



Doctoral Programs in Public Health Student Handbook 2024-2025

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Section I: UWM and the Zilber College of Public Health

A. The Zilber College of Public Health

The Joseph J. Zilber College of Public Health was established in 2009 and is the only CEPH accredited College of public health in Wisconsin. CEPH is the Council for Education on Public Health, the major body governing public health education.

The Zilber College is guided by core vision, mission, and values that are rooted in its commitment to social and environmental justice and health equity.

Vision

A just, equitable, healthy future for people, communities, and the environment in Milwaukee, the state of Wisconsin, and beyond.

Mission

The mission of the Joseph J. Zilber College of Public Health is to advance population health, health equity, and social and environmental justice among diverse communities in Milwaukee, the state of Wisconsin, and beyond through education, research, community engagement, and advocacy for health-promoting policies and strategies.

Values

We are committed to carrying out the following values in our individual and collective public health research, teaching, community engagement, and practice: *Integrity, Accountability, Collaboration, Diversity and Inclusion, Health Equity, and Social and Environmental Justice.*

Faculty and Staff

ZCPH Graduate Faculty can be viewed [here](#).

ZCPH Full Directory can be viewed [here](#).

B. Administrative Structure and the Graduate Program Committee (GPC)

The Zilber College Graduate Program Committee (GPC) sets policies for the operations of graduate programming. The GPC oversees the PhD programs with input from the full Zilber College faculty, the Zilber College Dean, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the PhD Director, and the Zilber College staff. Each track designates a Faculty Lead and students elect two representatives to serve on the Graduate Program Committee: one PhD student and one MPH student. The

information for representatives is listed below:

Role	Name (as of 2024)
Dean	Monica Wendel
Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs	Amy Harley
Associate Dean of Research	Lance Weinhardt
Faculty Co-Chairs	Michael Laiosa, Ann Swartz
UWM Graduate Representatives	Program Directors
PhD Director	Amy Kalkbrenner

C. The Public Health Student Association (PHSA) and PhD Representative on GPC

The Zilber College has a Public Health Student Association (PHSA) to support the leadership and engagement of students in the college. The PHSA supports undergraduate and graduate students. Consider serving as an officer in PHSA to improve our school and exercise your leadership.

One key role which ideally crosses over between the PHSA and the academic school structures is the PhD student representative on the Graduate Program Committee (GPC). This PhD student has voting rights on the GPC and leads the PhD Student Survey/Town Hall process in the spring. Ideally this person will be an officer or active participant in the PHSA, to use the structures of the PHSA to better connect student and faculty processes.

To volunteer to be the PhD student representative on the GPC or become connected with the PHSA, email the faculty advisor of the PHSA - Elise Papke, or the PhD Programs Director - (in 2024 - Amy Kalkbrenner).

D. Who to Contact

- **Monica Wendel:** Any issue not solved or addressed by other contacts (course instructor, faculty advisor, program director, Associate Dean for ASA).
- **Amy Harley (Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs):** Student financial issues, grievances or complaints, any issue not solved or addressed previously.
- **Michael Laiosa and Ann Swartz (Faculty Chairs):** Instructor concerns
- **Your Major Professor:** Curriculum, dissertation, and career planning, academic challenges.
- **Course Instructors:** First point of contact for questions or concerns about course content, course policies and procedures, classroom interactions.
- **Tanika Reesnes (Business Operations Manager):** Student worker issues and PA/TA/RA and building concerns not able to be solved by Maryam
- **George Henion:** point person for traveling needs.

- **Maryam Muhammed (Building and Events Coordinator):** Building concerns, scheduling building space, maintenance concerns.
- **Amy Kalkbrenner (PhD Director):** Questions or concerns about the PhD program (typically after consulting with your Major Professor).
- **Anna Hoesley (Professional Academic Advisor):** Academic and general student services support for PhD students, questions about academic program processes and graduation, notice of campus fellowships.
- **Corey Anderson (Academic Affairs Program Support):** Contact for Monica Wendel's calendar and contact for facilities issues in Zilber College occupied Enderis and NWQ spaces .
- **Analise Sandoval (Academic Affairs Program Support/Scholarship Coordinator):** Contact for Amy Harley's calendar, Questions about scholarships, course evaluations, and handbooks.

E. Role of the UWM Graduate School

All graduate degrees at UWM, including these, are under the auspices of the UWM Graduate School. Therefore, your time as a student is governed not only by the structure and policies of the Zilber College, but those of the Graduate School. Ultimately the Graduate School is responsible for conferring your degree.

This Handbook largely reflects the specifics of your degree at the Zilber College, and also provides links to Graduate School policies and resources, with the complete set available here.

F. Center for International Education

UWM has an office dedicated to supporting international students, with a wealth of resources and support staff to know about.

G. Tuition and Fees

- To find up to date information about UWM Tuition and fees, click here.
- We have two graduate courses with additional fees. These fees are called special course fees. The courses are PH 702 (\$100) and PH 703 (\$50). All online and hybrid courses carry a \$30/credit technology fee.

H. Course Materials, Canvas, and the UWM Library

Many public health classes will require the students to purchase textbooks and other materials. Class syllabi outline topics covered in class and associated readings.

Students may purchase textbooks at the UWM Bookstore online. Students may also purchase textbooks from other vendors. Check with the course

instructor listed on the Schedule of Classes to ensure you order the correct edition of required books. Any questions about assigned textbooks, readings, and assignments should be directed to the course instructor. Many Faculty post readings on Canvas, UWM's web-based course management system.

Note that the UWM library has many resources, both physical and online, including textbooks on reserve and scholarly journals. Students can access these resources here.

I. Student Travel for University Business

If a student is traveling using College funds, grant funds, travel awards, or professor's start-up funds, a travel authorization form must be completed (See Appendix A).

Please turn in the form and copies of any e-mail denoting award, use of funds, etc. to the Faculty Support Office. These should be turned in as soon as possible and, preferably, before you begin to plan the travel. When traveling on university business, it is *required* to work with George Henion (for pre-travel arrangements and post-travel reimbursement. Note that AirBnB will be reimbursable by university funds. All flights must be booked through FOX World Travel.

Section II: Information for All Public Health PhD Programs

A. Competencies for all Public Health PhD Programs

PhD Core Competencies

1. Formulate and test a hypothesis using basic statistical methods
2. Apply statistical inference to guide research decision-making relevant to public health problems and issues.
3. Evaluate *critically* scientific literature and identify how epidemiological and population health data can be used to answer research questions and inform program development and policy decisions aimed at promoting health equity.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills necessary for formulating research questions, identifying theory to frame research questions, and identify and employ appropriate methodologies for addressing a public health research question.
5. Apply social and environmental justice framework when asking and addressing research questions impacting the public's health

PhD CEPH 2021 - Foundational Knowledge Objectives

1. Explain public health history, philosophy, and values
2. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services*
3. Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health
4. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other community relevant to the school or program
5. Discuss the science of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.
6. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge
7. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population's health
8. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population's health
9. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health
10. Explain the social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities
11. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease
12. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health and ecosystem health (e.g., One Health)

B. Support from Your Major Professor and Professional Academic Advisor

The most important people guiding your degree are your Major Professor and the Professional Academic Advisor. (At UWM, the person elsewhere known as your advisor, chair, or mentor, is called your Major Professor.) Your Major Professor is a faculty member who is responsible for your academic training, assisting you in selecting coursework, planning for and executing your dissertation, and becoming

an independent public health researcher. Your Major Professor also serves as the chair of your Dissertation Committee. The Professional Academic Advisor plays an important supporting role, serving as a liaison with the Graduate School, keeping a file of your progress, answering questions ranging from course enrollment to financial supports to finding campus resources, and serving as an additional confidential advisor and support person for you. As of the fall of 2024, the Professional Academic Advisor is Anna Hoesley.

