

# 2023-2024

# PhD in Epidemiology

# Handbook



Department of Epidemiology  
College of Public Health and Health Professions  
College of Medicine

<http://epidemiology.php.ufl.edu/>

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# Welcome from the Chair of the Department of Epidemiology

Welcome!

Welcome to the Department of Epidemiology. I am thrilled that you are part of our PhD program! The department has had many accomplishments since its establishment in 2010. For instance, we received \$9.65 million in extramural grant funding during fiscal year 2020 alone. Many of our faculty members are national leaders in our research areas, and our graduate programs provide rigorous training to exceptional students in a supportive and collaborative environment. More importantly, our dynamic and growing faculty and staff are dedicated to excellence across our missions in research, education, and service. Our mission is to make scientific discoveries, educate others, and provide service so that we improve the health of the population. We do this through the practice of consequential epidemiology by:



- Advancing scientific knowledge through application of innovative epidemiological research across a broad range of contemporary health issues and populations
- Offering high quality master's, PhD, and post-doctoral programs and contributing to undergraduate programs that prepare students for academic and applied health careers
- Actively supporting service and outreach activities to address community needs

In addition, because we are uniquely co-located within the Colleges of Public Health and Health Professions and Medicine and within an academic health center, we have tremendous opportunities for broad interdisciplinary collaborations, which creates a training environment in which our students thrive. We are proud to be educating the next generation of leaders in public health and health professions. We hope you will enjoy exploring our web site and learning more about the wonderful work within our department and across the University.

Stephen E. Kimmel, MD, MSCE  
Chair, Department of Epidemiology  
<https://epidemiology.phhp.ufl.edu/about/chair/>

# Welcome from the PhD in Epidemiology Program Director

We extend a warm welcome to the Department and the Epidemiology family! It is with great enthusiasm that we embrace your presence in our dynamic and accomplished department. Throughout your doctoral dissertation journey, this comprehensive handbook will serve as your invaluable companion, guiding every step. Make it a priority to acquaint yourself with its contents upon joining the department and keep it accessible as you progress through the program. If you encounter any queries not addressed in the handbook, our Academic Program Coordinator and I are here to assist. Additionally, we recommend consulting the University of Florida Graduate Catalog for programmatic matters.



Our department is dedicated to ensuring that your graduate experience is both enriching and fruitful. I encourage you to wholeheartedly embrace your time in the Epidemiology PhD program as an opportunity for intellectual exploration, the expansion of knowledge, and personal growth, rather than merely perceiving it as a hurdle on your career path. The experiences you gain during your time in graduate school will lay a solid foundation for your professional journey. I urge you to actively engage in committees, attend seminars, and foster both professional and social connections with your fellow students and faculty members, both within and outside the department.

As you embark on this exciting chapter of your academic pursuit, remember that you are an integral part of our Epidemiology family. We highly value your unique perspectives, contributions, and aspirations, and we firmly believe we can achieve remarkable accomplishments together. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us whenever you require support or guidance. Always keep in mind that the connections you establish and the knowledge you acquire here will have a lasting impact on your future career. Once again, congratulations, and we eagerly anticipate witnessing your growth and success in the field of epidemiology!

Enjoy your time at the University of Florida in the Department of Epidemiology.

Go Gators!

Krishna Vaddiparti, PhD, MPHil, MPE, MSW  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Epidemiology  
Epidemiology PhD Program Director

## Introduction

The Graduate School establishes and administers graduate student policies and procedures campus-wide for the University of Florida. Policies and requirements listed in this handbook are either clarifications of those described in the [Graduate Catalog](#) or additional requirements or policies of the [PhD Program in Epidemiology](#). The PhD Program in Epidemiology is administered by the Department of Epidemiology, which is housed in both the College of Public Health and Health Professions and the College of Medicine.

Throughout this handbook, you will find links to programs, institutes, colleges and centers in the University of Florida. These links allow us to keep up with the ever-changing complexion of the University.

# Part I: The University of Florida

## Overview of UF

The [University of Florida](#) in [Gainesville](#) is a major research university and one of only 34 public universities that belong to the [Association of American Universities](#). It is the state's Flagship University, the oldest and most comprehensive University and is among the nation's most academically diverse public higher education institutions. UF has a long history of established programs in education, research, health care and service. It is currently ranked #5 among all US public universities.

UF has a 2,000-acre [campus](#) and more than 900 buildings, including 170 with classrooms and laboratories. UF's extensive capital improvement program has resulted in facilities ideal for 21st century academics and research, including the Emerging Pathogens Institute; the Cancer and Genetics Research Center; the McKnight Brain Institute, the Institute on Aging and the Clinical and Translational Research Institute (shown below). The new Malachowsky Hall for Data Science & Information Technology, which will connect students and researchers from across disciplines and create a hub for advances in computing, communication and cyber-technologies, will open in 2023.



## The UF Academic Health Center

The [UF Academic Health Center](#) is the country's only academic health center with six health-related colleges located on a single, contiguous campus with a nearby Veteran's Affairs Medical Center. They include the Colleges of 1) Dentistry, 2) Medicine, 3) Nursing, 4) Pharmacy, 5) Public Health and Health Professions, and 6) Veterinary Medicine. The Colleges teach the full continuum of students from undergraduates to professional students to advanced post-doctoral students.

The Academic Health Center is also a world leader in interdisciplinary research. Major Institutes and Centers include the [Clinical and Translational Science Institute](#), the [Diabetes Institute](#), the [Emerging Pathogens Institute](#), the [Institute on Aging](#), the [Institute for Child Health Policy](#), the [UF Health Cancer Center](#), the [UF Genetics Institute](#), and the [McKnight Brain Institute](#). Information on other UF Health centers and institutes can be found at this [link](#).

The Academic Health Center is closely affiliated with the [UF Health](#) System. Together with clinical programs and services across all HSC colleges, the UF Health partnership is helping to create Florida's future healthcare workforce.



## College of Public Health and Health Professions

The [mission](#) of the [UF College of Public Health and Health Professions](#) (PHHP) is to shape tomorrow's public health and health professionals through dynamic and responsive educational programs, transformational research, groundbreaking discoveries, and equitable health-related service.

In 2021, the College was re-accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). PHHP is the first college to include both public health and health professions that has received accreditation as a School of Public Health. Quick Facts about PHHP can be found on the [college fact sheet](#). In 2018, the College celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### Teaching

The College is composed of eight departments: 1) Biostatistics; 2) Clinical and Health Psychology; 3) Environmental and Global Health; 4) Epidemiology; 5) Health Services Research, Management and Policy; 6) Occupational Therapy; 7) Physical Therapy; and 8) Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences.

### Research

The College of Public Health and Health Professions was granted over \$44.5 million in external funding in fiscal year 2022-2023.

The Department of Epidemiology is home to the [Southern HIV and Alcohol Research Consortium \(SHARC\)](#) Center for Translational HIV Research and the Center for Genetic Epidemiology and Bioinformatics (GeneBio). The College of Public Health and Health Professions is home to additional centers, which can be found on the [PHHP website](#).

### Research Training

The College has [eight NIH training grants](#), including three in the Department of Epidemiology. These focus on [substance abuse](#), [alcohol and HIV infection](#), and [genomic medicine](#). Other training grants in the College include those in the areas of rehabilitation and neuromuscular plasticity; movement disorders and neurorestoration; physical, cognitive, and mental health in older adults; and breathing research and therapeutics.

### Patient Care

The College of Public Health and Health Professions is home to the Clinical and Health Psychology clinic, which offers both general and specialty psychological services to children, adolescents, and adults.

### Service

One major service site is provided through the Department of Epidemiology's [HealthStreet](#), which is a community-based effort that works every day to reduce disparities in healthcare and research participation by linking the medically underserved to medical and social services and opportunities to participate in research. HealthStreet offers an innovative hub for students and faculty to learn community-based research

methods. With its cohort of 11,500 community members, it offers unlimited opportunities for dissertations and service learning.

## College of Medicine

The [UF College of Medicine](#) is acknowledged as having one of the strongest medical education programs in North America. Its mission is to improve health care in Florida, our nation and the world through excellence and leadership in education, clinical care, discovery and service. The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the College of Medicine took place in 2016.

### Teaching

The College offers a variety of educational opportunities in addition to the medical degree, including the Interdisciplinary Program in Biomedical Sciences, which leads to a PhD or MS degree, and joint programs for both MD and PhD degrees. Also part of the College of Medicine is the School of Physician Assistant Studies. The College plays an important role in the continuing education of resident physicians and fellows through its collaboration with [UF Health](#). The College offers residencies in nearly 60 medical specialties and subspecialties as well as clinical and research fellowships.

The College of Medicine is ranked 35th among the nation's top research medical schools, according to U.S. News & World Report. The College includes 28 research-oriented basic and clinical academic departments, over 1,600 students, over 900 residents and fellows, and more than 1,400 full-time faculty members. The Jacksonville campus, located 75 miles to the northeast, is home to more than 450 physicians and scientists delivering medical care in an urban setting, performing research and educating medical students and residents.

### Research

College of Medicine faculty are national leaders in fundamental, translational and clinical research in areas pertaining to diseases of the nervous system, human aging, cancer, diabetes, infectious disease, immunology and inflammation, genetics and gene therapy. College of Medicine faculty and collaborative research teams continue to receive awards and honors that reflect their exceptional distinctions and contributions. College of Medicine researchers have achieved an increase in National Institutes of Health funding, consistently exceeding \$100 million in NIH funding annually. The College of Medicine houses [10 affiliated research institutes](#) and [61 affiliated research facilities/centers](#).

Two of the most widely recognized products to come out of research at the College of Medicine are Gatorade®, a popular sports beverage, and Trusopt®, an eye drop developed to treat certain forms of glaucoma.

### Patient Care

Patient care is provided by the UF Physicians Group Practice, a close collaboration with UF Health, the [Malcolm Randall Veterans Affairs Medical Center](#), and several community health-care sites and other affiliated hospitals in Florida. Patient care occurs at two principal locations — Gainesville and [Jacksonville](#) — and at nearly 50 clinical practices. Clinical strengths are in cancer, neurosciences, aging, gene therapy, psychiatry and addiction medicine, transplantation and children's services. UF faculty members account for

approximately 1.64 million physician outpatient visits and 92,046 inpatient visits annually. The UF Health Shands Cancer Hospital, a 192-bed hospital designed to meet the area's growing need for cancer services, opened its doors to patients in November 2009. It also houses the Critical Care Center for Emergency and Trauma services. The Florida Recovery Center is available for those who seek recovery from addiction and eating disorders. In January 2018, two new towers were completed: the UF Health Heart and Vascular Hospital and the UF Health Neuromedicine Hospital.

