

PHD IN PUBLIC HEALTH HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CONCENTRATION

2025-2026 Student Handbook

Program Director

Ara Jo, Ph.D.

Clinical Associate Professor

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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Department of Health Services Research, Management and Policy is one of eight departments in the College of Public Health and Health Professions at the University of Florida. The department consists of faculty with complementary skills and expertise in research areas including but not limited to health services research, health policy, health management, health outcomes, and health economics.

The objective of the graduate program is to prepare students to apply theory and concepts from a range of relevant disciplines. The department uses a student-centered approach to meet the goals of students in their chosen field of study.

PHD IN PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CONCENTRATION

Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of inquiry, both basic and applied, that examines the use, costs, quality, accessibility, delivery, organization, financing, and outcomes of healthcare services. The objective is to increase knowledge and understanding of the structure and processes of the healthcare system, and to assess subsequent effects on individuals and populations. Health services research draws on a variety of disciplines, and integrates their conceptual frameworks and methods to provide new ways of studying and understanding the health care system.

The PhD in Public Health, Health Services Research concentration prepares individuals to conduct inquiry that will inform government officials, corporate leaders, clinicians, health plan managers, and others making decisions about complex health-related problems and issues. Students in the PhD Program learn to apply research methods and scientific knowledge to the study of health services organizations and systems.

Graduates of our program find career opportunities in academic, private sector, and public service settings. For example, some graduates will combine research interests with a teaching career and accept academic appointments in a wide range of health-related departments in the nation's colleges and universities. Other graduates will pursue health services research in the context of healthcare delivery and choose employment opportunities with hospitals and health systems, managed care companies, the pharmaceutical industry and consulting firms. Finally, graduates may pursue careers in government or other public service entities (such as private foundations), whose programs are increasingly dependent upon the findings and methodologies of health services research.

FACULTY



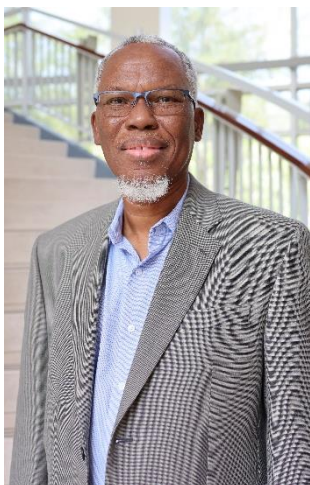
Dr. Lee Revere, PhD, MHA
HSRMP Department Chair & Florida Blue Endowed Professor

Dr. Revere is the Department Chair of Health Services Research, Management & Policy. Dr. Revere's research is focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare, lean six sigma and quality improvement, and the effects of payment structures on utilization and cost. She has been the principal investigator on numerous grants totaling over \$4.5M in funding and published over 45 journal articles in a variety of healthcare, quality and business journals.



Ara Jo, PhD, MS
PhD Program Director, Clinical Associate Professor

Dr. Jo, from South Korea, earned dual Bachelor's degrees in Economics and in Exercise Science at Ewha Woman's University, a Master of Science in Sport Management at Florida State University and her PhD in Health Services Research from the University of Florida. With her diverse educational background, her primary research interests focus on chronic disease prevention strategies such as screening, physical activity and risk score, and body composition assessments. She is particularly interested in normal weight obesity and overweight population with high muscle mass who are typically misclassified in health care setting. She is eager to further develop her career in developing more accurate risk assessment for effective and efficient chronic disease prevention through multidisciplinary approaches.



Valery E. Madsen Beau De Rochars, MD, MPH
Research Assistant Professor

Dr. Madsen provides epidemiologic expertise, investigating, designing, developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving strategies to prevent and control disease risk factors and hazardous exposures and to control epidemics. At the Emerging Pathogens Institute, he is serving as coordinator for underground research activities in the research laboratory located in Gressier, Haiti to answer questions on public health matters in Haiti.



Keith Benson
MHA Program Director & Bice Professor, Clinical Professor

Dr. Benson earned a Ph.D. in Health Policy and Administration from Penn State University, an MHA from Penn State and an MBA from Winthrop University. Dr. Benson's research background focuses on defining value in community health partnerships, leadership competency improvement, and pedagogical research in the teaching of health administration. His research interests include leadership development and delivering value in healthcare organizations.



Santanu K. Datta, PhD, MBA
Clinical Associate Professor

Dr. Datta's research is motivated by the need to provide decision-makers with information regarding healthcare costs, cost-effectiveness analysis, and budgetary impact of healthcare interventions, programs, and policies that improve health outcomes and quality-of-life to facilitate evidence-based policy and clinical practice implementation decisions. His particular research focus is on intervention strategies that improve outcomes and access in an efficient, cost-effective manner by utilizing technology and alternative provider strategies than traditional clinical practice.



Brittney Dixon-Daniel, PhD
Clinical Assistant Professor

Dr. Dixon's research interests include identifying priority health issues and concerns in rural areas (all aspects of rural health including obesity, health insurance and end stage renal disease), health care access, health care policy, health care disparities, and the intergenerational transmission of eating habits. She hopes to find health care solutions to help those in rural and underserved areas, create health care policies and educate the next generation of public health workers and researchers. She is an alumna of Florida State University where she received both her BS degree in criminology and an MPH. After receiving her MPH, she was a Program Coordinator for Healthy Families Florida, a program that provides expectant parents and the parents of newborns with educational materials, community resources and provides needed support to families throughout the child's developmental process up until the age of five.



Noah Hammarlund, PhD, MS
Assistant Professor

Noah Hammarlund completed his PhD in policy with a focus on health economics, statistics, and machine learning at the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University. He was a National Library of Medicine fellow in informatics and a postdoctoral fellow at the CHOICE Institute at the University of Washington. Noah's research applies econometric approaches and innovations in artificial intelligence to improve inequities in healthcare. He also investigates how the application of artificial intelligence can benefit patients as well as its potential to perpetuate and even worsen existing inequities. His disease focus centers on cancer, particularly prostate cancer.



Molly Jacobs, PhD, MS
Associate Professor

Molly Jacobs, MS, PhD, is an associate professor in the College of Public Health and Health Professions at the University of Florida. She holds a PhD and master's degree from George Washington University in economics and a bachelor's from Duke University in economics and German. Dr. Jacobs was also a Fulbright Scholar in Berlin Germany. She is a health economist and health services research focusing on the social determinants of health and health disparities. Much of her research focuses on marginalized and vulnerable populations and barriers to achieving health equity among racial, ethnic, and sex cohorts.



