Research Proposals (P) PHE 625 Advanced Methods Toolkit: Design, Sampling, Scale Development, & More (P) PHE 632 Developmental Origins of Health and Human Disease Epidemiology (R) PHE 634 Social Epidemiology Methods & Theory (P)
2. Apply appropriate theoretical frameworks to topics relevant to the field of Community Health, including pedagogical theory in the context of teaching.	PHE 520 Qualitative Research Design (R) PHE 546 Urban & Community Health (R) PHE 612 Advanced Principles Health Behavior (P) PHE 622 Health & Social Inequalities (R) PHE 624 Philosophy through Power Calculations: Writing Methods Sections for Research Proposals (R) PHE 625 Advanced Methods Toolkit: Design, Sampling, Scale Development, & More (R) PHE 626 Teaching & Learning in Health Promotion & Social Work (P) PHE 634 Social Epidemiology Methods & Theory (P) HSMP 671 Health Policy (P) HSMP 673 Values and Ethics in Health (P)
3. Utilize pertinent research design, analytic methods, and interpretation of results to address timely research questions in the field of community health.	PHE 520 Qualitative Research Design (P) PHE 624 Philosophy through Power Calculations: Writing Methods Sections for Research Proposals (P) PHE 625 Advanced Methods Toolkit: Design, Sampling, Scale Development, & More (P) PHE 634 Social Epidemiology Methods & Theory (R) CPH 636 Community-Based Participatory Research (R) HSMP 671 Health Policy (P) BSTA 611 Estimation & Hypothesis Testing (R) BSTA 612 Linear Models (R)
4. Evaluate the impact of social, cultural and contextual factors on health outcomes.	PHE 546 Urban & Community Health (R) PHE 622 Health & Social Inequalities (P) PHE 624 Philosophy through Power Calculations: Writing Methods Sections for Research Proposals (R) PHE 625 Advanced Methods Toolkit: Design, Sampling, Scale Development, & More (R) PHE 632 Developmental Origins of Health and Human Disease Epidemiology (R) PHE 634 Social Epidemiology Methods & Theory (P) PHE 626 Teaching & Learning in Health Promotion & Social Work (R) CPH 636 Community-Based Participatory Research (R) ESHH 519 Climate Change & Public Health (R) ESHH 612 Global & Planetary Health Concepts (R) HSMP 681 Population Health: Policy and Practice Implications (P)
5. Effectively disseminate Community Health knowledge and research findings to public, professional, and student audiences using multiple modes of communication.	PHE 520 Qualitative Research Design (P) PHE 546 Urban & Community Health (R) PHE 623 Doctoral Seminar in Community Health (P) PHE 626 Teaching & Learning in Health Promotion & Social Work (P) PHE 624 Philosophy through Power Calculations: Writing Methods Sections for Research Proposals (R) PHE 625 Advanced Methods Toolkit: Design, Sampling, Scale Development, & More (R) CPH 636 Community-Based Participatory Research (R)
6. Demonstrate ethical conduct and cultural competence in research design, analysis, dissemination, and critique.	PHE 622 Health & Social Inequalities (R) PHE 634 Social Epidemiology Methods & Theory (P) PHE 624 Philosophy through Power Calculations: Writing Methods Sections for Research Proposals (R) PHE 625 Advanced Methods Toolkit: Design, Sampling, Scale Development, & More (R) PHE 622 Health & Social Inequalities (R) CPH 636 Community-Based Participatory Research (P) HSMP 673 Values and Ethics in Health (P)
*(P) Indicates that the identified course is a primary source for the identified learning objective; (R) Indicates the course indicated is a reinforcing source for the identified learning objective. The variation in course credits reflects the options available for elective courses (3 or 4 credit courses). Students must ensure that at least 75% of their total course credits are at the 600 level in order to meet OHSU standards for a PhD program.	

5.3 Proposed Curriculum Plan for Full-time Students

The coursework aspect of the PhD curriculum is shown below with a suggested schedule for full-time students, making up the first three years of the program. During years 4 and beyond, students are expected to be enrolled only in dissertation credits (PHE 603), with a minimum of 27 credits required.