## Department of Epidemiology

The [Department of Epidemiology](#) is housed in both the College of Public Health and Health Professions and the College of Medicine at the University of Florida. Faculty members are appointed in both Colleges. This forward governance structure was designed to create synergies, resulting in a strong, competitive research profile and uniquely trained students.

The mission of the Department of Epidemiology is to improve health globally through education, training, research and service.

As a leader in the field, the Department aims to:

- Advance the field's theoretical and empirical base through rigorous multidisciplinary epidemiological research that monitors health globally.
- Prepare the next generation of scientific leaders to design and conduct ethical, relevant and innovative epidemiological studies.
- Train a public health workforce committed to working with diverse communities to bring about outcomes that matter.
- Develop and refine epidemiological measures and methods that address the dynamic and complex factors impacting public health globally.
- Provide leadership and service in epidemiology and public health through international, national, state, and local collaboration and community engagement.

The department offers the [PhD in Epidemiology](#), an [Epidemiology concentration in the MPH program](#), an [MS in Epidemiology](#), and an online [Graduate Certificate in Psychiatric Epidemiology](#). Currently, there are [over 100 students](#) across these academic programs in the Department.

# Part II: PhD in Epidemiology

## Program Overview

The PhD in Epidemiology program was implemented in 2008. The PhD is a research degree, granted on evidence of overall proficiency in epidemiology, and particularly on the ability to apply the skills in an independent investigation as demonstrated in a dissertation presenting original research with a high degree of literary skill.

Graduates of the Epidemiology PhD program will be able to:

- Apply epidemiological methods to address critical and/or emerging public health and clinical research issues through the use of:
  - Appropriate epidemiological research designs
  - Advanced statistical analysis methods for health studies
  - Data structures and measurement methods for health research
  - Depth of knowledge in an area of specialization
- Apply ethical thinking to a questionable ethics case from the current news
- Develop grant proposals and manage research projects
- Write scientific papers for publication in peer-reviewed journals, and communicate research results to stakeholders

The program consists of the following requirements:

- 90 credits of coursework
  - 36 credits of core coursework
  - 39 credits of elective coursework
  - 15 credits of dissertation research
- Formation a Supervisory Committee of at least four members in the first year of the program
- A 3.0 GPA overall and a 3.0 GPA in the epidemiology core courses
- Maintenance of appropriate professional conduct throughout the program
- Successful completion of a preliminary and qualifying comprehensive examination
- Preparation and successfully defense of a dissertation proposal and admission to candidacy
- Preparation and successful oral defense of a dissertation

These elements and the associated activities are described in the sections below.

## Student Learning Outcomes

The following student learning outcomes are necessary for progression to candidacy:

1. Design epidemiologic research studies and analyze data to answer health-related research questions that are currently relevant to the population.
2. Prepare to become an independent researcher in the field of Epidemiology
3. Illustrate a thorough understanding of epidemiology concepts.
4. Display ethical behaviors, cultural sensitivity, teamwork, professional conduct and communication, and build academic skills such as grant writing.

## Concentrations

The overarching goal of concentrations is to provide learners with advanced training in each respective field. This training will help prepare researchers for the frontlines of interdisciplinary team science targeted toward improving the quality of life, health, and society using epidemiologic tools and methods.

Students in the PhD program in Epidemiology may apply to graduate with a concentration in one of the following areas.

- [Cancer Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Lusine Yaghjian](#))
- [Data Science Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Mattia Prospero](#))
- [Genetic Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Jinying Zhao](#))
- [Gero-Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Catherine Striley](#))
- [Infectious Disease Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Volker Mai](#))
- [Psychiatric Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Catherine Striley](#))

Concentrations allow PhD students to focus their elective coursework toward a single content area that interests them. All concentrations offered by the Department of Epidemiology are completely optional, and students may enroll in up to two concentrations. Enrollment in a concentration requires the approval of the student's Research Mentor and the PhD Program Director.

All concentrations require that, before graduation, students submit either (a) dissertation aims or (b) a first-authored publication\* that documents research in the area of the concentration in addition to the required courses.

The Department of Epidemiology also participates in the Clinical and Translational Science Interdisciplinary Concentration offered by the Clinical and Translational Science Institute. For more information about this concentration, please visit:

<https://www.ctsi.ufl.edu/education/ph-d-students/cts-interdisciplinary-concentration/>.

\*If the student is not the first author but did make a significant contribution to the paper, as attested in an email or letter from the mentor, then that authorship will be accepted as a concentration requirement.

## Faculty and Administration

The graduate faculty members of the PhD Program in Epidemiology are:

- a) Core faculty in the Department of Epidemiology,
- b) Affiliated graduate faculty from other Departments and Colleges around the university,
- c) Part time faculty (Adjunct Faculty): Individuals with satisfactory professional qualifications who teach, conduct research, and sometimes have extended functions in connection to established programs, or
- d) Courtesy faculty appointees: Individuals currently not employed or paid by the university

A current listing of [core faculty](#) is shown on the Department of Epidemiology website. The Director of the PhD Program, appointed by the Chair of the Department, works with the Chair to oversee the PhD program, assuring student progress and monitoring program accomplishments. The Director works closely with core faculty members in the Department of Epidemiology and collaborates with the PhD Curriculum Committee and the Admissions Committee.

The PhD Academic Program Assistant, also known as the Academic Assistant or Program Assistant, is responsible for maintaining student records and assisting the Program Director.

A current list of all [graduate faculty](#) members in Epidemiology is included on the Department of Epidemiology website.



## Student Guidance and Mentoring

Students accepted into the PhD program will have a Research Mentor and an Academic Advisor.

### Research Mentor

The Research Mentor will:

1. Serve as Chair of the student's Dissertation Supervisory Committee if they are a core, joint, or affiliate faculty member within the Department of Epidemiology. If a faculty member is not a core, joint, or affiliate faculty member, they will serve as the Co-Chair.
2. Complete an annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Monitoring Plan with the student.
3. Review coursework and progression towards graduation at least once per semester.
4. Work with the student to form a supervisory committee during the first year.
5. Provide extensive mentoring and guidance as the student develops a research proposal.

Additionally, the Research Mentor should:

1. Meet with the student to review progress at least twice per month, although more frequently is recommended.
2. Provide detailed guidance regarding how to organize and write the PhD dissertation.
3. Provide opportunities for interactions with visiting scholars and presentation of data at local and/or national meetings.
4. Provide career guidance and advice as the student moves through the program.

### Academic Advisor

Students are assigned an Academic Advisor by the PhD Program Director prior to the start of their program.

The Academic Advisor will:

1. Be a core faculty member within the Department of Epidemiology
2. Work with the Research Mentor and the student to ensure that the student is completing the specific requirements needed to obtain the PhD in Epidemiology.
3. Meet with the student in advance of the course registration period each semester to discuss academic progress.
4. Be available throughout the year to consult with students about academic issues.

Additionally, the Academic Advisor:

1. Provides other general advice.
2. Can serve as a member of the Supervisory Committee, although this is not required.
3. Facilitates communication between the student and other program faculty as needed.

### Guidance

Every semester, the Research Mentor and the Academic Advisor will sign off on the [Course Registration Form](#). For each registration period, the Mentor and student will help plan courses to be taken; however, it is the responsibility of the Academic Advisor to know the curriculum requirements and to review the form.

To keep track, the Academic Assistant will document the completion of specific curricular requirements. This form will be provided to the student, the Research Mentor, and the Academic Advisor each semester.

### **Change in Research Mentor**

Switching Research Mentors (the Supervisory Committee Chair or Co-Chair) is discouraged unless there is a compelling rationale because time, effort and money are invested in the student by the Research Mentor. Students with a compelling rationale may speak with the Program Director to request a switch. Such changes will be considered if the student is in good academic standing, both the original and proposed new Research Mentors agree to the change, and the request is provided in writing to the Program Director. If the student is not in good academic standing or if the Research Mentor or proposed Research Mentor does not agree to the change, the student can appeal to the Program Director, who will make a final decision in consultation with the Department Chair.

### **Handbook Applications**

Changes in the handbook are only made with the students' best interests in mind. In general, students will be held to the terms and rules outlined in the handbook published in the year they begin the program unless there are university or departmental guidelines that warrant a change.

### **Good Academic Standing**

Good academic standing regarding progression toward the degree means that a student:

- Has at least a 3.0 GPA with no grades lower than a C
- Cannot have more than one incomplete grade on their transcript and has a contract to remediate the incomplete grade within the next academic semester
- Has established their supervisory committee on time (within the first 12 months of their program)
- Is on track to defend their proposal at least two semesters prior to their planned semester of graduation
- Will graduate on target – within 4 years

### **Unsatisfactory Progress or Unsatisfactory Scholarship**

[Per the Graduate School Academic Catalog](#): Any graduate student may be denied further registration if progress toward completing the program becomes unsatisfactory to the academic unit, college, or Dean of the Graduate School. Unsatisfactory scholarship is defined as failure to maintain a B average (3.00) in all work attempted. Graduate students need an overall GPA of 3.00 truncated and a 3.00 truncated GPA in their major (and in the minor, if a minor is declared) at graduation. Students with less than a 3.00 GPA may not hold an assistantship or fellowship.

## Supervisory Committee

### Composition

The Supervisory Committee oversees and mentors the PhD student through completion of the dissertation phase. Supervisory Committee membership is dictated by the UF Graduate School (see [Graduate Catalog](#)). The supervisory committee is composed of at least four members selected from the Graduate Faculty. At least two members, including the Chair, must be core, joint, or affiliate faculty members in the Department of Epidemiology. At least one member serves as the external member and must be from a different educational discipline, with no ties to the home academic unit. One member (the general member) may be from the Department of Epidemiology or another academic unit.

Affiliate faculty members whose primary academic home is outside of the department of epidemiology are allowed to serve as Supervisory Committee Co-Chairs. Affiliate faculty members are allowed to serve as Supervisory Committee Chairs only if they provide the majority of student funding and serve as the primary research mentor.

Role on Committee	Graduate Faculty Status
Chair	Yes, in Epidemiology
Co-Chair (optional)	Yes, at UF
Member (internal)	Yes, in Epidemiology
Member (general)	Yes, at UF
External Member	Yes, at UF, but cannot be Graduate Faculty in Epidemiology
Special Member (optional and requires special approval from the Department Chair and the Graduate School)	Not required

The Co-Chair may substitute for either the internal member or the general member according to their qualifications.