Frederick R. Kates, PhD
Clinical Associate Professor

Dr. Kates' research is in tobacco control with an emphasis on water pipe tobacco smoking among 18–24-year-olds. The South Carolina Public Health Association recognized Dr. Kates with the J. Michael Suber Media Excellence Award for sharing best pedagogical practices and online course development strategies on a YouTube channel dedicated to improving the delivery of instruction.



Lindsey King, PhD, MPH
Clinical Associate Professor

Dr. Lindsey King is a clinical associate professor in the Department of Health Services Research, Management and Policy and the social and behavioral sciences program at the University of Florida (UF) College of Public Health and Health Professions (PHEP). Dr. King's research background includes behavioral oncology research, maternal and child health epidemiology clinical research, and community-based participatory research (CBPR) to address disparities in maternal and child health. Dr. King's primary research interests focus on using CBPR and community-engaged research to identify the strengths of communities and eliminate health disparities in underserved populations including racial and ethnic minority populations and sexual and gender minority populations.



Nicole M. Marlow, PhD, MSPH
Research Assistant Professor

Dr. Marlow received her PhD in Health and Rehabilitation Science with a Concentration in Health Services from the Medical University of South Carolina, and she earned an MSPH in Epidemiology from the University of South Carolina. She has worked as a Co-Investigator on grants with NCRR, NIGMS, NIDCR, NCMHD, Abbott Laboratories, AbbVie, Pfizer, and CDC. Her personal research interests include the implementation of patient reported outcomes for clinical decision support of chronic pain management, comparative effectiveness research in chronic pain disorders, and access to care issues for patients with functional limitations and disabilities.



Yulia Levites Strekalova, PhD, MBA
MPH Program Coordinator, Associate Professor and Director

Dr. Levites Strekalova is Assistant Professor of Health Services Research, Management & Policy and Director of Evaluation and Educational Development at the UF Clinical Translational Science Institute. Dr. Strekalova's research is focused on the scholarship and application of team science to facilitate the integration of research into healthcare practice. Dr. Strekalova's expertise includes program planning and evaluation, teaming to enhance diverse perspectives in biomedical research and practice, and the implementation of human-human and human-machine teaming interventions to achieve the quadruple aim (i.e., improved population health outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, enhanced patient experience, and improved provider satisfaction). Dr. Strekalova is also Director of Evaluation and Educational Development for the UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute.



Julia Varnes, PhD, MPH, MCHES
MPH Program Director, Clinical Associate Professor

Julia R. Varnes, PhD, MPH, MCHES is the director of the Master of Public Health Program for the College of Public Health and Health Professions, and a Clinical Associate Professor with the Department of Health Services Research, Management, and Policy as well as faculty within the Social and Behavioral Sciences concentration. She is also an affiliate professor with the Center for Gender, Sexualities, and Women’s Studies Research. Dr. Varnes received her PhD in health behavior, with a minor in research and evaluation methodology, from the University of Florida. Dr. Varnes holds two master’s degrees, one in health education (UF), and one in public health (University of Maryland, College Park).



Ashby F Walker, PhD, M.A.
Associate Professor

Dr. Ashby Walker received her Ph.D. in Sociology from Emory University and serves as the Director for Health Equity Initiatives at the University of Florida Diabetes Institute. Dr. Walker is the elected Chair of the American Diabetes Association National Health Disparities Committee and a member of the Chronic Diseases & Conditions Priority Area Workgroup (PAW) of the Florida State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). Dr Walker has also served on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s scientific review committee. Dr. Walker’s research as a medical sociologist focuses on reducing health disparities in diabetes with a particular focus on communities receiving care at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC). Dr. Walker is the recipient of seven teaching, mentoring, and curriculum development awards and received the Diversity Champion award from the UF Graduate School in 2021 and was featured as “People to Know” by Diabetes Forecast Magazine in 2019.



Zhigang (Shay) Xie, PhD, B.Med, MPA
Assistant Professor

Dr. Xie has a solid foundation in health services research, complemented by in-depth knowledge of analyzing large-scale medical claims data. His main research focus is on healthcare policy, quality, cost, and access, with a particular emphasis on tackling health and healthcare disparities in underserved older populations. His specific areas of interest include Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia, cancer, and other aging-related issues. In addition to his academic experience, he has worked with large international nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving public health in middle- and low-income countries.



Yenan Zhu, PhD, M.A.
Research Assistant Professor

Dr. Yen-an Zhu is a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Services Research, Management and Policy at the University of Florida. Dr. Zhu is a Health Services Researcher by training, with a focus on the domains of cardiovascular diseases and Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Driven by a passion for advancing population health, Dr. Zhu leverages large-scale datasets and employs sophisticated methodologies to investigate the barriers to preventive care and disparities in health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations and marginalized communities. Dr. Zhu's emerging research focus is to uncover the factors associated with the co-occurrence of cancer and cardiovascular diseases and gain actionable insights that will inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at improving health outcomes.



Gaia Zori, PhD, MPH, CHES®
Clinical Assistant Professor

Gaia Zori, PhD, MPH, CHES® is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Services Research, Management, and Policy and in the Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) concentration in the College of Public Health and Health Professions. She serves as Master of Public Health (MPH) concentration coordinator for the SBS (campus and online) and Public Health Practice (online) concentrations. Dr. Zori is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES®) with nearly 10 years of experience in public health and health education. Dr. Zori's primary research interests center on understanding the structural factors contributing to disparate outcomes in sexual and reproductive health, as well as effective strategies for the promotion of health equity.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Faculty and Staff

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MISSION STATEMENT

The defining and distinguishing characteristics of the University of Florida's mission are its research, scholarship, artistic creation, and post-baccalaureate training in the arts and sciences and in the professions. The mission of the College is to preserve, promote, and improve the health and well-being of populations, communities, and individuals. The PhD program provides doctoral level training within the College, in order to conduct inquiry that will inform government officials, corporate leaders, clinicians, health plan managers, and others making decisions about complex health-related problems and issues. The program is a multidisciplinary field examining the use, cost, quality, accessibility, delivery, organization, financing, and outcomes of health care interventions and services where students learn to apply research methods and scientific knowledge to the study of health services organizations and systems.