C. Basic Stages of Doctoral Training

In general, you will complete these stages of training:

1. Coursework (2+ years)
2. Preliminary exam, assembling a dissertation committee, and writing and defending a dissertation proposal
3. Completing your dissertation research
4. Defending your dissertation and graduating

More detail on these stages is found under each specific PhD Program.

D. Milestones and Becoming a Dissertator

Milestones is an official system that UWM uses to keep track of, and approve, PhD student progress through key events like passing the preliminary exam and entering dissertator status. Do not ignore prompts from Milestones (or any future replacement system) and be pro-active about reminding others to enter information or approvals, as there could be financial consequences or delays in your graduation that result. Reach out to your Major Professor or Professional Academic Advisor for guidance.

Partway through your program, you will achieve the status of *Dissertator* (a PhD student working on their dissertation). This typically indicates that you have completed, for example, your coursework and preliminary exam, with the exact details specified below for each PhD Program. Dissertator status is verified through the Milestones system. Students who are dissertators pay a lower rate of tuition (detailed [here](#)), and so it is important to make sure that your progress is being appropriately tracked, and approved by others, in Milestones.

E. Logistics for the Doctoral Defense and Graduation

Knowing what to expect and working closely with the Professional Academic Advisor (Anna Hoesley in 2024) will help you avoid stress as you complete your degree.

- In the semester when you plan to defend, set up a meeting with the Professional

Academic Advisor (Anna Hoesley in 2024) to make sure that your Plan of Study is up to date and that all items in Milestones have been completed.

- Follow [UWM dissertation formatting guidelines](#).
- Arrange for (rooms, virtual links) and publicize the public seminar portion of your defense at least 2 weeks prior to your defense date. Reach out to the Professional Academic Advisor for instructions on how to do this.
- Remind your Major Professor and Professional Academic Advisor to obtain a “warrant of defense” needed for your committee to sign.

F. PhD Events During the Academic Year

- Fall: Fall picnic for PhD students and faculty
- Fall: Identify the PhD student representative for the GPC/ideally also active in the PHSA
- Spring: Apply for funding/research/teaching/fellowship opportunities and discuss finances with your Major Professor
- Spring: Complete the Annual Review of PhD Students
- Spring: Complete the PhD Student Survey and attend the PhD Town Hall

G. Annual Review of PhD Students

In the spring of each year in the program, the PhD student and Major Professor will work together to complete the [Annual Review of PhD Student form](#), which includes an updated CV for the student. This PhD annual review is not required for students with planned dissertation defenses within a couple of months (e.g. in the spring). While this annual activity serves to structure and document important guidance for the PhD student, this in no way should preclude frequent and ongoing similar discussions between the PhD student and Major Professor throughout the program.

H. Zilber College PhD Student Sample Writing Bookshelf

We have a [canvas resource page](#) that provides web resources and sample writing from past and current PhD students, such as publications and dissertations. If you cannot access this page, it may indicate that you need to be added. Contact the PhD Programs Director (Amy Kalkbrenner in 2024) or the Professional Academic Advisor (Anna Hoesley in 2024).

I. Financial Support During PhD Studies: General Information

The student should, each spring, initiate a conversation with their Major Professor about any funding needs for the upcoming academic year, maintain highly satisfactory progress and meet milestones in a timely fashion to be competitive for awards, and attend to notices, deadlines, and applications.

- UWM Student Financial Services, including financial aid resources, can be found [here](#).
- Scholarships, fellowships, and funding opportunities can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- General information about assistantships from the Graduate School can be found [here](#).

J. Financial Support During PhD Studies: Examples of Common Substantial Supports

Vera Zilber Fellowship

The Zilber College provides fellowships competitively awarded based on a combination of outstanding admissions applications (for incoming students), highly satisfactory continuing performance, and financial need.

Work requirement? NO

Years typically supported. Can be any year

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: Zilber College, Dean's office

To be considered: Submit a meritorious application for initial Zilber College admission, and in later years meet milestones in a timely fashion and stay in touch with your Major Professor.

TA – Teaching Assistant

The title Teaching Assistant is used for graduate students enrolled in the University of Wisconsin System who are regularly assigned teaching and related responsibilities (other than manual or clerical responsibilities) under the supervision of a member of the faculty. The [UWM International Teaching Assistant Assessment \(MITAA\)](#) is a requirement for some international teaching assistants who are non-native speakers of English and who will be assigned classroom duties as part of a graduate teaching assistantship. A Department representative must be available to participate in the assessment. There is no charge for the MITAA. In 2022/3 and 2023/4 the Zilber College provided 3 year-long TA awards. [The UWM Graduate school provides more detail and current stipend levels.](#)

Work requirement? YES, about 20 hours/week.

Years typically supported. In the second or later years of the program, after the needed course has been successfully completed or after the skills are obtained to support the course.

International student eligibility? YES. The UWM International Teaching Assistant Assessment (MITAA) is a requirement for some international TAs who are non-native speakers of English and who will be assigned classroom duties. A Zilber representative must be available to participate in the assessment. There is no charge for the MITAA.

Administered by: Zilber College, Faculty Chair

To be considered. Look for an email from the Faculty Chair in the spring of each year

announcing the application process and deadlines. Apply for the widest range of courses that you are qualified to teach to maximize your chance of being selected.

REA – Research Excellence Award

The REA is available in some years to support a doctoral student. The REA is typically awarded to a doctoral student whose Major Professor has previously supported PhD students with RA positions using federal funding, because this is the origin of this funding.

Work requirement? Varies

Years typically supported. Varies

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: Zilber College, Dean's Office

To be considered. Stay in touch with your Major Professor.

RA – Research Assistant

An RA is a graduate student enrolled in the University of Wisconsin System who is assigned to conduct research that is for the benefit of the student's own learning and research and for the benefit of the University, faculty or academic staff supervisor or granting agency. This title does not include students provided fellowships, scholarships, or traineeships which are distributed through other titles such as advanced opportunity fellow, fellow, scholar, or trainee. At the Zilber College, RA opportunities are advertised via email and flyers when a faculty member is hiring. Your Major Professor can also be a connection to potential RA opportunities. Faculty members fund RA positions by obtaining grants and contracts, such as from the NIH, NSF, EPA, CDC, private foundations, and pilot grants such as the UWM DIG and the CTSI pilot grant program. The UWM Graduate school provides more detail and current stipend levels.

Work requirement? YES, about 20 hours/week for a 50% appointment. Sometimes students receive a 33% appointment.

Years typically supported. Any years in the program.

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: Individual faculty member in conjunction with UWM

To be considered. Stay in touch with your Major Professor and keep an eye on emails and flyers that may announce opportunities.

AOP – Advanced Opportunity Program Fellowship

The AOP award supports students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education, such as those from minoritized racial/ethnic groups or otherwise disadvantaged.