### Chair and Co-Chair of the Supervisory Committee

A Chair is required on all Supervisory Committees. A Co-Chair is optional. Appointing a Co-Chair is appropriate if the student receives funding and is supervised in their assistantship duties by a Graduate Faculty member outside of the Department of Epidemiology, and/or the co-Chair has a synergistic area of expertise.

### Non-Tenure Track Faculty as Committee Chair

A non-tenure track faculty member can be a Committee Chair with the approval of the Department Chair.

### Formation of the Supervisory Committee

The Supervisory Committee Chair and the student will work together to identify a proposed Supervisory Committee in the first 12 months in the program. If the committee is not assembled within the first 12

months then the Committee Chair may appoint members. After the student and Committee Chair agree on the proposed Supervisory Committee, the student will submit the Supervisory Committee Selection Form to the Program Director, who will confirm that the proposed committee meets the Department guidelines as shown in the table above and discuss with the Department Chair if needed based on the guidelines provided earlier in this document. Proposed committee members will then submit their cv for review by the Department Chair.

Once students have permission from the Program Director and Department Chair to go ahead, the student will obtain members' agreements to serve. Once selected, the Committee Chair will alert the Program Director to the committee selection. Once approved, the student will obtain the signatures of all Supervisory Committee Members on the Supervisory Committee form. The last person to sign, the Department Chair, will return the form to the Academic Assistant, who will enter the committee into the UF Graduate School system for final approval at the Graduate School, and into the Epidemiology PhD database.

Final decision on who can be accepted also depends on faculty effort distribution as approved by the Department Chair.

### **Changes in Committee Membership**

If a student wants to change a Supervisory Committee member, they must first discuss this with the Supervisory Committee Chair (as noted on page 18, if a student is interested in [changing their Supervisory Committee Chair](#), they must first speak with the Program Director). The Supervisory Committee Chair discusses the student's request with the outgoing member and the Program Director and confirms with the proposed incoming member their willingness to serve on the student's committee. The Supervisory Committee Chair then sends written confirmation to the Program Director that the outgoing committee member has been advised of the change. The Program Director will present the request to the Department Chair. Changes need to be approved at least 60 days prior to the date of the Final Oral Defense so that the request can be reviewed and so any new member will have ample time to become familiar with the student's work. If a change must be made after the deadline for a graduating student then the department will need to submit a petition to the Graduate School. Students are discouraged from changing committee members once they have completed their Qualifying Exams.

### **Special Members**

Special Members of the Supervisory Committee can be requested but are not guaranteed. See table above for qualifications. To request a special member, contact the Academic Assistant and PhD Program Director and provide the most up-to-date curriculum vitae for the proposed special member, along with an explanation of why they are being requested. The Department Chair will assess the proposed special member's qualifications and provide an evaluative statement explaining what knowledge, experience and skills this special appointment will bring to the student's research as a guest expert on his/her supervisory committee. After approval by the department chair, the Academic Assistant will request that the department's Human Resources staff member request a UFID number for the proposed special member.

Once all requirements are in place, the Academic Assistant will enter the required nomination materials into GIMS. Special appointments do not count toward the required minimum for a valid supervisory committee

**Supervisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities Regarding Dissertation:**

The Chair of the Supervisory Committee will:

- Evaluate the student officially with a yearly evaluation
- Communicate with other members of the committee and the student
- Provide support and guidance to help the student meet academic goals
- Help to prepare PhD student Area Examination (both oral and written); get approval of exam questions from the Program Director
- Provide guidance on the student's dissertation topic
- Administer the doctoral dissertation proposal defense in accordance with the guidelines of the Graduate School
- Monitor and evaluate the student's progress and give clear direction as to the final work plan leading to graduation
- Conduct the final oral examination (also known as doctoral dissertation defense) to satisfy that the dissertation is original research and a contribution to the field. The oral portion of the examination must be conducted in compliance with Graduate School policies.
- Inform the PhD Program Director of all progress as the following milestones are completed, via email, within one day of the completion:
  - Written Area Exam
  - Oral Area Exam
  - Dissertation Proposal Defense
  - Final Dissertation Defense

The Supervisory Committee must collectively meet at least twice a year until the student advances to candidacy, and then every semester thereafter, to review the student's research. These meetings should be scheduled by the student, in consultation with the Supervisory Committee Chair.

## PhD Curriculum

The PhD in Epidemiology program requires a minimum of 90 semester credits beyond the bachelor’s degree. In addition, all students are required to complete, or to have completed, the following courses:

<i>Course</i>	<i>Epidemiology Prerequisites</i>
N/A	HIPAA & IRB certification
<b>PHC 6001</b>	Principles of Epidemiology in Public Health
<b>PHC 6937</b>	Introduction to Public Health for the Health Professions

The HIPAA & Privacy and IRB courses are available on [myTraining](#) through a sign-in process using the Gator1 sign in. The HIPAA Class can be found by search “UF\_PRV801v\_OLT”; the IRB Course can be found by searching “IRB803”. Both trainings should be completed in the first 30 days of the program.

PHC 6001 is the graduate-level introductory epidemiology course that is required for several of the core courses. If this course or its equivalent was not already completed then it should be taken the first semester of the graduate program.

PHC 6937 is designed to meet the [CEPH accreditation requirement](#) that “students complete coursework that provides instruction in the foundational public health knowledge at an appropriate level of complexity.” PhD students who have completed a CEPH-accredited bachelors, masters, or doctoral degree are not required to take this course. The course may be taken for-credit or not-for-credit. It should be completed by the end of the second year of study. Students will be informed by the Academic Assistant of their need to complete this course.

The current curriculum is shown below. All students must complete a minimum of 36 credits of epidemiology core coursework, 39 credits of Epidemiology Elective Courses, and 15 credits of dissertation work. Students will regularly review their progression towards meeting program curriculum requirements by completing the PhD Curriculum Form and reviewing it regularly with the Academic Assistant, the Research Mentor, and the Academic Advisor each semester.

### *Epidemiology Core Courses – Required (36 Credits)*

<i>Course</i>	<i>Statistics &amp; Data Management (8 Credits)</i>	<i>Credits</i>
<b>PHC 6052</b>	Introduction to Biostatistical Methods (SAS-based)	<b>3</b>
<b>PHC 6053</b>	Regression Methods for the Health and Life Sciences (SAS-based)	<b>3</b>
<b>PHC 7065</b>	Advanced Skills in Epidemiological Data Management	<b>2</b>
<i>Course</i>	<i>Epidemiologic Methods (6 Credits)</i>	<i>Credits</i>
<b>PHC 6000</b>	Epidemiology Methods I	<b>3</b>
<b>PHC 6011</b>	Epidemiology Methods II	<b>3</b>
<i>Course</i>	<i>Epidemiology (9 Credits)</i>	<i>Credits</i>
<b>Choose 9 credits from these courses</b>	Epidemiology of Chronic Diseases and Disability (PHC 6003)	<b>3</b>
	Public Health Concepts in Infectious Diseases (PHC 6517)	<b>3</b>
	Advanced Epidemiologic Methods III (PHC 7017)	<b>3</b>
	Social Epidemiology in Public Health (PHC 6016)	<b>3</b>

	Genetic Epidemiology (PHC 7594)	3
	Cancer Epidemiology (PHC 7007)	3
	Psychiatric Epidemiology (PHC 7038)	3
	Introduction to Molecular Epidemiology (PHC 7595)	3
<b>Course</b>	<b>Doctoral Series (6 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7727	Grant Writing for Population Health Research	2
PHC 7934	Seminar I: Epidemiology Past, Present, and Future	2
PHC 7000	Epidemiology Seminar II: Critical Evaluation, Research Proposals, and Methods	2
<b>Course</b>	<b>Writing Series (2 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7901	Epidemiology Literature Review and Critique (Journal Club)	1
PHC 7902	Scientific Writing for Peer Reviewed Publications for Popular Science	1
<b>Course</b>	<b>Ethics (2 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7427	Leadership in Ethics in Population Science	2
<b>Course</b>	<b>Measurement (3 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 6711	Measurement in Epidemiology and Outcomes Research	3

### ***Epidemiology Elective Courses (39 Credits)<sup>1</sup>***

<b>Course</b>	<b>Statistics Electives (6 credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Choose 6 credits from approved courses</b>	Introduction to Managerial Statistics (QMB 5304)	2
	Advanced Managerial Statistics (QMB 5305)	2
	Clinical Trials Methods (PHC 6020)	3
	Statistical Analysis for Managerial Decisions (QMB 6358)	2
	Theory of Measurement (EDF 6436)	4
	Impact Through Networks (PHC 6701)	2
	Introduction to Mixed Methods Research (PHC 6937)	3
	Introduction to Applied Survival Analysis (PHC 6059)	3
	<i>Other relevant approved advanced statistics courses</i>	<b>VAR</b>
<b>Course</b>	<b>Epidemiology Electives (18 Credits)</b> <i>If completing a concentration, see the concentration curriculum</i>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Choose from these courses. Any core course offering not already taken for credit can also apply to this section.</b>	Biology and Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS (PHC 6009)	3
	Landmarks in Psychiatric Epidemiology (PHC 6041)	2
	Foundations in Precision Medicine: Genomic Technologies (PHA 6134)	1
	Clinical Applications of Precision Medicine: Pharmacogenomics (PHA 6135)	2
	Clinical Applications of Precision Medicine: Oncology (PHA 6136)	2
	Foundations in Precision Medicine: Medical Molecular Genetics (GMS 6224)	1
	Pharmacoepidemiology and Patient Safety (PHA 6268)	3
	Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology (PHC 6591)	3
	PHC 6598: Foundations in Precision Medicine: Genetic Epidemiology (1 credit)	1
	Clinical Applications of Precision Medicine: Precision Health (PHA 6613)	3
	Design and Analysis of Translational Research in Biomedical Sciences (GMS 6841)	2
	Meta-Analysis in Clinical, Health Services Research and Public Health (GMS 6846)	2
	College Classroom: Teaching Process and Practice (RSD 6900)	3
	Psychiatric Epidemiology Online Seminar Series (PHC 6932)	1
Core Seminar in the Translational Science of Alcohol and HIV Infection	1	