COMPETENCIES

- Know how to apply alternative theoretical and conceptual models from a range of relevant disciplines to HSR.
- Apply in-depth disciplinary knowledge and skills relevant to health services research.
- Use knowledge of the structures, performance, quality, policy, and environmental context of health and health care to formulate solutions for health policy problems.
- Pose innovative and important research questions, informed by systematic reviews of the literature, stakeholder needs, and relevant theoretical and conceptual models.
- Select appropriate interventional (experimental and quasi-experimental) or observational (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) study designs to address specific health services research questions.
- Know how to collect primary health and health care data obtained by survey, qualitative, or mixed methods.
- Know how to assemble secondary data from existing public and private sources.

- Use a conceptual model to specify study constructs for a health services research question and develop variables that reliably and validly measure these constructs.
- Implement research protocols with standardized procedures that ensure reproducibility of the science.
- Ensure the ethical and responsible conduct of research in the design, implementation, and dissemination of health services research.
- Work collaboratively in multi-disciplinary teams.
- Use appropriate analytical methods to clarify associations between variables and to delineate causal inferences.
- Effectively communicate the findings and implications of health services research through multiple modalities to technical and lay audiences.
- Understand the importance of collaborating with policymakers, organizations, and communities to plan, conduct, and translate health services research into policy and practice.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

It is the general policy of the department of Health Services Research, Management and Policy (HSRMP) that graduate students have adequate financial support, and the department is committed to finding financial support for all doctoral students if possible. However, the nature of that financial assistance may change on a yearly basis and will be based on admission ranking and adequate progression in the program. Not all students admitted into the program will be offered financial assistance. For those students offered financial assistance, it is generally provided in the form of teaching and research assistantships with the expectation that students will contribute no more than 20 hours per week to these activities except in extenuating circumstances. The extenuating circumstances must be submitted in written form to the PhD program director. Students taking longer than four years to complete the doctoral program assume responsibility for obtaining their own financial aid.

Prior to the beginning of each academic year, every graduate student receiving financial assistance will receive a letter of offer specifying the total amount of the stipend for that period and other pertinent information. Students will be asked to sign the letter to indicate that it has been read, understood, and accepted. A copy of this document will be kept in the student's personnel file, and a fully executed copy will be provided to the student.

Every semester, each graduate assistant will receive a written evaluation of their performance from their supervisor(s). A copy of the evaluation will be kept by department human resources staff and the student will also receive a fully executed copy for their records. The program director will also keep a copy.

Professionalism and Performance in Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistants are UF employees. As such, they are expected to exhibit the professionalism and performance standards of all UF employees. Professionalism is expressed through one's demeanor, ethics, competence, reliability, and accountability. Principles such as teamwork, punctuality, integrity, and respect are essential to a functioning work environment. Performance is measured through one's application of these principles, as well as through one's contributions. Meeting deadlines, receiving feedback, and being proactive and responsive within projects are required of graduate assistants. Expectations for professionalism and performance include knowledge of UF and departmental policies. Graduate student employees are responsible for informing themselves of these policies.

Both a graduate assistant and their supervisor are responsible for setting clear expectations of work duties, communication, and performance. If a student has fallen behind on their initial plan or if a student isn't meeting the expectations, the supervisor and the PhD director will clarify the student's status and articulate for the student how they can maintain or recover good academic standing with an academic performance improvement plan document. Failure to complete the outlined goals in the plan will result in negative consequences (e.g., suspension or dismissal from the Graduate Assistantship).

PhD students are expected to work a minimum of 20 hours per week in the designated PhD Lounge during their first two years of the program. This requirement aims to enhance academic performance and foster network with faculty and peers. Each student will be assigned a dedicated workstation in the PhD Lounge based on their agreed-upon work schedule. Workstation assignments will be reviewed and renewed annually. Students must discuss and get agreement on their work schedule with their faculty advisor prior to submitting it to the PhD Program Director and the Academic Specialist for approval. In the third and fourth years, students who wish to continue using their assigned workstation may repeat the scheduling and approval process. If a student, their faculty advisor, and the PhD Program Director mutually agree that work does not need to be completed only within the specified PhD Lounge, this must be documented and submitted to the PhD Program Director. The approved document should outline where work will be completed for the student's required 20 hours per week.

SELECTION OF DISCIPLINE FOR DEGREE & MAJOR PROFESSOR

Upon entering the department, the PhD Program Director will assign each incoming student a faculty advisor/mentor based on their research interests. During the course of the year, each student is encouraged to meet with HSRMP faculty members so as to find the best scientific and interpersonal fit. Students may change advisors during the summer following their first year upon with written agreement from both the new and original advisors (Note: Students are not allowed to maintain funding from the original advisor's grant or contract when switching advisors unless there is explicit written permission). If a student desires to change the major advisor, they must inform the PhD Program Director in writing first. The student will then be assigned to a new advisor based on an agreement between the PhD program director, the student, and their previous and new advisors. The PhD program director will advise each student on general policies as set forth in this document. The department chair, program director, and academic program coordinator are responsible for general

oversight of the PhD program for quality assurance, assignment of teaching duties, and recruitment of students.

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

The supervisory committee is proposed by the student's faculty advisor in consultation with the student, nominated by the executive committee, approved by the chair of the department, and forwarded to the Graduate School. The advisor must hold Doctoral Graduate Faculty status within the PhD Program and all committee members must hold Graduate Faculty status with the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School is an ex-officio member of all supervisory committees. Graduate students should set up their supervisory committees after passing the preliminary exam at the latest. The student is encouraged to meet with the supervisory committee as often as possible.

The supervisory committee shall consist of at least two (2) graduate faculty members (including the chair) from within the department of HSRMP. The chair need not be tenured but must hold a full-time position in the department and be voted in as a member of the PhD program faculty. All PhD program faculty members are voting members. Other supervisory committee members must be graduate faculty as recognized by the University Graduate School. In addition, at least one (1) graduate faculty member must be selected to serve as an external committee member that is outside of the HSRMP department. In total, a student must have at least have four (4) supervisory committee members; one (1) chair from HSRMP, one (1) committee member from HSRMP, one (1) additional committee member and one (1) external member from outside of HSRMP. [External member must be outside of PPHP]

In rare cases, one's doctoral research may require the guidance of a specialist in an area of study other than that of the supervisory committee chair. In such cases, the PhD committee chair may recommend the appointment of a co-chair who should be on the graduate faculty.