These are suggestions, given that students may take electives that require different timing, may enroll on a part-time basis, or may have other needs that require a different arrangement (e.g., taking *EPI 512 Epidemiology I*, *PHE 511 Foundations of Public Health*, or *EPI 525 Introduction to Biostatistics*). It is also possible that the scheduling time for some courses may change over the course of a student's enrollment. Thus, scheduling plans should be made with faculty advisor input and should take prerequisites and the ordering of courses into account.

	YEAR 1		YEAR 2		YEAR 3 (and beyond)	
	Courses and credits	Student actions	Courses and credits	Student actions	Courses	Student actions
Fa	PHE 623 – Doctoral Seminal (1 cr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Attend SPH fall welcome o Meet with advisor o Meet with other PhD students o Attend quarterly potluck 	PHE 623 – Doctoral Seminal (1 cr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Attend SPH fall welcome o Meet with advisor re: research funding o Meet with other PhD students o Attend quarterly potluck 	All the courses for Year 3 and beyond are elective, possibly reading and conference, and dissertation credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Check with advisor, PD to ensure all coursework is complete for comprehensive exams o Take comprehensive exam o Prepare dissertation proposal o Defend dissertation proposal o Conduct dissertation work o Develop 3 publishable / published manuscripts based on dissertation work o Defend dissertation
	PHE 612: Advanced Principles of Health Behavior (3 cr, F/S)		HSMP 681 – Population Health: Policy and Practice Implications (3 cr)			
	PHE 622 – Health and Social Inequities (3 cr)		HSMP 673 – Values and Ethics in Health (3 cr; F/W/S)			
	EPI 525 – Biostatistics 1 (4 cr)		ESHH 519 – Environmental Health in a Changing World (3 cr) OR Elective (3, 4 cr)			
Wi	PHE 623 – Doctoral Seminal (1 cr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Meet with advisor o Meet with other PhD students o Attend quarterly potluck 	PHE 623 – Doctoral Seminal (1 cr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Meet with advisor re: research funding o Meet with other PhD students o Attend quarterly potluck o Plan abstract for SPH Research Week 		
	PHE 546 – Urban and Community Health (3 cr)		PHE 520 – Qualitative Research Design (3 cr)			
	HSMP 672 – Health Policy (3 cr, F/W/S)		PHE 624 – Philosophy through Power Calculations: Writing Methods Sections for Research Proposals (3 cr)			

	BSTA 612 – Linear Models (4 cr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Meet with advisor; begin discussing funding for future years o Meet with other PhD students o Attend quarterly potluck o Participate in SPH Research Week 	PHE 619 – Mentored Teaching (3 cr; F/W/S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Meet with advisor re: funding and comprehensive exam timing o Meet with other PhD students o Attend quarterly potluck o Present at SPH Research Week 		
Sp	PHE 623 – Doctoral Seminal (1 cr)		PHE 623 – Doctoral Seminal (1 cr)			
	PHE 634 – Social Epi Methods and Theory (3 cr)		CPH 636 – Community-Based Participatory Research (3 cr)			
	PHE 632 – Developmental Origins of Health and Disease Epi (3 cr)		PHE 625 – Advanced Methods Toolkit: Design, Sampling, Scale Development, & More (3 cr)			
	PHE 626 – Teaching and Learning in Health Promotion and Social Work (3 cr)		Elective (3, 4 cr) OR ESHH 612 – Global & Planetary Health Concepts (3 cr)			
NOTES – for non-MPH matriculating students: PHE 511 is offered only in the Fall, EPI 612 (with PD Messer) is also offered only in the fall; EPI 525, the Biostatistics course for Epidemiology and Community Health PhD students, is also offered in the Fall						

5.4 Curricular Exceptions

Under rare circumstances, prior coursework can be transferred into a student’s record and substituted for required or elective coursework. These requests for transfer and substitution should be submitted and approved by the time of the student’s comprehensive exam. There is no guarantee these requests can be granted.