Work requirement? NO

Years typically supported. Any years in the program, to a maximum of 3 years for PhD studies.

International student eligibility? NO

Administered by: UWM Graduate School

To be considered. Look for emails from the Zilber administrative office with deadlines and consult with your Major Professor, because limitations may apply for how many applications can be sent from each unit. You may want to discuss your eligibility with the Zilber Professional Academic Advisor.

DGSF – Distinguished Graduate Student Fellowship

The UWM graduate school awards these highly-competitive fellowships following an application process.

Work requirement? NO

Years typically supported. Last couple of years of the program, after the student has publications and other markers of success to support a competitive application.

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: UWM Graduate School

To be considered. Look for emails from the Zilber administrative office with deadlines and consult with your Major Professor, because limitations may apply for how many applications can be sent from each unit.

DDF – Distinguished Dissertator Fellowship

The UWM graduate school awards the DDF, on a competitive basis, to PhD students who are getting ready (with evidence) for their final year in the program.

Work requirement? NO

Years typically supported. Last year

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: UWM Graduate School

To be considered. Look for emails from the Zilber administrative office with deadlines and consult with your Major Professor, because limitations may apply for how many applications can be sent from each unit.

CTSI (Clinical and Translational Science Institute) Fellowship

The CTSI is based at the Medical College of Wisconsin with partnership with UWM, providing eligibility to UWM PhD students for these awards. These competitive awards support select students who have a planned dissertation (proposal) that can be conceptualized as translational, that is – bridging the gap between basic knowledge to clinical care (“bench to bedside”) or to community practice. Public health research often fits this definition.

Work requirement? NO. However, this award requires attending a yearly conference, meeting with other CTSI fellows, and submitting progress reports and evaluations.

Years typically supported. Last years in the program.

International student eligibility? NO

Administered by: CTSI of Southeast Wisconsin

To be considered. Look for an email directly from the CTSI or from the Zilber Associate Dean of Research with deadlines and application materials. Consult with the PhD Programs Director who may be able to consult about framing your work as “translational” and can connect you with examples of prior successful submissions.

F31 - Ruth L. Kirschstein Predoctoral Individual National Research Service Award

An F31 is an individual grant from the NIH to support doctoral students. The F31 is highly competitive. Developing an F31, while a lot of work, partners nicely with the development of a dissertation proposal and provides direct experience on submitting an NIH grant.

Work requirement? YES. Receipt of an F31 allows for full-time work on dissertation research and other educational/professional development activities toward a PhD.

Years typically supported. Last 2 or so years in the program.

International student eligibility? NO

Administered by: National Institutes of Health

To be considered. Have a fully-developed dissertation proposal that can be formatted as an F31 proposal. The most competitive applicants will have a track record of previous first-author publications and outstanding letters of reference. Work in conjunction with your Major Professor to keep an eye on NIH deadlines and requirements. Consult with the PhD Programs Director to find previous examples of submitted F31s from Zilber and UWM.

K. Financial Support During PhD Studies: Examples of Common Supplemental Supports

Ad Hoc Instructor Position

The ad hoc instructor has full responsibility for teaching a course, typically using materials previously developed. This position provides great teaching experience. Tuition is typically not covered with this position.

Work requirement? YES

Years typically supported. Any

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: Zilber College, Faculty Chair

To be considered. Keep an eye out for emails from the faculty chair about courses that need an ad hoc instructor with deadlines and instructions on how to apply.

CGSA - Chancellor's Graduate Student Award

The Zilber College offers these competitive awards to provide support for various

aspects of PhD student training, such as research supplies and fees, conference or research-related travel, and more.

Work requirement? NO

Years typically supported. Any

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: Zilber College, Dean's Office

To be considered. Keep an eye out for emails from the Dean's office with deadlines and instructions on how to apply.

UWM Graduate School Travel Awards

As of this writing (July 2023) each PhD student is allocated \$1000 by the UWM Graduate School to present at major conferences in their field. Thus, students are highly encouraged to inform themselves about details of the timing and eligibility and apply for these awards in advance of conference travel.

Work requirement? NO

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: UWM Graduate School

To be considered.

GSEF – Graduate Student Excellence Fellowship

The UWM Graduate School provides discretionary philanthropic awards to nominees of the other graduate school fellowships who had meritorious applications but did not receive the award (DGSF, DDF). They are awarded according to the donors' wishes (e.g. students who conduct research at the Field Station, students in the arts, etc.) and are generally one time awards of \$1,500-2,500. These awards do not include tuition remission.

Work requirement? NO

Years typically supported. Any

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: UWM Graduate School

To be considered. Follow the same procedures as applying for the DGSF/DDF.

Grader

A grader works alongside a faculty member to provide support for a course, but at a lesser amount of responsibility and pay than a TA, often grading assignments. Graders do not receive tuition remission. The need for graders varies by enrollment. A grader appointment may only be for one semester.

Work requirement? YES, for example, for 5 or 10 hours/week (varies by course).

Years typically supported. Any

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: Zilber College, Faculty Chair

To be considered. Same as for a TA position: Look for an email from the Faculty Chair in the spring of each year announcing the application process and deadlines.

Student Hourly Work

A wide variety of hourly work may be available. Two common scenarios are supporting a faculty member with their research, similar to an RA but without providing tuition remission and often for fewer hours. Other opportunities may include working in the academic advising office of the Zilber College, for example assisting with student recruitment. Hourly appointments are often used to support students during summer months when tuition is not required, but can also take place during the academic year.

Work requirement? YES

Years typically supported. Any

International student eligibility? YES

Administered by: Varies depending on the work

To be considered. Keep an eye out for fliers and emails announcing this type of opportunity.

Section III: PhD Program in Public Health, Concentration in (CBHP)

In addition to this CBHP-specific content, don't forget to review information for all Zilber College Public Health PhD programs ([Section II](#)) and [policies and procedures of the UWM Graduate School](#).

A. CBHP PhD Description

The Community and Behavioral Health Promotion (CBHP) doctoral program is designed to train students in social and behavioral science aspects of public health research and intervention with a particular emphasis on the development of community-level interventions. Faculty interest areas include: maternal, infant, and child health; health disparities; obesity; nutrition; food security; HIV and STD prevention; adolescent health; violence prevention; substance abuse prevention; creating healthy environments; and promoting mental health.

Students entering the program will be trained at the graduate level in community and behavioral health promotion from a public health perspective. Students will also have exposure to other key areas of public health (environmental health, epidemiology, biostatistics, and policy and administration), providing a broad foundation of public health research and practice. The PhD in Public Health with a concentration in CBHP requires 72 course credits beyond the Bachelor's degree. Coursework includes core courses as outlined below, research and methods courses, electives, and credits taken as pre-dissertation research supporting CBHP faculty research. In addition, students will prepare for public health leadership through their own original research.

Student research in community and behavioral health promotion may focus on the social and behavioral determinants of disease, illness, injury, and health, the interaction of social and behavioral factors with biological or environmental factors, or the efficacy of interventions to improve health through social and behavioral strategies within community settings. This program aligns with UWM's mission to further academic opportunities at all levels for women, minority, part-time students, and financially or educationally disadvantaged students. In addition, the program consistently strives for diversity within its faculty ranks to achieve the University's goal for cultural competency in teaching and learning.