Duties of the Supervisory Committee

- To provide optimum support and guidance to the student to help the student meet his/her academic goals.
- To inform the student of all regulations governing the PhD degree (listed in this document and on the university website). This does not absolve the student from the responsibility of becoming informed of these regulations.
- To meet soon after appointment with the student to consider the student's individual goals and proposed program.
- To evaluate the student's progress, it is advised that a minimum of two meetings are held each year.
- To evaluate the student's written portion of the dissertation proposal presentation/qualifying examination after the student has completed all required course work. The supervisory committee should also assist in the departmental oral portion of the proposal presentation.
- Must be graduate faculty as recognized by the University Graduate School.
- To meet as a committee once a year before the student advances to candidacy and every six months thereafter to review the student's research.

- To conduct the final oral examination in defense of the dissertation.

Changes in the Committee Membership

It is important to remember that any changes made to the supervisory committee must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School as the changes occur. Changes need to be approved at least 30 days prior to the date of the final oral defense so that all new members will have ample time to become familiar with the dissertation. Committee changes cannot be made after a final oral defense takes place. If any changes to your committee need to be made, please alert the program's Academic Coordinator.

CURRICULUM

PhD in Public Health, Health Services Research Concentration Curriculum

F= Fall S=Spring Su=Summer

COURSES	SEMESTER	TITLE	CREDITS	COURSE SUBSTITUTED
PHC 6600	All Year	Foundations of Public Health	0	-exempt-PH Core-
*HSA 6114	Fall, Summer	US Health Care Systems	3	Possible MPH Transfer
*PHC 6001	All Year	Principles of Epidemiology in Public Health	3	Possible MPH Transfer
*PHC 6326	Fall	Environmental and One Health	3	Possible MPH Transfer
*PHC 6410	Fall, Spring	Psychological, Behavioral & Social Issues in Public Health	3	Possible MPH Transfer
*PHC 6052	Fall	Introduction to Biostatistical Methods – SAS	3	Possible MPH Transfer
Total 15				
QUANTITATIVE METHODS AND STATISTICS				
PHC 6053	Spring	Regression Methods for the Life Sciences	3	
*HSA 7706	Fall	Health Services Research Methods I	3	
<i>Choose two:</i>		PHC 6022 Design & Conduct of Clinical Trials (F)	3	
		PHC 6059 Intro Survival Analysis (F)	3	
		PHC 6089 Public Health Computing (F, S)	3	
		PHC 6711 Measure in Epi and Outcomes Research (F)	3	
		PHC 7595 Intro to Molecular Epidemiology (F)	3	
		Elective Approved by Advisor	3	
		Elective Approved by Advisor	3	
Total 12				
HEALTH SERVICE RESEARCH CORE COURSES				
*HSA 6152	S26, Fall	Health Policy	3	
*HSA 6436	Spring	Health Economics	3	
*HSA 7106	Summer (EOY)	Health Care Access & Utilization	3	
*HSA 7708	Spring	Health Services Research Methods II	3	
*HSA 7759	Summer (EOY)	Quality & Outcomes in Health Services Research	3	
*PHC 6641	Fall	Social Stratification and Health	3	
<i>Research Focus</i>		Approved by PhD Director/Chair	3	
<i>Research Focus</i>		Approved by PhD Director/Chair	3	
<i>Research Focus</i>		Approved by PhD Director/Chair	3	
<i>Research Focus</i>		Approved by PhD Director/Chair	3	
<i>Research Focus</i>		Approved by PhD Director/Chair	3	
<i>Research Focus</i>		Approved by PhD Director/Chair	3	
Total 36				
PROFESSIONAL ISSUES				
HSA 6911	SumY1, Sum Y2	Research Seminar and Journal Club in HSR	0,1	
PHC 6707	Summer	Finding Health Research Info & Communicating	1	
PHC 7427	Summer	Ethics in Population Science	2	
<i>Choose one:</i>		APK 6715 Grant Writing in Health & Human Performance (S)	3	
		PHC 7727 Grant Writing for Population Health Research (Su)	3	
Total 7				
TEACHING & RESEARCH				
RSD 6900	Fall	College Classroom Teaching	3	
PHC 7979	All Year	Supervised Research for Dissertation Proposal	1-9	
PHC 7980	All Year	Research for Doctoral Dissertation	1-8	
Total 20 (7979+7980=17)				

TOTAL PROGRAM HOURS 90

CURRICULUM REQUIRED FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM

- HSA 6114 – US Health Care Systems
- PHC 6001 – Principles of Epidemiology in Public Health
- PHC 6052 – Introduction to Biostatistical Methods
- PHC 6326 – Environmental and One Health
- PHC 6410 – Psychological, Behavioral & Social Issues in Public Health

- HSA 7706 – Health Services Research Methods I
- HSA 7708 – Health Services Research Methods II
- HSA 6152 – Health Policy
- HSA 6436 – Health Economics
- HSA 7106 – Health Care Access & Utilization
- HSA 7759 – Quality & Outcomes in Health Services Research
- PHC 6641 – Social Stratification and Health

STUDENT PROGRESS

All PhD students in the college of Public Health and Health Professions (PHHP) are required to fill out a Monitoring Plan at the end of each year.

- **Monitoring Plan**
The monitoring plan tracks detailed progress of the student including completion of coursework, publications, attendance to scientific meeting, etc. The monitoring plan is available online (<https://internal.phhp.ufl.edu/phhp/monitoring-plan/>).
- **Individual Development Plan (IDP)**
The IDP tracks the general progress including goals and expectations, and strengths and weaknesses of the student each year. A pdf version of the IDP can be found here (<https://phhp.ufl.edu/files/2011/01/PHHP-IDP.pdf>).

Click [here](#) to download Year 1 IDP Template

Click [here](#) to download the Year 2+ IDP Template

Students must meet with their Faculty Advisor once a year to discuss and update the IDP. Students need to submit completed plans to the PhD Program Director and Academic Specialist.

READMISSION PROCEDURES

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

- A minimum GPA of 3.0 for courses taken during the doctoral program.
- Three letters of recommendation from faculty members in the HSR department.

Readmission is not guaranteed, regardless of the circumstances that necessitate it.