6.0 COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The comprehensive exam is designed to test students’ mastery of the learning objectives outlined for the PhD program in Community Health and their ability to apply that knowledge to research that demonstrates their readiness to move on to planning their dissertation work. Students must pass the comprehensive exam before they can proceed to writing and defending their dissertation proposal and subsequently advance to doctoral candidacy. The examination process involves both a written and an oral component. Details are described below.

6.1 Timing

The comprehensive exam will be scheduled only after all core required community health courses (34 credits), required methods courses (23 credits), and community health electives (at least 8 credits) have been completed. Methods elective courses (at least 6 credits) may be completed after the comprehensive exam. **Timing for taking the comprehensive will typically coincide with the Winter term**

of the third year for full-time students. Timing may differ for some students; however, the comprehensive exam must be taken when the university is in regular session (excludes summer session) and the student must be registered during the quarter in which the exam is taken. Students must communicate with the Program Director and tell them they plan to take the comprehensive exam in the term prior to the term in which they will be taking it. Students should note that Summer term is not an option for taking the exam or submitting forms; therefore, and students planning to take the exam in the Fall term must indicate so and file no later than Spring term.

Students should also recognize that it takes time to prepare the exams, so if a student hopes to take the exam early in a term, they should communicate this with the Program Director early in the prior term so there is sufficient time for the committee to be convened and prepare. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with their Comprehensive Exam Committee members at least one month prior to the scheduled exam to ask any question they may have about preparation and/or what to expect. Students are responsible for scheduling both the written and oral portions of their exam with their Comprehensive Exam Committee (see below). Given that faculty have busy schedules, it is advised that students schedule their exams well in advance.

6.2 Comprehensive Committee Composition and Duties

The committee is assembled by the Program Director and will serve as the committee for all doctoral comprehensive exams held during the academic year. The Comprehensive Exam Committee is ideally made up of 3–4 faculty members, although the number of members may vary from year to year depending on faculty availability. The Comprehensive Exam Committee is responsible both for writing and grading the comprehensive exams for the year.

6.3 Written Exam Component

The written portion of the exam requires a written response to a series of questions intended to evaluate mastery of the program learning objectives and doctoral coursework. Once students receive the examination questions from the Comprehensive Exam Committee, they have 9 days on a 24-hour clock to complete the exam, working off-campus at a location of their choice. The completed exam should be turned into the Comprehensive Exam Committee via email by the deadline provided

6.4 Oral Exam Component

The oral component of the exam should be scheduled approximately 1 week (and not exceeding 3 weeks) after the written exam, during the same academic term. The oral exam is in essence a defense of the written exam during which committee members may ask students to clarify portions of their written exam, answer follow-up questions related to their written exam, and otherwise provide evidence of their mastery of the concepts being tested. The Comprehensive Exam Committee is expected to attend in person, although provisions may be made on a case-by-case basis by the Doctoral Director in cases where faculty members are out of town for extended periods or where other barriers exist.

6.5 Comprehensive Exam Completion

When a student has passed the comprehensive exam, the committee and Doctoral Program Director will meet to evaluate the student's performance and assign a "pass" or "no pass" grade. In very rare cases,

and *only* upon the Program Director's discretion and initiation (students may not request this option), students may be asked to revise a portion of their exam prior to receiving their results. Once exam results are finalized, the faculty advisor and Doctoral Programs Director will file a *Report on Comprehensive Exam* form. If a student fails the comprehensive exam, the student may repeat it during the next regular academic term (i.e. excluding summer term), no fewer than 10 weeks after the first attempt and no longer than 1 year after the first attempt. The results of the second attempt are final; if a student fails the second attempt, the student will not be allowed to continue in the doctoral program. Any issues that might result in the need for a longer period allowed between the first and second attempts should be brought to the attention of the Doctoral Director, who will consider them on a case-by-case basis.