	PHC 6937)	
	Hospital Epidemiology (PHC 6937)	3
	Population Genetics (PHC 6937)	3
	CPE Psychiatric Grand Rounds (PHC 6939)	1
	Computational Epidemiology in Population Science (PHC 7083)	2
	Topics in Precision Medicine and Public Health Informatics (PHC 7199)	1
	Advanced Pharmacoepidemiology (PHA 7807)	3
	International Field Epidemiology (PHC 7910)	3
	National Field Epidemiology (PHC 7916)	1 – 3
	Independent Study (PHC 7918)	1 – 3
<b>Course</b>	<b>General Electives (15 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Choose any course relevant to your research interests or career goals. Any of the above listed courses not already taken for credit can also apply to this section.</b>		

***Epidemiology Dissertation Research Courses – Required (15 Credits)***

<b>Course</b>	<b>Pre-Candidacy (3 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7979	Advanced Research	VAR
<b>Course</b>	<b>Dissertation (12 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7980	Doctoral Research	VAR
	Doctoral Research	VAR
	Doctoral Research	VAR
	Doctoral Research	VAR

***Optional Concentrations:***

*Students may designate up to 2 concentrations. Students must submit either (a) dissertation aims or (b) a first-authored publication that documents research in the area of the concentration in addition to required courses before concentration certification.*

<b>Course</b>	<b>Cancer Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7007	Cancer Epidemiology	3
PHC 7595	Molecular Epidemiology	3
GMS 6065	Fundamentals of Cancer Biology	3
	TOTAL	9

<b>Course</b>	<b>Data Science Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7199	Topics in Precision Medicine and Public Health Informatics	1
PHC 7017	Advanced Epidemiologic Methods III*	3
PHC 7083	Computational Data Science for Epidemiology	2
PHC7858	Causal AI for Health Research*	3
<b>*Substitution with one of the courses listed below is permitted with approval of concentration director</b>		
PHC 6937	Introduction to Statistical Learning with Applications in Health Sciences	3



GMS 6822	Measuring and Analyzing Health Outcomes	<b>3</b>
GMS 6850	Foundations of Biomedical Informatics	<b>3</b>
GMS 6856	Introduction to Biomedical Natural Language Processing	<b>3</b>
	TOTAL	<b>9</b>
<b>Course</b>	<b><i>Genetic Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</i></b>	<b><i>Credits</i></b>
PHC 7595	Molecular Epidemiology	<b>3</b>
PHC 7XXX	Genetic Epidemiology	<b>3</b>
	A relevant course from Epidemiology or another department, with approval of concentration coordinator, identified in this handbook	<b>3</b>
	TOTAL	<b>9</b>

<b>Course</b>	<b><i>Gero-Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</i></b>	<b><i>Credits</i></b>
GMS 6485	Population Based Research in Aging	<b>3</b>
GMS 6099	Research Methods in Gerontology	<b>3</b>
PHC 6016	Social Epidemiology	<b>3</b>
	TOTAL	<b>9</b>

<b>Course</b>	<b><i>Infectious Disease Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</i></b>	<b><i>Credits</i></b>
PHC 6517	Public Health Concepts in Infectious Disease	<b>3</b>
PHC 7XXX	Hospital Epidemiology	<b>3</b>
	A relevant course from Epidemiology or another department, with approval of concentration coordinator, identified in this handbook	<b>3</b>
	TOTAL	<b>9</b>

<b>Course</b>	<b><i>Psychiatric Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</i></b>	<b><i>Credits</i></b>
PHC 6016	Social Epidemiology	<b>3</b>
PHC 7038	Psychiatric Epidemiology	<b>3</b>
PHC 6041	Landmarks in Psychiatric Epidemiology	<b>2</b>
PHC 6939	CPE Psychiatric Grand Rounds (Special Topics)	<b>1</b>
	TOTAL	<b>9</b>

<sup>1</sup>The Department of Epidemiology Curriculum Committee meets regularly to review and adjust the curriculum. The list of approved elective courses is updated regularly.

## **Curriculum Summary: PhD in Epidemiology**

The Epidemiology PhD Curriculum Form summarizes the required components of the University of Florida PhD in Epidemiology degree and includes a list of specific courses that have been approved as requirements or elective categories. Specific course availability varies and some courses may not be available every year.

The Academic Assistant will track the courses and maintain an updated file of each student's PhD courses using the PhD Curriculum Form that documents what curriculum requirements have been completed. At the time of each registration, the Academic Assistant will provide an official matrix of courses taken and requirements yet to take to the student, the Academic Advisor, and the Research Mentor.

Substitution or exemption for any specific curriculum requirements must be initiated with a letter of explanation that is signed by the student's Research Mentor and Academic Advisor (e.g., a specific course was cancelled or not offered for several years). Such requests will then be reviewed by the PhD Program Director, and the decision will be placed in the student's academic file.

## Registration

Registration requirements are consistent with the UF [Graduate School Requirements](#), unless otherwise specifically stated in this handbook. Students receiving assistantships or fellowships must register for the number of credits required by the University of Florida for their specific award. For example, 0.50 FTE Graduate Assistants must be registered for 9 credits in the fall and spring and 6 credits in the summer; predoctoral fellows, such as those supported by a T32 training grant, must be registered for 12 credits in the fall and spring and 8 credits in the summer.

Students must be registered every semester, including summer terms, until completion of their degree unless approved for a leave of absence or a medical withdrawal. Taking a leave of absence requires written approval (see Leaves of Absence) from the above leaders as well as the Chair of the Department. Students facing other emergency circumstances that might affect academic progression should first alert their mentor and then speak with the Program Director regarding options. Students failing to enroll as expected are subject to dismissal. Readmission requires an [application](#) and is not guaranteed except for a medical withdrawal. Readmission after an approved leave of absence depends on the student's fulfillment of the requirements of the leave of absence.

Part-time students in the Epidemiology PhD program are required to register for a minimum of either 3 credits in the fall and spring semesters and 2 credits in the summer session while they are actively working toward their degrees. Part-time status needs to be approved by the Program Director.

Full-time students are not permitted to change to part-time status without a specific written explanation approved by the Research Mentor, Academic Advisor, and PhD Program Director.

### Registration Procedure

Registration for students in the Epidemiology PhD program is carried out by the PhD Academic Assistant after paperwork is completed by the student. Prior to each upcoming semester, the Academic Assistant will compile a list of courses to be offered that are approved by the Curriculum Committee as PhD core program requirements or electives. Students may request to take other courses as electives, but such courses must be recommended by the student's Chair of the Supervisory Committee and approved by the Curriculum Committee Chair, with notification to the Academic Advisor and PhD Program Director. Once students have identified their proposed schedule, they will complete a Course Registration Form, have the form signed by the people listed on the form, and submit it to the Academic Assistant.

### Registration for Independent Research

If registering for an independent study (PHC 7918), pre-candidacy work (PHC 7979) or post-candidacy dissertation research (PHC 7980), the student should initiate the process several weeks prior to registration. The steps needed to register for these courses include:

- Completing a Dissertation Research Contract with PHC 7979 or 7980 specified or an Independent Research Contract Form (PHC 7918) that outlines contact time with the instructor, time allocation

by students, and specific plan (goals and objectives) and deliverables to be completed during the semester.

- Obtaining signatures from the Chair of the Supervisory Committee and the instructor, if different from the Committee Chair.
- Obtaining signature from the PhD Program Director
- Submitting signed contracts to the Academic Assistant

The Academic Assistant will then complete the registration process and create a unique section number for the student that links the course to the supervising faculty member. By the end of the semester, students must complete the work in the contract to receive credit (S/U). If work is not completed, the instructor may assign an “I” (incomplete) grade if the student is eligible for an “I” grade according to UF requirements. For students being given an “I” grade, the instructor will complete the approved Incomplete Grade Contract with the student. This I grade can be changed once the student has completed the work outlined in the Incomplete Grade Contract.

Please refer to [the Orange Book](#) section 3, page 12 for additional information on what constitutes a violation of the honor code with regard to incomplete work.

### **Registration in Final Semester**

All PhD students must register for a minimum of either three (fall and spring semesters) or two (summer semester) credits of PHC 7980 during the term they graduate; students on a fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship must be registered appropriately for their appointments. As noted above, these credits are arranged and documented using the Dissertation Research Contract. Candidates must submit a Degree Application online through ONE.UF by approximately the second week of their final term (see the Graduate Catalog or posted deadlines for the exact date). They may only do this after written confirmation from the Program Director has been given that all course requirements will be filled by graduation. This application must be renewed for a subsequent term if all degree requirements are not fulfilled in the term in which the application was filed.

## Academic Residence Requirement

Student participation in Department and College seminars and activities and interaction with other students and faculty is an important part of doctoral education, therefore students must remain in residence in the Gainesville area to be able to attend these events and to meet face-to-face with their Research Mentor and Academic Advisor. Students who want to relocate more than reasonable commuting distance away from Gainesville may petition to do so only after they have advanced to candidacy. A petition for an exemption to the Academic Residence Requirement must be submitted at least 2 months prior to the proposed relocation date and must include:

- A statement of reasons for the relocation
- A written plan detailing the work the student will be completing during the time period out of residence
- A written plan outlining how the student will maintain regular contact with their Supervisory Committee Chair and Academic Advisor and how this contact will be documented
- Signatures of the student, their Supervisory Committee Chair and their Academic Advisor

Petitions will be reviewed by the PhD Program Director and the Epidemiology Department Chair. The student, their Research Mentor, and their Academic Advisor will be informed of the final decision within 3 weeks of receipt of the petition.

### Conference Travel

All conference travel days must be preapproved by all direct supervisors. Students must complete the Travel Authorization Request, which must be submitted at least 10 days in advance of the start date of the travel. International travel requires an additional approval process.

### Personal Time

Per the agreement between the University of Florida Board of Trustees and Graduate Assistants United:

8.2 Personal time under this Article shall be with pay for up to five (5) days per semester appointment. Each person shall be credited with five (5) days at the beginning of each semester and shall use leave in increments of not less than one (1) day. For example, an employee scheduled to work six (6) hours on Monday and three (3) hours on Tuesday, who is unable to perform assigned duties on these days for any of the reasons described above, would be charged with two (2) days of personal time, regardless of FTE appointment, or number of work hours scheduled. The personal time provided under this Article shall not be cumulative.

Personal time days must be pre-approved by the Research Mentor via signature on the [Application for Leave](#). Personal time days do not carry over from one semester to another.