GUIDELINES FOR THE COMPLETION OF DOCTORAL DEGREE

A general timeline for completion of doctoral program is as follows-

STEP	TIME FRAME
Application	Late Fall Year 0
Admission	Early Spring Year 0
Assignment of Faculty Advisor	Summer Year 0
Orientation	Summer Year 0
First Semester Plan of Study	Summer Year 0
Prepare list of courses for transfer credits	Fall Year 1
Develop full plan of study	Fall Year 1
Take written qualifying examination	Summer Year 2
Select supervisory committee	Fall Year 3
Approval from supervisory committee on dissertation topic	Fall Year 3
Write dissertation proposal with input from supervisory committee	Spring Year 3 - Summer Year 3
Defend dissertation proposal	Summer Year 3
Conduct dissertation research	
Write dissertation with ongoing input from supervisory committee	Fall Year 4 – Spring Year 4
Schedule defense upon approval of supervisory committee chair	Spring Year 4
Submit dissertation draft to supervisory committee (2 weeks prior to defense)	Spring Year 4
Defend dissertation	Spring Year 4
Make revisions suggested by supervisory committee	Spring Year 4
Submit final dissertation to graduate school for approval	Spring Year 4

Students are awarded doctoral degree only after the successful completion of the following requirements-

REQUIREMENT 1: WRITTEN PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

Each student will be required to take a closed book, in-class written preliminary examination that will assess the student's knowledge, competencies and understanding of core concepts of Health Services Research, Management and Policy. Satisfactorily passing the preliminary examination is a requirement before enrolling in PHC 7979 – Supervised Research for Dissertation Proposal.

A. Exam Prerequisites

To take the written preliminary examination, the student must:

- Have a minimum 3.0 GPA.

- Have completed or received transfer credits for all Public Health Core courses, and all non-elective HSR and Quantitative Methods Core courses. The completion of all required core courses must be verified by the PhD program director a semester before the preliminary exam. Exceptions may be granted in unusual circumstances, but the student has fulfilled all other requirements.
- Be registered as a student at the time the examination is taken.

B. Exam Format

The preliminary examination will take place over two consecutive days in person. The examination is comprised of two sections:

- Quantitative Methods and Study Design: this exam will require the application of knowledge and skills learned in the Biostatistics and HSR Methods I & II.
- Health Services Research: this exam will require the application of concepts learned in the Health Policy, Health Economics, Social Stratification, Healthcare Access and Utilization, and Quality & Outcomes in Health Services Research courses.

Each section will begin at 8AM and conclude at 5PM. Students will take a lunch break at noon. Breaks can be taken at your discretion, but you must remain in the room other than bathroom breaks.

All questions will be comprehensive in nature, requiring the application of methods, theories, principles, and concepts of HSR along with critical thinking.

In the normal course of academic progress in the PhD program, students will sit for the preliminary examination during the latter part of the summer semester following completion of program coursework. Full-time students are expected to take the exam after two academic years in the PhD program in Summer Year 2. Part-time students are expected to take an exam during the summer semester after they complete the required courses. (See the course plan in this Handbook).

At the end of the Spring semester, a review session with specific exam instructions will be provided by faculty to review methods, concepts, and theories that may be on the examination. Students will be able to ask questions and request further meetings with faculty as needed.

C. Evaluation

The primary objective of the preliminary examination is diagnostic. It is intended:

- to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved the level of knowledge necessary to embark upon independent inquiry in health services research, management and policy;
- to provide faculty with a means of assessing the degree to which students have in fact accomplished that level of knowledge; and
- to identify any areas in which the requisite level of knowledge has not yet been achieved.

The faculty will meet and review each student's performance and arrive at a consensus on whether the student passed both sections of the preliminary exam.

Students who have passed all sections will receive notification of successful completion of the preliminary examination. Over the subsequent semester(s), they will proceed with development of their dissertation topic and preparation of their formal dissertation proposal.

If the faculty has determined that the student has not passed one area of the four areas in the preliminary exam, a remediation plan for the observed deficit in knowledge will be developed. The nature and format of the remediation will be determined collaboratively by the student, the faculty member(s) who wrote and graded the exam that the student did not satisfactorily pass, and the PhD Program Director. They will schedule a meeting to discuss the remediation plan with a student immediately after announcing the exam result. The student, in collaboration with the PhD Program Director, must develop and complete a targeted remediation plan such as auditing specific courses aimed at addressing deficiencies identified in the failed exam. The plan may consist of specified additional reading; the preparation of literature review(s); manuscript(s); summaries or other documentation that concepts have been reviewed and are understood; additional coursework; participation in ongoing research; or other steps needed to correct the issues identified in the preliminary exam. The remediation plan will be documented and signed by the above-mentioned faculty members and the student. The agreed upon remediation plan will commence in the fall semester following the preliminary exam, and will normally be completed within a semester. Once the remediation process is completed, the student must retake and pass the same section of the exam in December with the same format before they can continue with formal dissertation proposal development and defense.

It is fully anticipated that the remediation plan will be conscientiously completed and that the student will pass the relevant area(s) of the preliminary examination upon their second attempt. In the event of a second observed deficiency, and absent extraordinary mitigating circumstances, the student will be dismissed from the program based on a failure to make sufficient progress toward degree completion. In extremely rare circumstances, with documentation of extenuating circumstances and approval from the PhD Program Director, an exception may be approved to allow a student a second remediation and a third attempt at the preliminary examination. In this rare circumstance, the remediation process and retake will follow the structure outlined above.

REQUIREMENT 2: DISSERTATION PROPOSAL PRESENTATION / QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

1. It is suggested that the research proposal be presented no later than one year following successful completion of the preliminary exam. The topic of the research proposal must be an **original research project**. A written abstract of the research proposal, maximum of one page in length, should be provided, examined, and approved by the academic committee chair and committee prior to preparation of the complete proposal.
2. The supervisory committee for a doctoral candidate's dissertation should comprise of at least four members selected from the Graduate Faculty. At least two members, including the chair, must be from the academic unit recommending the degree. At least one member serves as external member and should be from a different educational discipline, with no ties to the home academic unit. One regular member may be from the home academic unit or another unit.