B. CBHP PhD Competencies

Upon graduation, a student completing the requirements for the PhD in Public Health with a concentration in **Community and Behavioral Health Promotion** will be able to:

1. Describe and critically evaluate the utility of key social and behavioral science theories for public health research.

2. Design and implement theory driven community and behavioral health promotion research.
3. Apply social and environmental justice philosophies, theories, and frameworks to public health research and the interpretation of research findings
4. Describe the social-political-historical contexts that have shaped the development of community engaged research including community based participatory approaches
5. Describe the contributions of community engaged approaches to community and behavioral health research and interventions
6. Critically appraise different methodological strategies in developing and implementing community engaged research
7. Apply qualitative and advanced quantitative methods to the study of public health problems, the assessment of community strengths and the evaluation of prevention and intervention programs.
8. Use research findings to advocate for policies, programs, and resources that improve the health of communities.
9. Demonstrate respect for the integrity and perspectives of others in all professional contexts
10. Demonstrate an advanced understanding of how to manage ethical issues in community and behavioral health research and practice

C. CBHP PhD Curriculum and Courses

For the most updated curriculum and requirements and course listing please see the [UWM Academic Catalog for the PhD in CBHP](#).

The PhD is the highest degree awarded in the field of public health, and the dissertation is expected to demonstrate an extraordinarily high level of knowledge, expertise and originality. Students are required to register for a minimum of 9 credits for dissertation, but a high-quality dissertation will likely require much more than the time equivalent of 9 credit hours. Given the vast differences between students and the types of research that qualify as dissertation research, it is impossible to predetermine a necessary amount of time. Expectations regarding the level of difficulty of the dissertation will be addressed at the time of the dissertation proposal.

The assemblage of elective courses is not exhaustive but reflects a starting point for the new program. With few exceptions, all of the courses are graduate-level courses. Those that are designated as Undergraduate/Graduate (U/G) classes are taught at the level of advanced undergraduate students and include additional material and assignments consistent with graduate-level curricula. Zilber College of Public Health faculty will continue to expand the choice of elective courses as future programs develop.

In addition to regular coursework and research, doctoral students are expected to attend Zilber College seminars.

D. CBHP PhD Curriculum Planning

The curriculum for PhD students in the CBHP program is designed to prepare students for careers in community engaged, prevention-oriented research to address social and behavioral oriented public health concerns. The curriculum has changed somewhat over the years such that students entering the program in different years may have slightly different sets of requirements. If the program requirements change while a student is in the program, they have the option of going with the new requirements or staying with their original requirements. A course planning and tracking document specific to your degree program, called a "Plan of Study", can be found on the Zilber College website to help students select courses and track their progress, in collaboration with their Major Professor.

E. CBHP PhD Dissertation Committee

The student, in consultation with the Major Professor, will select four additional members to form a Dissertation Committee. A minimum of three committee members must be faculty in CBHP. See the Graduate School Doctoral Requirements page for more information on the doctoral committee.

F. CBHP PhD. The Important Role of the Major Professor

The Major Professor plays a vital role in a student's development as a scholar, researcher, and public health professional. The Major Professor is responsible for advancing the career goals of the student by supporting community collaborations, publications, presentations, and other professional activities. All admitted students are assigned to a primary major professor/mentor to develop an academic plan and supervise research activities and provide feedback/suggestions regarding the development of program competencies. Initially an advisor meets with the student in person or over the phone prior to their arrival on campus to begin planning their first year in the program. During the Fall Orientation, the CBHP lead provides the Doctoral Student Handbook to the new cohort and students meet with their primary advisor to plan the first year. Ideally, PhD students meet regularly (at least once a month) with their mentors. Some students work very closely with their Major Professor/mentor, who may employ them as a research or teaching assistant. However, some students prefer or work more independently, often supporting themselves with outside, public-health related employment and developing their own research interests, sometimes related to their professional background.

Advisors and students are expected to use a "Plan of Study" and an online Student

competency assessment tool to guide the advising process. These documents help standardize advising process. The Plan of Study is designed to help students identify yearly research/training goals and identify which of CBHP competencies deserve special attention. The fillable worksheets allow students to track their progress by checking off required courses taken, which helps the advisor and student determine what classes are still needed. This approach also facilitates planning for the next year's course offerings and schedule. The competency self-assessment is intended to guide course selection and facilitate professional development.

Advisor assignments are based on the student's research interests and the availability of advisors. If a mismatch occurs or if a student's interests change, students are free to find another advisor if one is available to take on another student. The process for switching advisors should begin with the student initiating a discussion with their current advisor about their reasons for wanting to switch. The next step should involve a discussion the CBHP lead, who will help facilitate the switch, if possible. If a student has a compelling reason, they may ask the program lead or the Associate Dean to help facilitate switching advisors prior to talking with the advisor.

G. CBHP PhD Preliminary Examination

The preliminary exam must be successfully completed within five years of initial enrollment in the PhD program. In the 2024/2025 academic year, CBHP faculty will be re-designing the CBHP preliminary exam. This redesign will be complete with ample time to allow CBHP PhD students entering in the fall of 2024 to prepare for this exam. An addendum to this handbook will be published in the spring of 2025 to elucidate the new preliminary exam.

H. CBHP PhD Post-Preliminary Exam and Forming the Dissertation Committee

Once a student has passed all sections of the Preliminary Exam, the student and their Major Professor will work together to form a Dissertation Committee that consists of 5 members, at least 3 of whom are CBHP faculty including the Major Professor as a chair of the committee. Students must also follow the Dissertation Committee rules specified by the UWM Graduate School.

The student must then submit an online Application for Doctoral Dissertator Status, located in the online Doctoral Milestones System. Once the student has been admitted to doctoral candidacy, they may begin registering for Dissertation Research credit. Note that students cannot take regular courses after they are awarded dissertator status unless they receive permission by the Graduate School. Dissertators can take **maximum** three credits each semester and are considered full time.

I. CBHP PhD. What is a Dissertation?

This description was excerpted from the Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Southampton in England and adopted from the CBHP faculty as an intro statement. "Your dissertation, or research project, is probably the single most important assignment you will undertake whilst at university and is often a key indicator of your true capabilities as a student and researcher. A dissertation adheres to certain fundamental principles of academic writing: It is a structured piece of writing that develops a clear line of thought (an 'argument') in response to a central question or proposition ('thesis').

A dissertation is an extended piece of work, usually divided into chapters, and containing a significantly more detailed examination of your subject matter and evidence than is the case for most essays.

Because you usually have much more responsibility in choosing your research topic, and for sourcing your supporting materials, your dissertation provides evidence of your ability to carry out highly independent study and research.

You are typically expected to be clear about the methodology (investigative procedures and rules) you have used to gather and evaluate your evidence. This aspect of producing a dissertation has much greater emphasis than in a typical essay.

Those of you undertaking analysis of quantitative data must similarly ensure that you adhere to the methodological requirements expected within your academic discipline and that you utilize the appropriate software. You must satisfy yourself as to these requirements within your subject area." - Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences, University of Southampton.