### Leaves of Absence

Per the [agreement](#) between the University of Florida Board of Trustees and Graduate Assistants United:

### 8.3 Unpaid Leave

(a) Graduate Assistant shall be entitled to six (6) weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one (1) or more of the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child and in order to care for that child;
2. The placement of a child with a graduate assistant for adoption or foster care;
3. The care of a spouse, domestic partner, mother, father, sister, brother, child, legal dependent, or a relative living in the graduate assistant's household;
4. A serious health condition of the GA which makes the GA unable to perform his or her duties.

(b) The GA shall provide the University with written notice not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the requested leave if practicable. In the case of an emergency, the GA must give verbal notice within twenty-four (24) hours of taking leave. In the case of a serious health condition, the University may request medical verification from a health care provider. The University also may require the GA to see a health care provider of the University's choice and at the University's expense.

(c) The GA may request an extension of the leave which the University at its sole discretion may provide.

(d) The GA is entitled to return to the same or similar position at the conclusion of the leave. This return provision does not apply if the return date is after the completion of an employment contract.

(e) The University shall continue to pay the health care premiums during the duration of the GA's leave. If applicable, the University tuition waiver shall be maintained.

(f) A GA must be in at least a second semester of employment as a GA to be eligible for this leave provision.

## Internship Policy

Internships can provide valuable, real-world experience for doctoral students. However, internships are not a required part of the PhD in Epidemiology curriculum and should not delay a student's progress in the program. In order to allow for this optional experience while still ensuring timely progression through the PhD program, the following Internship Policy has been implemented:

### Requirements for students who want to do an Internship

1. Students may only do an internship after they have passed the Written Preliminary Exam.
2. Students are limited to one internship opportunity during the PhD program unless approved (in rare circumstances) by the Research Mentor, Program Director, and the Department Chair.
3. Students must be making documented adequate progress in the PhD program for an internship request to be considered.
4. If the internship requires the student to relocate outside of Gainesville during the internship period then it must be completed during the summer semester, unless the student has advanced to candidacy before the internship request is submitted.
5. The duration of the internship will be no longer than one semester.
6. Students must request a formal leave of absence for the internship, which means that they will not receive a stipend or tuition waiver during the internship period: <https://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/hiring-center/current-employees-status-changes/graduate-assistant-leave-of-absence-process/>
7. The leave of absence for summer internships must take place between May 16 and August 15. This is non-negotiable per Human Resources.
8. International students may have different rules and restrictions for internships. They will need to consult with the International Center in advance of submitting an internship request to the Program Director to determine the specific requirements for their request.
9. If a student is required to take course credits for an internship in order to remain in compliance with visa requirements then the student will be personally responsible for covering those expenses.
10. Students may need to switch health insurance coverage during the internship semester due to the leave of absence. Students are expected to personally cover the fees associated with their health insurance coverage while on leave.

### Process to request approval for an internship

11. The Research Mentor(s) must approve the request on the approval form before it is brought to the PhD Program Director. Students must provide a copy of the written approval to the Program Director.
12. Students must request approval from PhD Program Director as soon as possible and no less than four weeks in advance of the proposed internship start date. The Department Chair will provide the final approval.
13. After approval of the internship by the PhD Program Director and Department Chair, students will request a leave of absence request letter from the Academic Assistant. The Academic Assistant will

email the letter to UF HR Employment ([ufhr-employment@ufl.edu](mailto:ufhr-employment@ufl.edu)) and to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs at the Graduate School (currently Judy Traveis; [jdiusb@ufl.edu](mailto:jdiusb@ufl.edu)).

Students who wish to request to do an internship must complete the PhD in Epidemiology Internship Request Form.



## Transfer of Credits

The Department of Epidemiology and Curriculum Committee will *consider* transferring graduate coursework that was obtained prior to acceptance in the PhD program. This includes graduate work previously conducted at the University of Florida. All course transfers must meet guidelines outlined in the UF Graduate Catalog [guidelines for graduate degrees](#) as well as guidelines of the Department of Epidemiology.

A maximum of 30 credits can be requested to apply to the 90- credit requirements in the PhD in Epidemiology program with these caveats:

- The program in which the course was taken should lead to an MPH or MS in Epidemiology degree at that institution; courses that do not meet this criterion may be requested but are not guaranteed to be transferred.
- A grade of B or higher was obtained. Pass/Fail courses are not transferrable.
- Required courses are not transferrable unless there is a direct match to our course.
- Only courses directly related to the PhD in Epidemiology will be transferred.
- Course credits are based on instructional hours; in general, one hour of instruction per week during a semester equals one credit.
- Generally, no more than 6 credits of General Electives may be transferred.

### Procedure

Students entering the program should send a completed transcript of any prior graduate-level degree coursework to the Academic Assistant the semester before entering the program. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable for this purpose. Students may be asked to provide syllabi for courses. The Program Director will review transcripts and make recommendations for course transfers on the PhD Course Transfer Request Form. The program director will send the form to the student for approval and their signature. The Academic Assistant will then submit the GIMS course transfer request form to the Department Chair for approval, and then to the college approver and the Graduate School. The Academic Assistant will track all stages of course transfers and will inform students when their course transfers have been approved.

### Final Check

No transferred course can be taken for PhD credit at UF. For example, if the student is allowed to transfer Spatial Epidemiology from University X, Spatial Epidemiology cannot be taken at UF for credit towards the PhD in Epidemiology. However, the Supervisory Committee Chair may request an exception based on the academic needs of the student.

## Qualifying Examination

The University of Florida requires all PhD students to complete both a written and an oral PhD qualifying examination. The Department of Epidemiology has additional criteria.

The exam has three components: 1) the Written Preliminary Examination, 2) the Written Area Examination, and 3) the Oral Area Examination.

**1) The Written Preliminary Examination** begins the process. It can only be completed if the student:

- Has a minimum 3.00 GPA and is in good academic standing;
- Has completed the core (non-elective) coursework for the PhD program, with the exception of *PHC 7727 Grant Writing for Clinical and Health Research* and *PHC 7427 Ethics in Population Science*, which may be taken after the Written Preliminary Exam;
- Is currently registered for coursework at the time the examination is taken.

The Written Preliminary Examination is offered twice each calendar year—and the dates will be announced at the beginning of the fall and summer semesters. The content of the WPE is currently under review and may change. If so, the handbook will be updated accordingly. Students interested in taking the Written Preliminary Examination should get permission from their Research Mentor to take it, and should request it in writing to the PhD Program Director and the Academic Assistant no later than 60 days in advance of June/December 1<sup>st</sup>. The Academic Assistant will confirm that the student has completed the necessary coursework and is eligible to take the exam. No later than two weeks in advance of the test date, the Academic Assistant will provide a list of interested and eligible students to the Department Chair and the PhD Program Director.

High stakes exam protocols are utilized during the exam period: no internet availability and no phones. All grading is de-identified through a number system that only the Academic Assistant knows. All discussion of the exam and all communication of the grading and exam results to the student must go through the PhD Program Director.

If a student fails the exam, they will be eligible to retake the failed Preliminary Exam within 3 months. By exception, the Program Director, in consultation with the faculty who graded the exam and the student's advisor and mentor, may determine that the 3-month retake timeframe should be modified to address specific student performance concerns. If this occurs, the Program Director will discuss the concerns and modifications with the student prior to implementation.

If the student retakes the Preliminary Examination and still scores below the pass mark, they will receive a 'Failed' status and will be required to leave the program.

## **2) Written Area Examination**

The Written Area Examination may only be taken after successful completion of the Written Preliminary

Examination. The format of the examination requires:

- Knowledge of the specific area of expertise of the student
- Knowledge of the unique aspects of Epidemiology in study designs related to the area of expertise
- Ability to think conceptually and clearly, and speak clearly in Epidemiological terms about the area of expertise

The student will notify the Research Mentor of their perceived readiness to be examined. The student will prepare a 3-8 page summary of their research area and potential questions to address along with potential methods. The Supervisory Committee Chair will ask committee members for potential questions related to the field of study. Questions will take into consideration design of studies, persistent and current problems in the field today that need to be solved, and other research issues. Five questions will be selected for the written portion of the exam. The Supervisory Committee Chair will then ask the Academic Assistant to schedule a date for the exam period. ***The Supervisory Committee Chair must request the Academic Assistant to schedule a date for the exam period at least four weeks in advance of the desired exam date.*** The Supervisory Committee Chair will send the exam questions to the Academic Assistant who will send them to the student at 8:00 AM, with a deadline 7 days later, at 8:00 AM.

The student will be sent five questions and will choose three of those questions to answer in writing. Work must be that of the student alone. Faculty may not discuss the exam questions with students prior to the exam start, and they may not help in any way. Answers must be typed, double-spaced in Arial 12-point font with one-inch margins all around. No more than 10 pages per question will be allowed; the 10 pages do not include references.

Each member of the Supervisory Committee grades each exam question. Exams will be graded within two weeks of the exam completion. Each question will be graded as pass/fail. All three questions must be successfully answered to advance to the oral phase. The student will be given one opportunity to rewrite any question not successfully answered. Failure to pass a Written Area Exam rewrite will result in the student being dismissed from the program. In such cases, options for completing a master's degree within the department will be discussed.

### **3) Oral Area Exam**

Within two weeks of passing the Written Area Exam, the student must pass the Oral Area Exam. This one-hour exam, without any PowerPoint or presentation, will cover all five questions available for the Written Area Examination. All members of the Supervisory Committee must be present. If any member is not available due to illness or travel, a core faculty member of the Department of Epidemiology must be substituted to fill in, but only one substitute is allowable. It is expected that dates will be pre-vetted in order that all members will be able to attend. The Academic Assistant will send reminders one week ahead, 3 days ahead and the day before. The Oral Area Exam will be closed to other students. At the close of the exam, each Supervisory Committee member will grade the exam as pass/fail. In the event that there is a dissenting

decision, the majority grade will be the final grade. If there is a tie, then the Supervisory Chair’s vote is the deciding vote.

Any student who does not fully pass the Oral Area Exam will be allowed to do provisional remedial work through classes or other sessions to strengthen their area and general knowledge. The Supervisory Committee will decide at the Oral Area Exam meeting whether they should reconvene for the student to retake the oral area exam after the remedial work is completed or whether completion of the remedial work alone will meet the requirement for passing the exam. If the Supervisory Committee decides not to reconvene, the Supervisory Committee Chair will inform all members of the student’s status. The remediation period can be as short as one month or as long as one semester. After successful remediation, the Supervisory Committee Chair will inform the Program Director and the Program Assistant of the student’s status.