3. The written proposal should include the **first three chapters** (introduction/background, study design, data analysis plan) of the dissertation and should be distributed along with "key" references to the committee at least 14 days prior to the oral dissertation proposal presentation. There is no page limit for the written proposal.
4. The graduate student will give a succinct, 30—40-minute presentation (complete with visual aids) that focuses on the proposal topic and methodology in person. The duration of the oral examination is two hours. Examination will commence with the presentation of student's research proposal. The student will then be examined by the committee. Oral questions posed to the student will be related to the written and oral dissertation proposal. The proposal defense is closed presentation only with the dissertation committee and the student.
5. The committee will identify questions relevant to the research focus area, which may include but not be limited to:
 - Literature evaluation skills
 - Writing skills
 - Theoretical application
 - Scientific background
 - Study design
 - Analytical methods
 - Measurement methods
 - Data and statistical analysis skills
 - Differentiation of clinical/policy and statistical significance
 - Basic concepts covered in the professional courses
6. The final evaluation of the proposal by the dissertation committee should be communicated to the student and the graduate academic affairs committee utilizing the following scale:
 - a. Pass: With written feedback on strengths and weaknesses
 - b. Remedial work needed:
 - Specific needs for additional learning experiences (e.g., scientific area, statistics, and writing) may be identified.
 - Remedial work may include a minor rewrite of the proposal or a major rewrite and re-defense of the proposal. Remedial work must be completed within six months from the time of proposal presentation.

The candidate will propose a format for the final dissertation write up at the oral proposal presentation. The final format will be discussed and agreed upon with the candidate's committee at this point.

A doctoral student becomes a doctoral candidate when the following requirements are satisfied:

- The student's academic record is satisfactory (GPA of 3.0 or higher)
- Required coursework is completed
- The student has passed the written preliminary examination

- The student has successfully defended their dissertation proposal (qualifying exam)
- The Admission to Candidacy form has the required approvals

Students are responsible for scheduling their proposal and dissertation defenses and for completing all necessary paperwork required by the Graduate School. Students must coordinate the room scheduling and form collection with the program's Academic Coordinator.

If the student fails the oral proposal presentation/qualifying exam, he or she may retake it only once and it must be within one semester.

If a student fails the oral proposal presentation for a second time, the Graduate School will be notified. A re-examination may be requested but it must be recommended by the student's supervisory committee and approved by the Graduate School. At least one semester of additional preparation is considered essential before re-examination.

Between the date of passing the dissertation proposal presentation and the date of the degree, there must be a **minimum of two semesters**. The semester in which the oral proposal presentation is completed is counted, provided that the exam is completed before the midpoint of the second term. No more than five years may pass between the completion of the oral proposal presentation/qualifying exam and the conferring of the degree.

REQUIREMENT 3: DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Students should refer to the Graduate School's dissertation checklist:

<https://success.grad.ufl.edu/media/successgradufl.edu/pdf/checklist-dissertation.pdf>

The PhD final exam consists of an oral defense of the research results that are described in the doctoral dissertation. This exam is given within six months of graduation, after the first submission of the dissertation, and the completion of all other prescribed work for the degree.

Students must submit the dissertation electronically and should refer to the Graduate School Editorial Office for more information regarding the dissertation submission. The guidelines are also online at: (<https://success.grad.ufl.edu/td/resources/>)

Copies of the student's dissertation must be given to the supervisory committee members at least two weeks in advance of the final examination. Graduation may be delayed for those who do not adhere to this rule.

All work for the PhD degree must be completed within five calendar years after the completion of the PhD oral qualifying examination.

REQUIREMENT 4: ORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE / FINAL DISSERTATION EXAMINATION

Every candidate for a doctoral degree is required to prepare and present a dissertation that shows independent investigation and is acceptable in form and content to the supervisory committee and to

the Graduate School.

Students must follow dissertation submission criteria and deadlines outlined by the Graduate School (<https://success.grad.ufl.edu/td/resources/>)

A written abstract of the project (200 words minimum) will be provided to the Dissertation Committee Chair no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled presentation.

An announcement of the examination is sent at least one week prior to the date of examination to faculty members in the College of Public Health & Health Professions inviting them to attend.

At least four Graduate Faculty members, including all members of the supervisory committee, must be present at the oral portion of the final examination. Only the official members of the supervisory committee may sign the dissertation signature pages. The Chair of the committee and the student must be present in person; however other members of the supervisory committee may attend via phone or video conference if attendance in person is not possible.

At the time of the oral defense, the student should have **two** forms that require signatures:

- 1) Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Signature Page (ETD)
- 2) Final Exam Submission Form

These forms are provided to the student by the program's Academic Coordinator. Once the forms are completed and returned to the Academic Coordinator, they will be submitted electronically. Students will receive an email alert once this is completed. The student will need to complete the ProQuest Publishing Agreement in GIMS. This form needs to be **completed and delivered to the Graduate School by the student** as soon as possible.

Note: Upon completion of the dissertation, students are required to submit the appropriate paperwork to IRB indicating the completion of the study. If a student continues to analyze data at other institutions, he/she must submit an IRB to the corresponding institution.

EXIT INTERVIEW AND ALUMNI

All students are required to complete an exit interview with the Program Director during the semester of their graduation. This will be scheduled by department staff.

After graduation, HSRMP alumni are encouraged to keep in touch with the department. Alumni can contact the Program Director or staff to update contact information, current position, and share success stories. Alumni may also stay in touch by completing a form on the college website: <https://phhp.ufl.edu/alumni-and-giving/stay-in-touch/>.

University of Florida Graduate School policies, including grievance procedures and other pertinent information, can be found on the University of Florida Graduate School website: <https://graduateschool.ufl.edu>.

STUDENT HONOR CODE AND CONDUCT CODE

The Honor Pledge: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student Honor Code. 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.”

(1) Principles and Scope. Our educational mission is to enable our Students to lead and to influence the next generation and beyond for economic, cultural, and societal benefit. The University strives to protect and to guide the educational community by establishing a Student Honor Code, a Student Conduct Code, and a Student conduct system. These codes and systems promote individual and social responsibility and are enforced through University Regulations. By becoming a member of the University of Florida community, a Student agrees to adhere to its Student Honor Code and its Student Conduct Code. Students acting as individuals or as members of Student Organizations are expected to follow all applicable Laws and Regulations. University Regulations have been designed to promote the safety of people and the campus community, to create an environment conducive to learning, and to achieve the mission of the Institution.

(a) Principles. The University principles address our respect for people and property, for fairness, for Laws and Regulations, and for academic integrity. Nothing in this Regulation shall be interpreted to limit the constitutional or statutory rights of any Student, including but not limited to expressive rights protected by the First Amendment.