J. CBHP Dissertation Process Instructions

For each CBHP student, the dissertation must demonstrate the ability to plan, develop, implement and write-up original, rigorous, high quality public health research. There are many ways that a student can complete this final step in their formal studies. Because the CBHP program is inter-disciplinary by design, the expectations regarding the topical focus and the methods will likely vary from student to student, advisor to advisor. The decision about whether an idea is large enough, rigorous enough, public healthy enough, etc. is to be determined by the dissertation proposal committee. When working toward determining a dissertation project, a student should work closely with their research mentor who is in the best position to provide valuable input and set guidelines/expectations. This document is intended to outline the practical aspects of the dissertation proposal and defense and not the intellectual aspect of the process.

Getting started. As soon as a CBHP student has been admitted to doctoral candidacy, they may begin accruing the necessary credits of Dissertation Research (varies by year admitted). Dissertators can take a **maximum** three dissertation credits each semester and are not supposed to take regular courses after they are awarded dissertator status.

The dissertation may take one of two formats and students should choose one or the other and write the proposal accordingly (see Tables 1 and 2).

The **traditional format** has at least five chapters: Introduction, Review of the Literature, Methods, Results, and a final chapter containing Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

The **three-manuscript format** has at least four sections: Introduction, three standalone manuscripts and integration/conclusion.

In consultation with their Major Professor, the candidate will develop a dissertation research plan and form a Dissertation Committee. The student should work with the Major Professor to put together a dissertation proposal committee that consists of at least 3 UWM graduate faculty and at least three CBHP faculty members, including their Major Professor. The CBHP Major Professor will serve as the chairperson of the committee. It is the student's responsibility to formally ask faculty members to serve on their proposal committee.

K. CBHP PhD Proposing a Dissertation

Once the committee is formed, the student submits a written dissertation proposal to be reviewed and formally approved by the committee. The proposal must clearly outline the student's plan for completing an original piece of research that is substantial enough for a dissertation. Typically, the proposal includes the theoretical framework, a brief integrated summary of the most relevant research, the questions/hypotheses, the research design and methods, including the proposed analyses. The review and approval process will include a formal presentation to the committee. It is up to the committee to determine what is sufficiently substantial for a dissertation project. They typically make suggestions for improvements during the proposal meeting. To summarize, the guidelines for the proposal and proposal meeting are as follows:

1. The student discusses research ideas with Major Professor
2. The student writes a one page abstract to be distributed to potential committee members
3. The student selects a proposal committee with input from the Major Professor
4. The student completes a proposal (between 30-50 double spaced pages).
5. The student works with the Major Professor to schedule a proposal hearing.

6. The student provides the committee with the proposal at least 2 weeks prior to the proposal hearing.
7. Only the student and committee members attend the proposal.
8. The student's oral presentation should be no more than 45 minutes and typically includes 30 to 60 minutes of discussion.
9. Following the presentation and discussion, committee members convene to determine the readiness of the proposal and recommend changes to the student.
10. The entire meeting should be no more than 120 minutes.
11. The committee may require a second proposal meeting if substantive modifications in the proposal are necessary.

Following approval by the proposal committee, the student works to complete the dissertation. Successful completion of the dissertation is the culminating step of doctoral studies. The dissertation defense is the student's opportunity to present their work to their Doctoral Committee. The Doctoral Dissertation Defense Committee must have at least five members, three of whom must be full time faculty in CBHP. One of the five can be from outside UWM. The student is responsible for putting together this committee, in consultation with their primary Major Professor.

The online system for moving through the formal process of documenting the committee composition and the defense can be found [here](#).

L. CBHP PhD Defending the Dissertation

Once the dissertation research and write up has been completed, the candidate submits the original work to their committee for review. In addition to the written dissertation (as outlined in Table 1 and 2 for two types of dissertations below), the candidate must orally defend the dissertation document, including the theoretical framework, the research design and methods, the analyses and the conclusion.

Important steps leading up to the dissertation defense are as follows:

1. Student should apply for graduation at the beginning of the term in which they plan to defend.
2. The student submits a one-page abstract of the Dissertation to the ZCPH Graduate Program Advisor two weeks prior to defense date. The Graduate Program Advisor distributes the abstract to faculty, students and staff.
3. The doctoral committee chair signs the Dissertation Defense Form at least 3 weeks prior to the oral defense indicating approval of the dissertation for presentation.
4. The form is submitted to the CBHP lead and the Graduate Program Advisor.
5. Electronic copies of the dissertation are distributed to committee members at least two weeks prior to the anticipated defense date.

6. Student should make hard copies upon request from individual faculty members.

The dissertation defense will be publicly announced and open to the ZCPH academic community. Faculty, staff, other students, and guests are invited:

- The Defense is scheduled for 2 hours.
- Following the Defense (about 90 minutes), the doctoral committee convenes without the student present to assess the student's dissertation research.
- The outcome of the defense is based on the majority vote.
- The doctoral committee may require modifications of the dissertation following the examination and before final approval.
- If the doctoral committee does not “pass” the student at the defense, they may:
 - Defer and request revisions to the dissertation document,
 - Defer and request revisions to the dissertation research,
 - Defer and reschedule another defense
 - Fail the student and terminate them from the program.

Once the committee has formally approved the dissertation document and the oral defense, and the lead of the CBHP Program has certified completion of all requirements, the candidate is awarded the PhD in Public Health with a Concentration in Community and Behavioral Health Promotion.

M. CBHP PhD Dissertation Formatting

For information about dissertation formatting, please visit the UWM Graduate School [here](#).

Table 1. Requirements for the traditional style dissertation.		
Part	Chapter	Content
I		Qualifying Pages Title Page Follow the formatting requirements of the UWM graduate school which can be found on their website. http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/thesis-dissertation-formatting/
		Main Text
II	1	Introduction
	2	Literature Review
	3	Methods
	4	Results of the dissertation
	5	Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations
III		References/ Bibliography
		Appendices Title Page
		Appendix Sections (i.e., instruments, etc.; if applicable)
IV		CV

Table 2. Requirements for the manuscript style dissertation.		
Part	Chapter	Content
I		Preliminary Pages Title Page Follow the formatting requirements of the UWM graduateschool which can be found on their website. http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/thesis-dissertation-formatting/
		Main Text
II	1	Introduction including theoretical framework
	2	First manuscript
	3	Second Manuscript
	4	Third manuscript
	5	Integrated Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations
III		References/Bibliography
		Appendices Title Page
		Appendix Sections (i.e., instruments, etc.; if applicable)
IV		CV

Section IV: PhD Program in Public Health, Concentration in Biostatistics (BIO)

The program did not admit students to the Concentration in Biostatistics for the 2024 - 2025 academic year. Current students should reference the handbook for their year of admission.

Section V: PhD Program in Environmental Health Sciences (EHS)

In addition to this EHS-specific content, don't forget to review information for all Zilber College Public Health PhD programs ([Section II](#)) and [policies and procedures of the UWM Graduate School](#).

A. EHS PhD Description

The Environmental Health Sciences (EHS) doctoral program with the Joseph J. Zilber College of Public Health will train the PhD student to become a leading public health professional who will serve as an independent research scientist in a variety of settings. In addition to deep training in a specific EHS domain, the student will receive graduate level introductory training in the five major areas of public health to ensure integration into the broader public health profession.