7.0 DISSERTATION PROCESS

The dissertation is the doctoral student's most substantial achievement—a significant work of research built upon immersion in the academic literature, informed theoretical reasoning, and original research and analysis, intended for an educated readership of one's peers. A student does not begin the formal dissertation process until they have completed all relevant coursework and examinations according to program requirements. The dissertation process consists of the key steps below (accompanying required forms shown in parentheses):

- Appointment of the dissertation committee (form: *Appointment of Dissertation Committee*)
- Scheduling defense of completed written proposal (form: *Dissertation Proposal Defense Request*)
- Dissertation proposal defense based upon written documentation and oral examination (form: *Dissertation Proposal Approval*)
- Advancement to candidacy after proposal defense (form: *Advancement to Candidacy*)
- Dissertation defense (form: *Dissertation Defense Approval*)

All forms must be submitted to the Programs Director with required signatures.

7.1 Dissertation Committee

After passing the comprehensive examination and identifying a dissertation topic.

The dissertation committee guides the student through the dissertation process. The committee consists of 4-5 faculty, all of whom have relevant academic qualifications to serve on a dissertation committee (i.e. doctorally prepared). The committee is chaired by a core faculty member from the student's PhD program. At least one other faculty member must be an SPH primary or affiliated faculty; the third (and fourth possibly) must bring relevant expertise and be eligible for an SPH appointment.

One member of the committee (the fourth or fifth member) should bring a complementary perspective that will enrich the student's learning and must have topical or methodological expertise relevant to the student's research. This person could be based at PSU, OHSU, a health system, state government, or another university, and should be currently active (if emeritus or retired, justification of the

appointment must be provided). This person is recommended by the student and the dissertation chair and the appointment is approved with the rest of the committee. This person reads all drafts and participates in the proposal and final defenses, but does not necessarily engage as heavily in editing, hours of advising, etc. (this will depend upon the individual's interests and time).

Students must complete the Appointment of Dissertation Committee form and obtain the appropriate signatures from faculty and the PhD Programs Director to officially appoint their committee. This process is required to ensure that an appropriate committee is convened with members that have experience either mentoring students through a dissertation or extensive research and publication experience. Good academic advice and mentoring will have a profoundly positive effect on the student's progress through the doctoral program, general intellectual development, and career prospects. Careful composition of the dissertation committee is essential to meet students' academic interests and facilitate successful completion of the dissertation. If a PhD student has concerns with due process during the dissertation, they should consult with their Program Director, the Programs Coordinator, and then the Associate Dean Academic Affairs, as necessary.

The doctoral student's working relationship with the dissertation committee chair and other members is a function of the student's background and experience, the nature of the project, and the expertise of the faculty supervisors. Students work very closely with their committees, seeking guidance and feedback frequently throughout the process of research and writing. The dissertation chair provides considerable oversight and guidance, so careful selection of a chair is vital for the student and will help facilitate completion of the dissertation in a timely manner.

7.2 Dissertation Proposal and Defense

The dissertation proposal is intended to demonstrate the scientific merit and feasibility of a proposed doctoral dissertation research project that, upon completion, will substantially contribute to the Community Health field through three manuscripts that are ready and appropriate to submit for publication to peer-reviewed scientific journals. Through reviews and feedback of the dissertation committee on drafts of the written proposal document, the study design and focus of the research will be optimized before active dissertation research begins. When the dissertation committee is satisfied that the written proposal represents sufficient planning and background research that allows for a meaningful critique and oral defense, the dissertation committee will approve the student to move forward with scheduling the oral dissertation proposal presentation. The public oral defense of the dissertation proposal provides an additional opportunity for critique and suggestions from the dissertation committee as well as other faculty members, graduate students and members of the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health community. Students should meet with their faculty advisor and dissertation committee before beginning the writing process, and iteratively throughout the process to ensure that satisfactory progress is being made, and that the proposed research question and study design will be optimized prior to proposal defense.

The written proposal contains the following sections:

Specific aims and proposed methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation:

This section must be in the format of the research section of an NIH research proposal (see [PHS 398 Instructions](#), Sections 5.5.2 on Specific Aims and 5.5.3 on Research Strategy), and will include the following sections:

- Title Page: 1 page
- Specific Aims: 1 page
- Research Strategy: 12 pages
- References: unlimited

Please also see <http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/extra/extdocs/gntapp.pdf>, a helpful guide to writing an NIH grant—including suggestions for what to include in each section.

Status Statement on Human Subjects Protections and IRB status:

This statement should not exceed one page, single-spaced, and should report the status of the IRB application timeline and current status.