Upon passing the Written Preliminary Exam, the Written Area Exam and the Oral Area Exam, the student will officially pass the Qualifying Exam and progress to the dissertation proposal phase. The date of passing the Written Area Exam and the Oral Area Exam will be entered into the student’s record in the PhD database by the PhD Academic Assistant, after being notified by the Research Mentor.

### Qualifying Examination

<b>Exam Component</b>	<b>Given By</b>	<b>When Taken</b>	<b>Content</b>
Written Preliminary Examination (WPE)	Department of Epidemiology	After completion of core coursework and if criteria for status are met; usually between year 1 and year 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Part 1 - Applied knowledge of topics covered in core coursework</li> <li>Part 2 – Journal article critique</li> </ul>
Written Area Examination	Supervisory Committee with approval of Curriculum Committee Chair	After successful completion of WPE and prior to the Oral Area Exam; usually during year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Three of five questions written</li> <li>• Not in-house</li> <li>• One week</li> </ul>
Oral Area Exam	Supervisory Committee with approval of Curriculum Committee Chair	After successful completion of the Written Area Exam and at least six months prior to final dissertation defense.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Any content from the five questions—even those not answered.</li> <li>• One hour</li> <li>• In-house</li> <li>• Knowledge of foundational aspects of the area</li> </ul>

## Dissertation Proposal

As soon as the Candidate has completed the qualifying exam (Written Preliminary Exam, Written and Oral Area Exams), she/he must begin work on the dissertation proposal. The proposal may be up to 21 pages maximum. The following breakdown is suggested:

- Abstract—30 lines of text, similar to that of an NIH abstract
- Specific Aims—state clearly and concisely what is being proposed, and hypotheses that will be tested (2 pages max)
- Significance—such as defined by the NIH grant application, with relevance to the field of epidemiology and public health (3 to 6 pages)
- Preliminary Studies (optional)—that describes what work has already been done as a beta test or leading up to the work to be done (3 pages max)
- Design and Methods—must have an understanding of how the work will be accomplished, with a flow chart and time line, power calculation, statistical tests to be performed, strengths and limitations. (5 to 10 pages)
- Literature Cited (no page limit)

In advance of any scheduling of the dissertation proposal defense, the Supervisory Committee Chair will meet with the PhD Program Director, and the Academic Assistant to discuss the process of the dissertation proposal defense in the Department of Epidemiology. Students will work with their Supervisory Committee Chair to prepare the dissertation proposal. Once the Chair feels it is ready for review, the student will send it to the Supervisory Committee for review. Once the Committee members agree it is ready for defense, the Academic Assistant will set up a dissertation proposal defense date. The student must submit their final proposal to the committee at least three weeks before the proposal defense date.

The candidate and the Supervisory Committee Chair must be physically present at the defense and all efforts will be made to schedule the defense at a time when the remaining committee members can also be physically present. If any members must attend remotely due to unexpected circumstances this is allowed consistent with Graduate School guidelines. In such cases, the Academic Assistant should be informed as soon as possible in order to make the appropriate technological arrangements. The Proposal Defense will commence with a succinct, yet complete, overview of the student's research proposal given as an oral presentation that is approximately 30 minutes long and supported by visual aids (PowerPoint). It should focus on the proposal topic and methodology. The final dissertation format (three journal articles or traditional dissertation proposal) will be discussed and agreed upon with the candidate's Committee at this point.

The Supervisory Committee will then evaluate the written proposal and the oral presentation. Thirty minutes will be given for questions for the Supervisory Committee to address such topics as:

- Literature evaluation skills
- Theoretical application

- Scientific background in the area
- Specific Aims
- Study design
- Models of disease/conditions
- Analytical methods
- Measurement methods
- Data and statistical analysis plans

After the student has answered questions from the Supervisory Committee, the Committee will meet without the student present to determine the outcome of the proposal defense. The results will be immediately communicated to the student and that same day the core Epidemiology faculty member will notify the PhD Director and the Chair of Epidemiology of the results. The following scale will be used:

1. Pass with no revisions
2. Pass with minor revisions—student must revise and submit the revisions to the Research Mentor who will send it to interested committee members.
3. Pass with major revisions—student must revise and resubmit. At the discretion of the Supervisory Chair, the committee may be reassembled.
4. Not acceptable—student and Research Mentor must meet with the PhD Director.

Any recommended revisions must be completed within 3 months from the time of proposal presentation. If a student needs more than one rewrite, the Chair of the Department will be notified. A re-examination may be requested but it must be recommended by the student’s Supervisory Committee Chair and approved by the Program Director.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

Upon passing the proposal defense (#1 or #2 above), the student’s Supervisory Committee Chair will obtain signatures from all Supervisory Committee members on the Admission to Candidacy Form and inform the student that they have advanced to candidacy. The Academic Assistant will obtain the form from the Supervisory Chair and submit the data to the Graduate School. Students who receive a #3 or #4 will complete all required revisions before admission to candidacy. The Academic Assistant will notify the Program Director and the Department Chair that the student has advanced to candidacy.

### **IRB Approval**

All dissertations must receive IRB approval. This can take a few weeks to a couple of months depending on the timing and the state of the work. It is suggested that this be done either before or as soon as possible after the defense to avoid lengthy delays. Students are advised to take an active role in the approval process.

## Dissertation

The written and oral phase of the Area exam must be passed at least six months prior to the final dissertation defense. Per the Graduate School, two semesters must elapse between the Dissertation Proposal Defense and graduation. The semester in which a student advances to candidacy counts as one of the two semesters if the student advances to candidacy prior to the midpoint of the semester. No more than three years may pass between passing the Oral Dissertation Defense and the conferring of the degree for the Department of Epidemiology.

Every candidate for an Epidemiology PhD degree is required to prepare and present a dissertation that shows independent investigation of a topic relevant to the Epidemiology discipline, and is acceptable in form and content to the Supervisory Committee and to the Graduate School. A doctoral dissertation must demonstrate the ability to conceive, design, conduct, and interpret independent, original, and creative research. It must describe significant original contributions to the advancement of knowledge and must demonstrate the ability to organize, analyze, and interpret data. The student and Supervisory Committee are responsible for the level of quality and scholarship.

PhD in Epidemiology candidates will work with their Supervisory Committees to identify an appropriate format for their dissertations. Two format options are acceptable: 1) traditional; and 2) three journal articles.

### **Traditional Dissertation Format**

The traditional dissertation format is one single document; it is an expanded version of the dissertation proposal format. The dissertation consists of:

- Abstract—Must be 350 words or less
- Specific Aims—state clearly and concisely the hypotheses that were tested
- Significance—such as defined by the NIH grant application, with relevance to the field of epidemiology and public health
- Design and Methods—clearly describe how the work was accomplished, with descriptions of statistical tests that were performed
- Study Participants – Discuss how study participants were included in each aim of the study, including how they were identified, recruited, participated in the informed consent process and provided informed consent, and how their rights were protected, including privacy.
- Results – Organize results by specific aim
- Discussion – Discuss the innovative aspects of the work, how the work advances the field, how the goals of the study were or were not met, and the strengths and limitations of the study. Include a discussion of future directions of the research.
- Literature Cited

## Journal Article Format

Candidates in scientific fields publish results of their research as journal articles. The three journal article dissertation format allows the student to prepare three journal articles, tied together by a common theme, as the core of their dissertation. However, all copyright concerns must be addressed and any chapter that represents a journal article must have a footnote at the bottom of the first page that states, “Reprinted with permission from...” and gives the source as it is listed in the references section. The Graduate School stresses the fact that the dissertation is the primary objective and publication is the secondary objective. Students must use the formatting requirements of the Editorial Office for spacing and margins, pagination and copy sequence, heading formats, and overall preparation.

The Journal Article format allows for presentation of three manuscripts developed for submission to scientific journals. The dissertation must have a common introduction and review of literature. It is highly recommended that there be a methods chapter. There must also be a final chapter summarizing the overall results, conclusions, and recommendations for further research. In all, the dissertation must have the following elements:

- A common table of contents covering the entire body
- An abstract of the complete study immediately preceding page 1 of the main text
- A common introduction
- A methods chapter (required if the scientific manuscripts do not provide space to describe the methods in sufficient detail, optional otherwise)
- The three scientific manuscripts representing the aims of the thesis
- A final chapter summarizing the overall results, conclusions, and recommendations for further research
- A common list of references at the end of the text

The Graduate School encourages candidates to use the scholarly journal in which they have published as a guide for thesis and dissertation preparation. A printed journal article on an analogous subject serves as a tangible, graphic guide for style of writing, use of abbreviations and numbers, reference system, and overall usage policies. Do not use the journal style manual to format the thesis or dissertation, however. To prepare the thesis or dissertation, use the formatting requirements of the [UF Graduate School Editorial Office](#).

- All pages numbered in sequence—from page 1 through the biographical sketch
- A footnote at the bottom of the first page of each article that states, “Reprinted with permission from...” if applicable.

The Journal Article Format also requires that:

- The student must be first author of all three articles, one of which must be submitted for publication before the student graduates. Students are encouraged to review authorship standards of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recommendations for defining the role of authors and contributors.
  - Members of the committee should have the opportunity for co-authorship corresponding



to their contribution to the dissertation manuscripts. Individual committee members may opt not to be a co-author on individual manuscripts.

- The work has been done while a student is in the PhD Program in Epidemiology
- The articles were not submitted for publication prior to advancing to Candidacy

Each student is expected to work closely with the Supervisory Committee during the active research phase and while developing the written dissertation. A draft copy of the whole dissertation must be given to the dissertation committee at least one month prior to the defense. This allows time for any major changes to be conveyed and discussed prior to the defense. All committee members must provide written feedback to the student and the Research Mentor at least two weeks prior to the Defense. It is highly recommended that committees meet regularly to vet each chapter so that delays are avoided.

Dissertations must be written according to the UF Graduate School requirements. If these requirements are not met, the dissertation will not be accepted. The Graduate Council requires the Graduate School Editorial Office, as agents of the Dean of the Graduate School, to review dissertations to ensure the format is acceptable, and to make recommendations as needed. When first presented to the Graduate School Editorial Office, the dissertation should be final and completely formatted. Students should be familiar with the format requirements and should work with the [Application Support Center](#) to troubleshoot their files before providing their first submission document to the Editorial Office for review. The Graduate School also regularly provides dissertation workshops to help students prepare their dissertations according to the guidelines. Students are encouraged to attend these workshops and to frequently refer to the Graduate Catalog while planning and preparing their doctoral dissertation.