Our faculty have a diverse expertise in the environmental health sciences covering a broad range of research domains including developmental toxicology, environmental toxicology and chemistry, and environmental epidemiology. Through these topical areas, we have public health research focused on neurodevelopment diseases, the immune system, emerging contaminants, and freshwater monitoring and quality. The EHS program through its faculty offer students an unparalleled opportunity for cross-disciplinary training in pursuit of original and cutting-edge dissertation research projects. In addition, laboratories and equipment are available across campus to promote innovative research pertaining to issues of environmental and occupational health that the student may wish to investigate. The partnership with the Milwaukee Health Department is vital to establishing programs in Milwaukee to translate research findings into prevention/intervention activities.

A graduate of our program will be able to understand and interpret the relevant literature in their field and conduct high-quality research that is judged by peer review. Through written assignments and oral presentations, the student will also become an effective communicator of their work in professional settings. Finally, the graduate will be well-positioned to collaborate with a range of professionals and communities in order to create effective societal policies. This latter objective is of particular importance as successful science is increasingly dependent on interdisciplinary teams capable of investigating complex health issues.

The PhD in EHS is 65+ credits beyond the Bachelor's degree. Coursework includes core courses as outlined below (29 credits), with at least 12 credits of electives taken from the approved list or approved by the student's advisor. The remaining credits (24) are to be taken as research credits. The core course program of study is designed for students to acquire an interdisciplinary, broad foundation in the research and practical aspects of public health. Students will also gain Environmental Health Science specific research skills and competencies that will

facilitate success in their thesis research.

Graduate credits for relevant coursework taken at other institutions with an earned letter grade of B or higher may be applied towards this total. For students entering with an advanced degree, the Admissions Committee may grant credit for relevant coursework at its discretion, but in no case will it allow more than 12 credits to be applied towards the 65 required credits needed for completion of the degree. Initially, the student's advisor will approve the course of study; however, later this task will be performed by the student's academic and/or Dissertation Committee

B. EHS PhD Competencies

1. Apply public health science theories, principles, and methods when developing and implementing public health programs and research.
2. Correlate issues of population diversity and social justice with principles of environmental and occupational health.
3. Describe the major environmental and occupational agents and their effects on human populations and the environment.
4. Describe genetic, physiologic, and environmental factors that affect susceptibility to adverse health outcomes following exposure to common hazards.
5. Explain current environmental risk assessment methods.
6. Describe approaches for detecting, preventing, and controlling environmental hazards that pose risks to human health and safety.
7. Identify the general mechanisms and/or modes of action of agents in creating an adverse response to environmental exposures via various routes and doses.
8. Develop an original hypothesis and design research studies to test it, and then conduct appropriate research and results synthesis to produce a definitive result.
9. Demonstrate acceptable skills in scientific writing and oral presentation, to both scientific audiences and the general public.
10. Demonstrate knowledge of relevant literature for a selected area of study including identification of knowledge gaps.

C. EHS PhD Curriculum and Courses

For the most updated curriculum and requirements and course listing please see the [UWM Academic Catalog for the PhD in EHS](#).

A course planning and tracking document specific to your degree program, called a "[Plan of Study](#)", can be found on the Zilber College website to help students select courses and track their progress, in collaboration with their Major Professor.

D. EHS PhD. Major Professor as Advisor & 1st Year Advisory Committee

As specified in Graduate School regulations, each student in the EHS PhD program must have a Major Professor to advise and supervise their studies. Upon admission, the student is assigned a temporary advisor; however, a permanent advisor must be selected during the Spring of first year of study. The Major Professor serves as the student's research mentor and will guide the student in course selection and research design. By the end of the fall semester of the first year in the program, the student should form a 1st year Advisory Committee in consultation with the student's Major Professor, for the purposes of conducting the qualifying exam. The 1st year Advisory Committee is comprised of the student's Major Professor plus two additional faculty members from within the Joseph J. Zilber College of Public Health. The 1st year Advisory Committee must be approved by the EHS Track Lead and members may or may not be part of this.

E. EHS PhD. Qualifying Exam

During the end of the second semester of enrollment, a student must pass a brief qualifying exam (sometimes called the end of first year exam). The duration of this exam is 90 minutes. The student gives an oral synopsis/self-evaluation of their first year in the program and describes highlights from their coursework. The 1st year Dissertation Committee then evaluates if the student has demonstrated a knowledge base in public health that was to be firmly established in the first year of coursework. A grading rubric can be requested from the student's Major Professor. The Dissertation Committee in conjunction with the student also maps any remaining coursework that needs to be completed by the end of the third year in the program. Students failing this important first exam will not be allowed to continue in the program and will forfeit any fellowships, TAsip, PAsip, or RAsip, if applicable. Students who wish to contest the decision of the 1st year Dissertation Committee are referred to the ZCPH grievances policy.

F. EHS PhD Research Credits (PH990)

The PhD in EHS requires a certain number of research credits, in concert with the expectation that apprentice-style learning from your Major Professor or other qualified faculty best supports the goal of deeply learning about research.

The student should consult with their Major Professor to make sure to plan for enrollment in sufficient credits of PH990 toward this goal. It is worthwhile to take PH990 credits as soon as schedules allow, because of the impact on tuition costs and credits allowed, which shift when the student becomes a Dissertator.

G. EHS PhD. Doctoral Committee

As early as the middle of the second year and no later than the start of the third year, the student will need to assemble a doctoral committee consisting of graduate faculty to guide studies and research. In consultation with the Major Professor, the student will select four additional members. A minimum of two committee members must be EHS program faculty (which may include the Major Professor who chairs the committee if that faculty is from EHS). This committee will also approve the dissertation proposal and serve as the doctoral examining committee for the dissertation defense.

Students must also follow the Dissertation Committee rules specified by the UWM Graduate School.

When forming the committee, the student should keep in mind that they will be working closely with its members for an extended period of time. It is important to assemble a cohesive group; choosing members with similar research methods and approaches may be just as important as choosing people with closely compatible research interests. The student's Major Professor or other mentors may provide ideas for possible committee members. The student should maintain frequent contact with their committee members, as they will be more likely to advise the student of both new developments in their field and valuable research opportunities. The student should plan on providing annual research updates for their doctoral committee at least once annually once they have reached dissertator status.

H. EHS PhD Interim Progress Meeting

We recommend that students have an Interim Progress Meeting after the Qualifying Exam and about two months prior to the scheduled Preliminary Exam. The purpose of the Interim Progress Meeting is to generally support the student prior to the Preliminary Exam, to assure that requirements are met, and that the student is on track with the dissertation proposal, and to provide guidance in the appropriate timing of the Preliminary Exam. Importantly, the Interim Progress Meeting serves as a demarcation point for the student to proceed with writing the dissertation proposal independently following this milestone. This meeting will include the chair (Major Professor) and other committee members (at the discretion of the student and Major Professor) but does not need to include the entire committee. During or before this meeting, the chair (Major Professor) will check that all course requirements are met and will verify that the student is on track for achieving the required number of research credits. This meeting will include the student giving an approximately 45 min presentation providing an overview of the current stage of the dissertation proposal planning, including specific aims, mastery of relevant literature, and general research approach, and possibly to include preliminary data. While there are no formal rubrics for this meeting, possible outcomes include a

postponement of the Preliminary Exam timing should the student need more committee support, or the scheduling of the Preliminary Exam. Following this meeting, the student will write the dissertation proposal independently without further feedback from the Major Professor or committee members.