Preliminary plan for three manuscripts:

A table mapping each specific research aim to a proposed manuscript title, authorship list/order, and target journal for publication (see example on next page).

Preliminary Plan Example:

Research Aim	Tentative Manuscript Title	Authorship Plan	Potential Journal
1. Evaluate the relationship of measles immunization with measles incidence	The effect of immunization of measles incidence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	1. Student's name 2. Dr. X 3. Dr. X	<i>Vaccine</i>
2.			
3.			

Oral Dissertation Proposal Presentation

When the doctoral committee is satisfied that that draft proposal represents sufficient planning and background research, students can schedule their defense of the dissertation proposal. The proposal defense is an oral presentation by the PhD student to their dissertation committee. The proposal defense centers around an oral presentation by the student to their committee, followed by questions from the committee. The intent is to determine that the student is adequately prepared to be advanced to candidacy and to complete the dissertation research and writing. The first portion of the defense is an open event. The latter portion is restricted to committee members, and the final discussion with the student. The dissertation proposal defense presentation must take place in the presence of the entire approved dissertation committee, although provisions may be made on a case-by-case basis by the Program Director in cases where faculty members are on sabbatical or are otherwise unavailable. The presentation period as a whole will last approximately 90 minutes, with the student presentation lasting 30 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for public questions, and 45 minutes for the closed Q&A session

with the committee and doctoral candidate only and the period of discussion among the committee members. Students are responsible for scheduling the proposal defense.

7.3 Timing and Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy

The dissertation committee and Program Director will recommend the student for advancement to candidacy once the dissertation proposal has been approved.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

A student cannot complete their dissertation research until Human Subjects Institutional Review Board approval is obtained either at OHSU, at PSU with OHSU ceding oversight, or at another institution with OHSU ceding oversight as appropriate for the research project. In some cases of research with no human subjects, a waiver from the Institutional Review Board may be obtained instead, for qualifying research. The student must work with their advisor and dissertation committee on this, as often a faculty member is required to submit the materials. Students conducting human subjects research must also complete human subjects research training per IRB requirements.

7.4 Written Dissertation Format

It should be noted first that the dissertation must meet the formatting requirements of OHSU and the OHSU library. When/if any of the SPH criteria contradicts those criteria, the student should contact their dissertation chair to discuss, keeping in mind that the OHSU criteria will always supersede those of the SPH when there is conflict. All OHSU and SPH procedures regarding formatting, submission, and SPH-level deadlines and forms for dissertation submission prior to graduation must be followed. The student is responsible for submission of the final manuscript to the OHSU library per university policy.

The CH dissertation is comprised of the following sections:

- Title page (required, this page does not carry a page number)
- Copyright Notice page (this page does not carry a page number). This page is required if you have registered for copyright; otherwise it is optional but recommended.
- Prefatory pages. The following pages are numbered with lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). A page number must be printed on every page. Each of these sections must begin on the top of a new page.
 - Dedication (optional)
 - Acknowledgments (optional)
 - Table of Contents (required)
 - List of Tables (required if tables included in the dissertation)
 - List of Figures (required if figures included in the dissertation)
 - Glossary or List of Abbreviations/Symbols (required if Abbreviations and Symbols are used in the dissertation)

- Preface (optional)
- Text of the Dissertation, divided into Chapters. Beginning with the first page of Chapter 1, all pages are numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.); this pagination continues to the end of the document. A page number must be printed on every page.
 - Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Aims
 - Introduction should be no more than 3 pages in length. This section should provide a cohesive justification for the body of research that makes up the dissertation. Students should look to the Background section of the dissertation proposal for guidance.
 - Research Aims should be no longer than 1 page in length (formatted as they would be for the Specific Aims section of an NIH grant and as they were for the dissertation proposal).
 - Chapter 2: Review of the Literature
 - The literature review should not exceed 30 pages and should address the overarching literature relevant for the body of work covered in the three research papers included in the subsequent three chapters. This section should demonstrate the cohesive nature of the student's work.
- Chapters 3-5 will be written in the form of three discrete manuscripts formatted as if they will be submitted to the American Journal of Public Health, except for reference sections. References for the entire dissertation will be provided in one cohesive terminal reference section. Formatting information for Chapters 3-5 can be found at <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/userimages/ContentEditor/1432646399120/authorinstructions.pdf> Note: References for the entire dissertation will be provided only once, in the Terminal Reference section of the dissertation.
 - Chapter 3: Research Paper #1
 - Chapter 4: Research Paper #2
 - Chapter 5: Research Paper #3
 - Chapter 6: Synthesis of Research
 - This section should not exceed 20 pages and should draw conclusions from the body of research as a whole--including overarching themes, strengths and limitations, public health significance of the work, and future research directions.
- Footnotes or endnotes, if used