[Thesis and Dissertation Format Requirements](#)

[Dissertation Checklist](#)

[Editorial Document Management System](#)

[Graduate School Graduation Checklist](#)

[ETD Technical Support](#)

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all dissertation requirements for the Graduate School are met; students are strongly encouraged to carefully review the [Graduate School Handbook](#) and to view [online tutorials](#) related to the dissertation process.

## Final Oral Dissertation Defense

After submitting the dissertation and completing all other work prescribed for the degree, the candidate is given a final oral examination by the Supervisory Committee, on campus. Before the date is scheduled, the Supervisory Committee Chair will meet with the PhD Program Director, and the Academic Assistant to review all protocols. The Epidemiology Academic Assistant will contact committee members to schedule the defense date and time and will reserve a room for the defense. ***The Supervisory Committee Chair must request the Academic Assistant to schedule a date for the defense at least four weeks in advance of the desired exam date.***

The candidate and the Supervisory Committee Chair must be physically present at the defense and all efforts will be made to schedule the defense at a time when the remaining committee members can also be physically present. If any members must attend remotely due to unexpected circumstances this is allowed consistent with Graduate School guidelines. In such cases, the Academic Assistant should be informed as soon as possible in order to make the appropriate technological arrangements.

Here are the Zoom guidelines for Dissertation Defenses for participants. Be sure to forward this to all those who partake:

1. Please mute your mic during the open presentation. A meeting host will mute the mic if any background noise is happening while the presentation is being conducted. Questions are only open to faculty and students at UF. You may not unmute the mic. If a participant keeps being disruptive, they will be removed from the zoom meeting.
2. Please dress appropriately if using a web camera during the Dissertation Defense. Pay attention to your background and if needed use a suitable virtual background.
3. Chat conversations and questions should be on-topic and appropriate to the presentation. This is limited to faculty, staff, and students at UF.
4. Please remain professional at all times. Do not use any inappropriate language. Do not send irrelevant links or pictures through chat.
5. There will be a closed session of the Dissertation Defense with the candidate and the committee members. Please remember to sign out or leave the meeting once the closed portion of the defense begins, if not a zoom host will remove you.

If a Supervisory Committee member cannot attend in person or remotely (for example, due to serious illness) then a substitution may occur, but the substitute will be a core member of the Department of Epidemiology. Per the [UF Graduate Catalog](#), "If a supervisory committee member cannot be present at the student's final defense, a Graduate Faculty member in the same academic area may substitute for the absent committee member. The substitute should sign the Final Examination form on the left side, in the space provided for committee members, noting the name of the absent member. The chair of the student's major academic unit also must indicate the reason for the absence and state that the absent member agreed to this substitution at the final examination. The substitute should not sign the ETD signature page. The original committee member must sign. No substitutes are allowed for the chair or external member of the committee." In those cases, the defense will be rescheduled.

The PhD Dissertation Defense consists of an oral defense of the research results that are described in the dissertation. The oral defense is open to other faculty, family/friends, and other students. The Academic Assistant will publish the dates, titles, and presenter to all Graduate Faculty members in Epidemiology and relevant Department Chairs in PPHP and COM, and the Deans of these two Colleges. Supervisory Committee members must have a written or electronic copy of the dissertation at the defense. The approximately two-hour defense begins with a 45-minute succinct presentation by the Candidate, followed by questions from faculty members, and then by questions from students if time permits. It ends with all guests and the candidate leaving the room so the Supervisory Committee can confer briefly. The candidate is then invited back into the room and the defense continues for the remainder of the two hours total time. At the conclusion of the defense the candidate is again asked to leave the room and the Supervisory Committee will vote on the outcome of the defense.

The Committee may vote:

- Pass—with or without minor revisions that the Research Mentor (Supervisory Committee Chair) will review and pass;
- Incomplete—with major revisions that will require all Committee members to review and finalize;
- Fail—which means that even major revisions will not make the dissertation acceptable. Hopefully, a student will never get this vote, as it is a negative reflection of the Supervisory Committee Chair as well as the entire Committee.

The committee vote must be unanimous. The Supervisory Committee Chair will inform the Department Chair and the PhD Program Director of the dissertation defense results within 24 hours of the defense.

The Supervisory Committee Chair must hold the ETD Signature Page until all members are satisfied with the dissertation. However, this form must be submitted electronically, via GIMS, by the Final Submission Deadline for the Graduate School Editorial Office, during the term of intended degree award.

If the Candidate passes without any changes, the candidate and the Supervisory Committee Chair sign the UF Publishing Agreement Form immediately after the dissertation defense, while the entire Supervisory Committee signs the ETD Signature Page and the Final Examination Report immediately after the defense. The forms will be returned to the Academic Assistant who will enter the results in GIMS.

If the Candidate passes with minor revisions, the candidate and the Supervisory Committee Chair sign the UF Publishing Agreement Form immediately after the dissertation defense, and all members of the Supervisory Committee except the Committee Chair sign the ETD Signature Page and the Final Examination Report immediately after the defense. The Supervisory Committee Chair will retain the ETD Signature Page; once the changes have been implemented to their satisfaction, the Chair will sign off on the ETD signature page and return it to the Academic Assistant.

If the Supervisory Committee votes that the dissertation is incomplete and needs major revisions, the UF

Publishing Agreement Form and the ETD Signature Page and the Final Examination Report should not be signed until all committee members have reviewed and approved the required revisions. The Supervisory Committee Chair will retain those forms and will be responsible for gathering the signatures of the committee members after those revisions have been approved.

If the Supervisory Committee votes that the student has failed the dissertation defense, all forms should be returned to the Academic Assistant without signatures. In the event of a failed dissertation defense, the Supervisory Committee Chair will immediately inform the Department Chair and the PhD Program Director of the results.

Once all changes are made to the dissertation, or if no changes are needed, the Academic Assistant will announce the passing of the defense to the faculty and students along with the student's next steps.

For updates and requirements for dissertations, check the [Graduate School website](#) or check with the PhD Program Director.

## **Part III: Other Important Information**

### **GatorLink**

UF requires all students to maintain access to their GatorLink e-mail. To create your GatorLink, you must go to the [Gatorlink home page](#).

### **Emails from the Department**

All students are required to respond in a timely manner to emails from academic program faculty and staff, including, but not limited to, the Department Chair, Program Director, and Academic Assistant.

### **Department of Epidemiology Seminar Series**

All doctoral students are expected to attend at least 50% of the departmental seminars and LunchNLearn sessions with the speaker offered each year and attendance for the 50% of seminars must be in-person. This requirement is part of the professional development of the student. A request for student volunteers to provide transportation to the seminar speaker and to escort him/her during the visit will be communicated to all doctoral students. The Department expects active participation from all students in the successful planning and conducting of the seminar series. The departmental seminar series is typically arranged on the first Thursday of every month. All doctoral students are expected to arrange their classes and meetings accordingly to ensure availability to attend the seminar series. A sign-in register will be maintained to log attendance. Also, the Chair's Travel Award to attend conferences will include consideration of each student's participation in attending the departmental seminar series.

### **Quarterly PhD Student Meetings**

All PhD students are required to attend the quarterly PhD student meeting with the Program Director and Department Chair. Program issues and/or updates will be discussed at the meeting and student feedback will be requested.

## **PhD in Epidemiology Professional Development Series**

Students are expected to attend sessions of the PhD in Epidemiology Professional Development Series and to provide suggestions on topics for the series. All efforts will be made to schedule sessions outside of the Epidemiology course schedule.

## **Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate Assistants are employees of the University and are employed under the terms of the Graduate Assistants United [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#). Graduate Assistants are expected to perform their duties as specified in their letter of appointment. Per the GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement:

“Any appointment may be curtailed, diminished, or terminated at any time only by reason of any one of the following:

1. Continued failure to perform duties as specified in the letter of appointment after written notification from the department
2. Failure of the employee in the academic judgment of the University to maintain satisfactory student status or to make appropriate progress toward the degree.
3. Incompetence or misconduct of the employee that is documented by the department.
4. Lack of funds as a result of adverse financial conditions.”

Per that agreement, the faculty supervisor will notify the Graduate Assistant in writing of any failure to perform assigned duties. The Graduate Assistant should be given an opportunity to remediate that failure, but continued failure will result in curtailment, diminishment, or termination. Curtailment, diminishment, or termination may be grievable under Article 22 of the GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Graduate Assistants on a 0.5 FTE appointment are expected to work 20 hours per week during regular, non-holiday weeks. On university recognized holidays, Graduate Assistants will be credited 4 hours of time off per holiday and will complete the remaining hours; they are not expected to work additional hours that week to make up for holiday hours. Time off for university-recognized holidays does not count against [personal time](#).

All students who plan to work in academia are strongly encouraged to enroll in RSD 6900 [College Classroom: Teaching Process and Practice](#) for basic training in formal instruction and teaching. This course counts as a departmental elective.

## **International Students**

To teach, international students whose official first language is not English must score at least 55 on the

SPEAK Test or 28 on the Speaking Section of the Internet TOEFL to be eligible to teach in the classroom, laboratory, or other instructional setting. Those who score 45 to 50 on the SPEAK Test, or 23 to 27 on the Speaking Section of the TOEFL iBT, may teach if they concurrently enroll in EAP 5836 to help their personal interaction and public speaking skills. Those who have scores below these minimums are not eligible to teach.

## Financial Aid

Check the [Grants and Fellowships](#) page for grant ideas and tips on how to write a grant. Other funding resources are located at the [Graduate School website](#). For general information about your financial aid status, please contact the [UF Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships](#).

Scholarship opportunities also exist within the [College of Public Health and Health Professions](#), the [College of Medicine](#), and the [university](#) as a whole.

## Florida Residency

Recommendations for establishing and declaring Florida as the legal state of residence are [outlined](#) on the UF Admissions site.

## Funding for Professional Travel

### Epidemiology Chair's Travel Award

The Chair's Travel Award provides travel funds to students enrolled in Epidemiology who are presenting a poster or paper at a professional conference or meeting. The activity must be related to the student's career development, the student must be in good academic standing and the student must actively participate in the department seminar series (attend at least 50% of seminars, all of which must be in person) and receive approval from their Research Mentor to travel. It is expected that Research Mentors who have grant funds or other funds that can be used to support student travel will use those funds. It is also expected that students will apply for other funding sources (see below).