I. EHS PhD Preliminary Examination

This examination must be taken no later than the end of the third year of study. In order to take the preliminary exam, all formal coursework must be completed with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. The student's Dissertation Committee serves as the examining committee. The preliminary examination consists of two parts: written and oral.

The written portion of the examination is designed as a grant proposal suitable for a major federal funding agency, such as NIH or NSF. This written proposal serves as the student's dissertation proposal. In keeping with the NIH/NSF grant proposal formats, the proposal must include sections for Specific Aims, Significance, and Innovation, and must include justification, feasibility, preliminary data if appropriate, research strategy, expected outcomes, and potential pitfalls and alternative explanation section headings. A strong and relevant hypothesis and/or set of research aims should be stated, and the work should show evidence of a mastery of the literature in relation to the dissertation topic area.

The dissertation proposal is to be no more than 12 pages single spaced using 0.5-inch margins, 11-point Arial font. Protection of Human subjects and Protection of vertebrate animals' sections should be included if applicable to the proposed research. Specific aims, references, human subjects, and vertebrate animal sections do not count in the 12 pages. It is recommended that students utilize a grant writing resource such as "The Grant Application Writer's Workbook" by Stephen Russell and David Morrison while developing this section. Students may also refer to a funded grant written by their PI, but the development of their proposal should be worked on independently.

The oral portion of the examination is broken into two subparts: an oral defense of the proposal and a general public health knowledge phase. The proposal phase consists of the student presenting their dissertation proposal to the examining committee. The student is evaluated on the clarity of the presentation, quality of the materials presented, and the logic and creativity of the proposal. The role of the examination committee is to evaluate both the written and oral presentations in detail, probing the student's knowledge of the dissertation topic.

In the "General Public Health Knowledge Phase" of the preliminary examination, the student will be evaluated (via oral questioning) by the Dissertation Committee to determine if the student has truly acquired public health competencies which should have been acquired by completion of the formal coursework in the EHS PhD

program.

The student must submit the written proposal to the entire committee 2 weeks prior to the scheduled oral portion of their preliminary exam. Three business days prior to the scheduled exam, the committee chair (Major Professor) will check in with committee members to evaluate whether the written proposal is satisfactory to continue to the oral defense. If the written dissertation proposal is unsatisfactory to the committee, the Major Professor will notify the student and committee that the oral portion will be postponed, and the student will have no more than one month to meet with each individual member of the committee for feedback on how to properly re-write the proposal and complete these revisions. The student will then re-submit the dissertation proposal for consideration of the committee and reschedule the oral exam portion one week later (5 weeks after the original exam date).

If the student does not successfully write a dissertation proposal and defend it and their public health knowledge during their oral exam, they will be dismissed from the program and any funding will be terminated. A student who fails the doctoral preliminary examination will be dismissed from the program. After successfully passing the preliminary examination, the candidate is to follow all Graduate School policies and procedures to log milestones of doctoral studies. Visit the Graduate School website for more information.

The assessment rubric outlines the evaluation process for the exam itself, which consists of three parts. For the first part, students write a grant proposal/dissertation proposal suitable for a major federal funding agency, such as NIH or NSF. Evaluation criteria include a strong and relevant hypothesis/research aims, mastery of the literature for the dissertation topic, solid organization of the proposal sections, clarity of writing, and overall logic and creativity of the proposal.

The Dissertation Preliminary Examination has two oral components. In the first part, the student presents the proposal to the committee. The committee uses the rubric below to evaluate the student's knowledge of discipline-specific and subject matter concepts within Environmental Health Sciences, clarity of the presentation, ability to synthesize information, originality of the proposal, and feasibility of the research.

Assessment Rubric for the Dissertation Preliminary Examination

Evaluation Criterion (Scale of 1-5)

- A score of 5 exceeds expectations
- A score of 3 meets expectations
- Anything below a score of 3 does not meet expectations
- Did the student demonstrate an integrated knowledge of Public Health?
- Did the student demonstrate knowledge of discipline specific concepts within Environmental Health Sciences as well as the subject matter in the specific

proposal?

- Did the student demonstrate good communication skills, both written and oral?
- Did the student demonstrate an ability to synthesize information clearly?
- Were the ideas put forth in the proposal original ideas that could ultimately culminate in a PhD thesis?
- Are the experiments proposed doable at UWM/Zilber College of Public Health?

J. EHS PhD Dissertator Status

Specific requirements must be completed before a doctoral student qualifies for dissertator status. A student is eligible to become a dissertator when they have:

- Completed all major and minor course requirements.
- Passed the doctoral preliminary examination.
- Submitted the dissertation topic summary or proposal hearing form to the Graduate School.
- Met residence requirements. (see above)
- Cleared incomplete and “in progress” grades/reports in non-research courses.
- Achieved a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA.
- Submitted an application for Doctoral Dissertator Status for this information to be verified and approved by the Graduate School and the graduate program representative. The form must be submitted before the next semester begins.

Specific requirements which must be completed before a doctoral student qualifies for dissertator status are described on the Graduate School [Doctoral Requirements](#) page.

K. EHS PhD Research, Dissertation, & Dissertation Defense

Doctoral students should be aware that the research component is extremely important and requires significant time allocation. The doctoral research must be of high quality and innovative. A full-time commitment is required to complete this critical component of the degree. The definition of full-time varies from advisor to advisor within the Zilber College of Public Health, but successful doctoral students in our EHS program should anticipate working long hours, including on weekends, winter intersession and summer months. Students are also expected to enroll in, and successfully complete at least 24+ hours of research credit. Six or more of these research credits must be obtained at the level of dissertator. Three credits of research per semester is the full-time credit maximum, once a student has reached dissertator status, per Graduate School Policy.

The student is to work closely with a Major Professor who will advise and supervise the student’s studies as specified in Graduate School regulations. The Major Professor

serves as the student's research mentor and will guide the student in course selection and research design. During the process of earning the EHS PhD degree, doctoral students will be expected to present their research findings at local, regional, national, and/or international meetings. Presentation at a minimum of one of these meetings is required before defending the dissertation described below. Such meetings could include but are not limited to: American Public Health Association (APHA), Society of Toxicology (SOT), and Society for Neuroscience (SFN), American Society of Microbiology (ASM), Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC), etc.

All successful doctoral students must prepare and successfully defend a dissertation reporting the results of their research. The original research findings embodied in this dissertation will be acceptable for publication in refereed journals. During the final year of study, the candidate must first present a seminar open to the general public on the thesis research. Secondly, the candidate must prepare and successfully defend their dissertation conveying the results of the project in a succinct, articulate fashion to the Dissertation Committee. A full-time student who does not pass the dissertation defense within six years of admission may be required to take another preliminary examination and be re admitted to the program.

EHS faculty use the rubric below in their evaluation process for this last milestone. The Dissertation Committee is evaluating both the oral defense and the written product. The committee assesses the student's clarity of presentation, ability to answer questions during both the public and private portions of the defense, knowledge of the subject matter, ability to synthesize information, originality of ideas, appropriateness of experiments, and clarity of writing.