- Terminal references (references for all sections combined into one reference section, following a consistent way of formatting (e.g. the American Journal of Public Health, <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/userimages/ContentEditor/1432646399120/authorinstructions.pdf>) that is relevant to the student's field or plans for manuscript submission. If OHSU allows separate reference sections for each of the three body papers and the other sections, and the student prefers this approach, that is also acceptable.
- Appendices

7.5 Dissertation Defense and Degree Completion

After completion of the written dissertation, and with the dissertation committee's approval, the doctoral candidate will schedule the oral dissertation defense. A dissertation defense may be scheduled only during the regular academic terms, at least five weeks prior to the end of the term of anticipated graduation. For summer term graduation, deadlines apply to the regular eight-week Summer Session. Although students should be submitting drafts to their committee members in an iterative process of review and revision throughout their writing process, ***the student must deliver a completed final version of the dissertation to all members of the approved committee no fewer than two weeks before the dissertation defense.*** Students are responsible for scheduling the dissertation defense.

The dissertation defense is an oral presentation by the PhD candidate of the completed written dissertation. The oral defense lays out the purpose, implementation, and findings of the dissertation project, and makes a case for the project's contribution to scholarship in the particular field of study. The presentation is directed mainly to the dissertation committee, who are expected to be present (physically or virtually). The oral dissertation defense is open to the public, and current doctoral students are strongly encouraged to attend (and others interested in the topic and/or wish to support the candidate by their presence). Following the public portion of the defense, the dissertation committee members question the candidate on the significance, limitations and implications of the work and findings. The defense is an open event, except for the committee's deliberations at the conclusion, which are restricted to committee members, and the final discussion with the student, which is restricted to the student and the committee. The presentation period as a whole will last approximately 2 hours, with the student presentation lasting 45 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for public questions, and 60 minutes for the closed Q&A session with the committee and doctoral candidate only and the period of discussion among the committee members.

The dissertation is accepted by the dissertation committee when there is no more than one dissenting vote after the dissertation defense. If there are two or more dissenting votes, the candidate will be given a second opportunity to defend the dissertation. The second defense may take place no sooner than one month and no later than six months after the first defense. If there are two or more dissenting votes at the second defense, the student fails the dissertation defense.

At the completion of the dissertation defense, the Committee members sign the **Dissertation Defense Approval** form, indicating any pending requirements and timing for pending revisions. The student is

responsible for timely completion of such revisions and for submission of the final manuscript to the OHSU library.

The defense must be completed no later than the end of Week 6 in the academic quarter in which the candidate wishes to graduate. A defense that involves any PSU faculty who are on 9-month contracts may only be held in the regular academic terms (fall, winter or spring quarter). The final written dissertation is sent to the committee by the student at least two weeks before the scheduled defense. The candidate, with the consent of the committee, informs the PhD Program Coordinator no later than four weeks in advance of the dissertation defense and works with administrative staff to prepare a public announcement that includes the dissertation abstract and information about timing and location of the defense. The dissertation abstract is due to the registrar's office two weeks before the dissertation date.

8.0 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Different modes of funding, such as graduate research assistantship (GRA) positions or graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs) may be available but vary by year and by faculty funding. While the OHSU-PSU SPH seeks to identify and allocate as many assistantships as possible, it does not guarantee funding for students. Prospective and continuing students should discuss their needs and interest in these opportunities with the Program Director and relevant faculty early and often.