After official notification of acceptance of the abstract, the student must submit the [Chair's Travel Award Application](#), along with their official notice of acceptance and a statement of their estimated expenses using the [Travel Authorization Form](#), to the Academic Assistant. The Academic Assistant will request approval from the Chair. Students will be reimbursed after travel has occurred. Students must turn in all receipts for reimbursements with summary page of expenses along with all funders of the trip within 30 days of travel. Unused funds do not carry over. Availability of funds will be evaluated each fiscal year, and students will be notified if the award is cancelled. Students should not request more than two awards per year and no more than eight awards per student. It is expected that the student will solicit travel funds from the Research Mentor and the Graduate School first before asking for Department Travel Funds. Only early bird registration will be reimbursed. All other travel guidelines of the University will be followed.

### **Graduate Student Council Travel Grants**

Grants are also awarded by the Graduate Student Council (GSC) to cover travel-related expenses for presenting research or participating in professional development at a professional conference. Travel Grants can be found on the [GSC](#) web page.

### **UF Office of Research Travel Funds**

Students may request travel funds from the UF Office of Research under certain circumstances that are listed on the [website](#).

## **Academic Professionalism and Integrity**

In addition to prescribed coursework in the PhD program, students are required to collaborate with their Research Mentors and other faculty members on presentations at professional meetings, publications in peer-reviewed journals, and professional service, such as reviewing journal articles, consulting with community agencies, and serving on University and Department committees.

The Department of Epidemiology has opportunities for students to learn about current activity in the field of epidemiology and to meet practicing epidemiologists. Students are strongly encouraged to attend major seminars or talks that are directly supported by the Department of Epidemiology, and to meet with visiting epidemiologists during times that are allotted to PhD students. Students who cannot attend these organized, departmental activities must give a reason for non-attendance.

Professional communication and behavior are expected of all students in the program. Students are expected to attend departmental seminars and the LunchNLearn sessions with the visiting speakers. Students are also expected to attend the PhD program Quarterly Meetings and the PhD in Epi Professional Development Series sessions. Students are strongly urged to participate in service activities, including community service, service on department or university committees or organizations, or service within professional organizations. Professionalism is an educational outcome of this program and therefore, is continually assessed by the Research Mentors and other faculty members based on student behaviors and interactions in the department and class. Professional behaviors and attitudes are also assessed during the yearly departmental assessments done by the Program Director.

### **Research Integrity**

All students are responsible for receiving ongoing training in the Responsible Conduct of Research. This training should begin in the first 30 days of the program; ignorance of federal regulations covering research is not an excuse for misconduct. Graduate students can be and are held accountable for their conduct, and such accountability can lead to serious consequences. To meet this training need, students are required to take the Department Ethics Course. Students should also expect regular discussion of responsible conduct of research and bioethics with their mentors.

The University has an [Office of Research](#) and Research Compliance Officer and students should become familiar with the information on their website.

Students are responsible for reading and understanding this policy before engaging in any research activities:

**UF Research Misconduct Policy.** Per [UF Regulation 1.0101](#): Integrity in scholarship and research is fundamental to the University of Florida's mission of excellence in education, research, and service. The University and its faculty, staff and students must together ensure that violations of research integrity are dealt with efficiently and diligently in order to preserve and maintain the highest ethical standards of scholarly and research integrity.

The University is committed to integrity in research and scholarship and has set forth the principles and procedures for the University's review and investigation of allegations of research misconduct and other violations of research integrity in its [Policy for Dealing with Conduct in Research](#). This policy applies to allegations of violations of research integrity in connection with any research at the University of Florida, regardless of any sponsor or funding source.

In addition to the administrative officer to whom the accused reports, academic and research misconduct will be reported to any persons who have a legitimate educational need to know about the issue. This may include the Department Chair, the PhD Program Director, members of the dissertation committee and other faculty members.

The full University Policy of Research Misconduct section can be accessed [here](#).

If you have any concerns about conduct, please see your Research Mentor or the PhD Program Director to clarify the UF policy and to consider possible action.

### **Student Honor Code**

Each Student and every Student Organization is required to abide by the Student Honor Code and the Student Conduct Code when on University-controlled property, at University sponsored events, or off campus in accordance with sections 3 and 4 of [the Orange Book](#). In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

**On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.**



Unprofessional conduct or violations of the Student Honor Code can result in dismissal from the program regardless of GPA.

## Department Grievance Procedures

The grievance procedure is as follows:

- Step 1. Oral discussion between the graduate student and the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance is strongly encouraged. The discussion should be held as soon as the student first becomes aware of the act or condition that is the basis of the grievance. The student may wish to present his or her grievance in writing to the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. The person alleged to have caused the grievance must respond to the student either orally or in writing.
- Step 2. If the student considers the response to the discussion and/or written document from Step 1 to be unsatisfactory and feels that the grievance still exists, the grievance should be brought in writing, with all supporting documentation, to the Program Director. If the grievance still remains unresolved, the Program Director will liaise with the Department Chair. The department must respond to the student's grievance in writing in a timely fashion.
- Step 3. If the grievance is still considered to be unresolved, the student may then file the grievance in writing with the Associate Dean for Education Affairs of the College of Public Health and Health Professions, who shall investigate the matter and respond to the student in writing within a reasonable timeframe.
- Step 4. The right of appeal in writing to the UF Ombuds for graduate and professional students, as the authorized representative of the President of the University, shall be the final appeal but only after the above steps 1–3 have been exhausted. The Office of the Ombuds is located in 31 Tigert Hall, 392-1308 and their website is <http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>.

Other Grievance Resources: Most employment-related grievances are covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 22, between the Florida Board of Education of the State University System and Graduate Assistants United. Students with employment-related concerns should contact the GAU office at 392-0274, or Human Resource Services at 352-392- 2477.

Allegations of research misconduct should be brought to the attention of the administrative officer (e.g., department chair, dean) to whom the accused party reports. Students may wish to seek advice from the Director of the Division of Research Compliance, 460 Grinter, 392-9174, before making a formal complaint. Graduate students who have complaints or problems with other aspects of university life should consult the Dean of Students Office in 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261 for the appropriate grievance procedure.

## **Required Immunizations**

All students are required to comply with the College of Public Health and Health Professions' [student immunization requirements policy](#). Please note there are immunizations you must complete prior to enrollment.

## **Computer Requirements**

All students are required to comply with the College of Public Health and Health Professions' [computer requirements policy](#).

## **HIPAA and FERPA**

All students in the College of Public Health and Health Professions are required to complete HIPAA on-line training and to sign a HIPAA Confidentiality Agreement. You must complete HIPAA every year you are in the program. The HIPAA training website is located at <http://privacy.health.ufl.edu>. You must also read and sign the Confidentiality Statement.

Certificate of Completion of HIPAA and signed Confidentiality Agreement should be turned in to your Department/Program. Instructions for submission will come from your Department/Program. Please keep a copy of your HIPAA compliance documents. Students in noncompliance will have a hold put in their record. The College will drop all classes of students remaining in noncompliance by the end of the second week of classes. Please note: Even if you have completed HIPAA at another institution including Shands Hospital, you must repeat the on-line training and sign another confidentiality agreement.

The 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, also known as the Buckley Amendment, is a federal law (20 U.S.C. 1232g) that protects the privacy of a student's educational record. FERPA applies to all educational institutions receiving funds from the United States Department of Education, from kindergarten through university level.

FERPA training is required annually for UF graduate assistants. When working with student records, a student assistant should work cooperatively with their supervisor to ensure FERPA compliance.

## **IRB**

All students are required to complete IRB registration and training before participating in any research.

## **Additional Resources**

Students should be aware that multiple resources exist to assist students with teaching and research. See the Graduate School's [Office of Graduate Professional Development](#) for a list of these resources.

## **Counseling and Student Health**

Students may occasionally have personal issues that arise in the course of pursuing higher education or that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing problems affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and to seek confidential assistance at:

[University of Florida Counseling & Wellness Center](#), 352-392-1575 Visit their website for more information.

U Matter, We Care, [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575

Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from: [Alachua County Crisis Center](#): (352) 264-6789

BUT – Do not wait until you reach a crisis to talk with a counselor. The University of Florida Counseling Center has helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance; you are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.

The [Student Health Care Center at Shands](#) is a satellite clinic of the [main Student Health Care Center](#) located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at Shands offers a variety of clinical services including primary care, women's health care, immunizations, and pharmacy services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 352-294-5700 or visit the website.

It is the goal of the [Disability Resource Center](#) to foster a sense of empowerment in students with disabilities by educating them about their legal rights and responsibilities so that they can make informed choices, by encouraging them to engage in critical thinking and self-advocacy and by supporting them in being successful students, campus leaders and positive contributors to the campus community. The Disability Resource Center, in conjunction with the Division of Student Affairs, is helping students to create an unparalleled experience where students embrace learning and diversity to become leaders in the service of the global community.

## Shared Governance

Shared governance is important at the University of Florida and in the Department of Epidemiology. The Department of Epidemiology invites student participation on several committees including the:

- Epidemiology Curriculum Committee
- Epidemiology Seminar Committee
- Epidemiology Awards Committee
- Department of Epidemiology Monthly Meeting
- Other Committees as determined

PhD students select a student representative each year who will gather ideas and concerns from students and present those to the Program Director at a monthly meeting. The PhD student representative attends the Department of Epidemiology Monthly Meeting. Annual Appointments to other committees are made by the Chair of the Department, who is notified of a students' interest by the PhD Program Director.

At the University level, Graduate Student Council serves as a liaison between UF graduate students, UF administration, and the UF Student Government. General body meetings are held each month of the Fall and Spring terms. More information can be found on the [Graduate Student Council](#) website. PhD in Epidemiology students are expected to elect a representative to Graduate Student Council. Attendance at Council meetings is important as this is linked to eligibility for travel funds from the council. It is the PhD students' responsibility to ensure that PhD in Epidemiology program maintains this eligibility.

## **Readmission Requirements**

Students who have left the program prior to graduating and wish to be readmitted require the following:

- A minimum GPA of 3.00.
- A detailed letter from the student addressing why they should be considered for readmission, their relevant experiences since leaving, and why their goals are now in line with a PhD program

Readmission is not guaranteed, irrespective of the circumstances that necessitated it, with the exception of medical withdrawals.

## **Policy Changes**

Any and all policies outlined in this handbook are subject to changes in the University and College regulations.

Suggestions for changes to this handbook?  
Contact the [PhD in Epidemiology Program Director](#).

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand all policies outlined in the PhD in Epidemiology Handbook. Return this page to the Academic Assistant by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

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Print name

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Date

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Signature