1. Respect for people and property. Students are encouraged both to conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies respect for all people and property and to adhere to their personal values without imposing those on others.

2. Respect for fairness. Rules and established procedures are intended to ensure both fundamental fairness and an educational experience for Students and Student Organizations.

3. Respect for Laws and Regulations. Students and Student Organizations are expected to follow all applicable Laws and Regulations.

4. Respect for academic integrity. Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University. Students commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high 3 standard of honor required by the Student Honor Code. Any Student who becomes aware of a violation

of the Student Honor Code is encouraged to report the violation to the appropriate University Official.

(b) Scope. 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 this Regulation.

The University disciplinary process is educational and designed to address Student behavior; therefore, the University will address any alleged violations of its Student Honor Code or its Student Conduct Code independently of any criminal or civil court process.

A Student may be held responsible for their actions as an individual and as a member of a Student Organization.

Any question about how to interpret or apply the Student Conduct Code or Student Honor Code should be directed to the Dean of Students or designee.

(c) Off-Campus Conduct. The University may apply the Student Conduct Code and Student Honor Code to Students whose conduct may have an adverse impact on the health, safety, or welfare of people, property, the University Community, or the pursuit of its objectives, regardless of where such conduct occurs, even if off campus.

Full Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code document:

<http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf>

For more information:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Integrity in scholarly work has received considerable attention in recent years both in academic circles and in the news. Some notorious cases of fraud have made those in higher education sensitive to this issue. Some of these instances, especially in the sciences, have surfaced when attempts to replicate work failed. In the humanities and social sciences, plagiarism assumes greater prominence. Cheating, the bane of many high school and undergraduate teachers, can resurface at the graduate level as well. Moreover, in our increasingly complex professional world, graduate students may find themselves embroiled in abuses of confidentiality or conflicts of interest. All five of these problems are of major concern to graduate students, faculty, and other graduate educators.

Although many graduate students will have few problems with the ethical decisions involved in maintaining integrity in their work, others may not see the issues so clearly. Some may even be unaware of the potential for problems with integrity in graduate study. The Graduate School has prepared these guidelines for units to be consistent should fraud, plagiarism, cheating, abuses of confidentiality, or conflicts of interest arise.

FRAUD

Fraud usually involves the intentional and deliberate misuse of data in order to draw conclusions that may not be warranted by the evidence. Falsification of results may take one of two forms: (1) fabrication of data or (2) omission or concealment of conflicting data for the purpose of misleading other scholars. An intermediate form, difficult to detect especially in quantitative analyses, occurs when students are sloppy about categorization. All researchers, irrespective of discipline, can agree that the fabrication of data is fraudulent, and most will agree that the deliberate omission of conflicting data is also fraudulent. But a few scholars might argue that one person's conflicting data is another person's irrelevant data. In general, the best researchers are those who come to terms with any piece of evidence which others may regard as conflicting. Strong support for a given hypothesis involves disposing of or dealing with alternative hypotheses.

The best insurance against fraud in graduate student research is careful and close supervision by the faculty advisor and exemplary behavior by other members of the academic community. The student should communicate regularly and frequently with his or her major professor. He or she can do so in a variety of ways, such as by submitting laboratory notebooks for frequent faculty review, by having faculty monitor the student's reading in the field, by regular progress reports to the faculty advisor, and so forth. Faculty should normally expect such communication, and in the absence of faculty initiative, graduate students should initiate dialogues with faculty. Such communication will help the student develop intellectually and will lessen the possibility of fraud. If a student is suspected of fraud, the academic community should handle the matter forthrightly and with a clear regard to the rights of the graduate student such that the career of a student researcher who may be innocent is not damaged. Similarly, if graduate student fraud is verified, it must be adjudicated in accordance with established University procedures. The Graduate School will provide information on those procedures to any interested party.

PLAGIARISM

Unlike fraud, which is usually the deliberate creation of false data or results, plagiarism is the use of another's words, ideas, or creative productions or omission of pertinent material without proper attribution (i.e., without giving due credit to the original source). Flagrant cases of plagiarism may involve extensive borrowing of material from articles, books, or creative productions with perhaps only slight modifications. In such cases, penalties are usually severe for the student and would likely result in expulsion from Graduate School or, if a degree has already been earned, the rescinding of that degree. Less extensive cases of plagiarism may be either intentional or unintentional (e.g., carelessness or ignorance of the commonly accepted rules) but may also have severe repercussions. In using other people's

work, one must cite that work in the text or, more commonly, in footnotes, and use either direct quotations or skillful paraphrasing for all ideas that are not one's own. Since much of the basic information about our disciplines comes from outside ourselves through a variety of sources common to all work in a discipline, it is unnecessary to footnote those facts and ideas, which are, so to speak, in the common domain of the discipline. Otherwise, we would be footnoting everything we know. But an intimate familiarity with the literature of the discipline, or a sub-discipline thereof, lets one know when the distinctive words or ideas of another researcher should be given proper attribution. The fairly common practice among scientists of citing the previous significant literature relating to the subjects of their articles or books serves as something of a safeguard against plagiarism, but such reviews of the pertinent literature are less usual in the humanities.

Every graduate student should have a comprehensive knowledge of what constitutes plagiarism. Ignorance of the concept of plagiarism on the part of the student is no excuse for resorting to it at the graduate level, if indeed ignorance is an acceptable excuse at the undergraduate level. Graduate students who have any confusion about the concept should discuss plagiarism with faculty members. Students should expect faculty members to demand that they know what constitutes plagiarism. There are problems, however, not always associated with traditional perceptions of plagiarism. One of these is the danger, when borrowing from the works of others, of quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing the material in such a way as to misrepresent what the author is trying to say. A second problem arises when a student is overly dependent on the work of another, even if it is cited meticulously. Still another problem is plagiarizing oneself by submitting the same data or findings in more than one article or by reviewing the same book in two different journals. And, finally, there is the problem of a graduate student's findings being used by his or her mentor without proper attribution to the student either in the article or book, indeed of not giving credit for joint or co-authorship in articles or books where a substantial amount of the work is done by the student. The student should discuss any perceived problem of this nature with the faculty member involved, the chair of the department, or, if need be, with the Graduate School.

In nearly all of these instances of plagiarism, or variations therein, the best preventive is the example and consultation of the faculty advisor and the rest of the academic community, who should be sensitive to all of these nuances. Again, as with cases of fraud, University of Florida faculty should handle any suspicion of plagiarism with due regard to the student's rights, and any detection of plagiarism should be adjudicated in accordance with established University procedures. The Graduate School will provide procedural information on request.

CHEATING

Cheating at the graduate level may not differ morally from the same action on the undergraduate level, but many find graduate cheating more reprehensible and the consequences, understandably, are more severe. Academic dishonesty for one whose presence in graduate school declares he or she has opted for the intellectual life is a serious matter indeed. While cheating in the classroom is covered by regulations emanating from other parts of the University, cheating on qualifying or preliminary examinations is not. Such dishonesty, once proven, will at the very least result in failure of the examination and may

mean termination of the student's enrollment.

ABUSES OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Abuses of confidentiality by graduate students can take various forms. Students often have access to thesis and grant proposals, data, or unpublished papers of other graduate students or faculty members. Some students use this privileged material in their own research without permission, even though proper attribution may be made. Such an abuse of confidentiality would include the adaptation into one's own research of a thesis or dissertation proposal or any unpublished work that one has opportunity to read or indeed of adopting ideas first floated, and not yet relinquished, by someone else. Another example of an abuse of confidentiality is when the graduate student gains archival or library materials about living or recently-living subjects and uses them in his or her research without permission from the library or archive or, in some cases, from the individual. Any research on live subjects can present similar dilemmas. Confidentiality is one of the forms of integrity, which is relatively easy to abuse and relatively difficult to detect. Once again, as with fraud and plagiarism, the example of the graduate student's mentor and that of the rest of the academic community is the best preventive.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Conflicts of interest between graduate students and faculty members may arise in a variety of ways. We have already alluded to the problems that can occur when the research of a graduate student is inadequately acknowledged by faculty, either by failure to footnote properly or to give co-authorship credit. But another set of professional interpersonal relationships must be handled with great care if the integrity of graduate study is to be preserved. As continuing formal education becomes more common and as academics begin to become involved in the world of business, the possibility of a business relationship between student and teacher becomes greater. All of us are familiar with the kind of conflict of interest which may arise through nepotism, that is, when a person serves in an administrative or supervisory relationship to those who are related to him or her by blood or marriage. Most universities have rules that try to regulate professional relationships in such cases. Many faculty members are reluctant to have their own sons, daughters, or spouses take their courses for credit on the grounds that such students may be perceived by others to have an unfair advantage. A business relationship including a consulting one must evoke the same kind of caution. And a student should be careful about working for a company owned or administered by faculty involved in the student's degree work.

COMPLIANCE & TRAININGS

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT ORIENTATION

All incoming PhD students are required to attend the Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation hosted by the Graduate School. Please refer to the links below for more information.

<https://gradadvance.graduateschool.ufl.edu/programs/orientation/>

<https://ufl.pb.unizin.org/ta-handbook/>

<https://teach.ufl.edu/grow-your-teaching/for-teaching-assistants/>

FERPA (COMPLETED ANNUALLY)

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 faculty, staff, and graduate assistants. When working with student records, a student assistant should work cooperatively with their supervisor to ensure FERPA compliance.

HIPAA (COMPLETED ANNUALLY)

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a broad federal law that is in part designed to provide national standards for protection of certain health information. As required by HIPAA, the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) promulgated complex regulations known as the Privacy Rule, which implement the federal law. This is completed in myTraining.

PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT (COMPLETED BIANNUALLY)

GET80 Harassment Prevention. Every employee of the university (e.g. GA, TA, and RA) is expected to complete this training every two years.

FLU VACCINE (COMPLETED ANNUALLY)

Students, Faculty and Staff are all encouraged to get a flu shot. Flu shots are available from the main campus (Infirmary Building) and Health Science Center (Dental Tower, Room D2-49) locations, as well as SHCC outreach events across campus.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY FORM (COMPLETED BIANNUALLY)

The University of Florida expects that every member of its academic community shares its commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth. To meet these standards, academic dishonesty is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Students are required to sign this form every two years.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The following is the grievance procedure from the [Graduate School Student Handbook](#). The HSR program uses the Graduate School's procedure for handling student grievances.

The University of Florida is committed to a policy of treating all members of the university community fairly in regard to their personal and professional concerns. A formal grievance procedure exists to ensure that each graduate student is given adequate opportunity to bring complaints and problems of an academic nature, exclusive of grades, to the attention of the University administration with the assurance that each will be given fair treatment.

A grievance is defined as dissatisfaction occurring when a student thinks that any condition affecting him or her is unjust or inequitable or creates unnecessary hardship. Areas in which student grievances may arise include scientific misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination, employment-related concerns, and academic matters. The University has various mechanisms available for handling these problems when they arise, and it can sometimes be confusing for the student in knowing where to turn. In general, it is desirable to settle grievances in an informal fashion rather than initiating a formal grievance. Communication is the key element. As soon as a grievance issue arises, the student should speak with either the supervisory committee chair or the department graduate coordinator. If neither of these individuals is available, the department chair is the next alternative. In most cases these individuals can work with the student and the person causing the grievance to resolve the issue informally, as specified below.

Students must first attempt to resolve the issue through their academic unit and then college. Only if the issue cannot be resolved may students contact the Ombudsman for an appointment. Documentation must be provided of all formal actions taken to resolve the issue. The Ombuds is located in 31 Tigert Hall, **392-1308**.

Informal Stage

In the informal phase of the academic grievance procedure, oral discussion between the 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. Additionally, or in the alternative, the student may wish to present his or her grievance in writing to the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. In either case, the person alleged to have caused the grievance must respond to the student either orally or in writing.

Formal Stage

If the student considers the response to the discussion to be unsatisfactory and feels that the grievance still exists, the grievance should be brought in writing, with all supporting documentation, to the department chair or a designated representative of the department. The response of the department to the student's grievance must be given in a timely fashion. If the grievance is still considered to be unresolved, the student may then file the grievance in writing with the dean of the college, who shall investigate the matter and respond to the student within a reasonable time.

The right of appeal in writing to the 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 prescribed administrative channels and grievance procedures have been exhausted. Employment-related grievances are covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 11, 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**. Issues of research misconduct are covered by Rule 6C1-1.011, Florida Administrative Code. Any 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 Sponsored Research, 219 Grinter, **392-1582**, 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.

Suggestions for changes in this handbook?

Please contact the PhD Program Director.