Assessment Rubric for the Dissertation Defense

Evaluation Criterion (Scale of 1-5)

- A score of 5 exceeds expectations
- A score of 3 meets expectations
- Anything below a score of 3 does not meet expectations
- Did the student demonstrate an integrated knowledge of public health?
- Did the student demonstrate knowledge of discipline specific concepts within Environmental Health Sciences as well as the subject matter in the specific proposal?
- Did the student demonstrate good communication skills, both written and oral?
- Did the student demonstrate an ability to synthesize information clearly?
- Were the ideas/results put forth in the thesis original ideas with no duplication with previous studies?
- Was the science/experimental methodology presented performed appropriately?
- Will the data chapters in the thesis document be able to be converted into manuscripts, if they have not been published prior to the thesis defense?

Section VI: PhD Program in Epidemiology (EPI)

In addition to this Epidemiology-specific content, don't forget to review information for all Zilber College Public Health PhD programs ([Section II](#)) and [policies and procedures of the UWM Graduate School](#).

A. Epidemiology PhD Description

The Ph.D. in Epidemiology is the highest degree for epidemiology, preparing graduates for research careers in many settings including academia, non-governmental organizations, and public service at the state, national, and international levels. Students will be trained to conduct independent epidemiologic research in applied and academic settings, with an emphasis on the translation of epidemiologic findings into policies that promote population health, social justice and health equity. Coursework will focus on theory, quantitative and qualitative methods, community-engagement, and the intersection of epidemiologic research and public health policy. Students must complete 66 graduate credits beyond the bachelor's degree, plus an additional 9 credits dedicated toward dissertation writing and research. Completion of a high quality doctoral dissertation based on original research is a key feature of the academic program. Students' capacity to complete dissertation research will be supported by a rigorous curriculum designed to bring students to the intellectual forefront of the discipline.

B. Epidemiology PhD Competencies

1. Integrate knowledge regarding biological, behavioral, cultural, and sociopolitical mechanisms within historical contexts operating at multiple levels of causation to shape hypotheses regarding population health and health equity.
2. Critically evaluate epidemiologic theories of disease distribution and epidemiologic frameworks of causation.
3. Apply theories across multiple disciplines to frame and interpret epidemiologic research with attention to relevant policy and practice implications.
4. Critically appraise the scientific literature to identify strengths and limitations of existing methodological approaches in the field of epidemiology.
5. Design and conduct independent, interdisciplinary epidemiologic research using appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative methods and demonstrating knowledge of theory, study design, sources of bias, and other limitations to causal inference.
6. Explain the principles and methods of conducting community-engaged epidemiologic research to promote population health and health equity.
7. Develop self-reflexive and other skills for justice-oriented, ethical epidemiologic research and practice.
8. Communicate, orally and in writing, epidemiologic concepts, methods, and research findings.
9. Translate epidemiologic findings into policy recommendations and advocacy

strategies that promote population health and health equity.

C. Epidemiology PhD Curriculum and Courses

For the most updated curriculum and requirements and course listing please see the [UWM Academic Catalog for the PhD in Epidemiology](#).

A course planning and tracking document specific to your degree program, called a “[Plan of Study](#)”, can be found on the Zilber College website to help students select courses and track their progress, in collaboration with their Major Professor.

D. Epidemiology Dissertation Committee

The student, in consultation with the Major Professor, will select four additional members to form a Dissertation Committee. A minimum of two committee members must be EPI program faculty. Students must also follow the [Dissertation Committee rules specified by the UWM Graduate School](#).

E. Epidemiology PhD Major Professor as Advisor

As specified in Graduate School regulations, each student must have a Major Professor to advise and supervise their studies. During the application process, students will be asked to describe the research areas they are primarily interested in and identify faculty with whom they may potentially have shared research interests. The entering student is assigned an advisor/Major Professor at admission based on fit and focus. The Major Professor serves as the student's research mentor and will guide the student in course selection, program planning, and research design. Students may change their advisor/Major Professor if the fit and focus change over time. The Major Professor must have graduate faculty status.

F. Epidemiology PhD Preliminary Examination

Students must pass a PhD Preliminary Examination before advancement to PhD candidacy (i.e., dissertator status). The exam will consist of a single take-home exam in which students provide written answers (about 35-50 double-spaced pages) to a series of questions in reference to select epidemiologic research articles. Students will have one week (typically Monday to Monday) to complete the exam. The Doctoral Preliminary Examination Committee will select the research articles and create the exam. The questions will assess several PhD program competencies and will require students to integrate content related to 1) epidemiologic concepts and methods, 2) data analysis methods and applications to epidemiologic research, 3) applications of theory, social and environmental justice, health equity, and community engagement to epidemiologic research, and 4) policy implications of epidemiologic research. The examining committee will grade the exam and assign

either a pass, conditional pass, or fail. For a conditional pass, the examining committee will determine options for remediation including but not limited to an oral presentation or re-write of certain questions. At the discretion of the examining committee, a student who fails the preliminary exam may be allowed one additional attempt with all or part of the examination.

G. Epidemiology PhD Dissertator Status

Once students have passed their preliminary exams they will be considered in Dissertator Status, at which point they will need to enroll in three credits of PH990 until the completion of their defense.

H. Epidemiology PhD Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation research plan should include an abstract, background, outline of specific aims and hypotheses, (articulated as three distinct but related research questions), preliminary findings (if applicable), research methods proposed, public health significance of the proposed research and references. The student, in consultation with the Major Professor, will select members to form a Dissertation Committee. The composition of Dissertation Committee must be in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Graduate School. The candidate then submits a written dissertation plan to be reviewed and formally approved by the Dissertation Committee. The research plan must clearly outline the student's obligation for completing an original piece of work of sufficient quality, as determined by the committee. The review and approval process for the dissertation research plan will include a formal presentation to the committee.

I. Epidemiology PhD Dissertation Research and Defense

Upon approval of the dissertation proposal, students will proceed with an original and significant research investigation under the supervision of their Major Professor, culminating in a written dissertation. Once the approved dissertation research and write-up has been completed, the candidate will submit the original work to the committee for review. The candidate must also orally defend the dissertation in a publicly announced presentation that is open to the academic community. When the Major Professor has certified completion of all requirements, the candidate will be awarded the PhD in Epidemiology and encouraged to submit it for publication.

Section VII: Zilber College Policies

A. Withdrawal Policy

Date Approved: GPC 2/10/2015

Withdrawal is the formal termination of a student's complete registration in all courses for the semester. To simply stop attending classes does not constitute a withdrawal. Withdrawals are not accepted by telephone. The student must fill out a withdrawal form or send a letter by certified mail to give notice to the Zilber College and Graduate School of the withdrawal.

The postmark date or the date the withdrawal form is received by the Graduate School becomes the effective date. This date determines the amount of fee/tuition that will be assessed. Check the [UWM Web site](#) for withdrawal deadlines and to determine the effect of withdrawal on your fees.

Students may withdraw after the deadline only for reasons other than academic difficulty. The student must first submit a [Request for Exception](#) to the Graduate Advisor. If the request for withdrawal is for medical reasons, the student must supply documentation from a physician.

Withdrawals will be noted on the transcript. Withdrawals after the fourth week of classes remain on the academic record with the course number and title followed by a W symbol.

B. Reentry Policy

Date Approved: GPC 2/10/2015

If a student returns to the public health program after an absence of two or more semesters (excluding summer and UWinterIM sessions), they must apply to re-enter.

The following are requirements for re-entering students:

1. Completion of a semester's coursework within the past five years.
2. A cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher.
3. Clearance of academic and administrative holds.
4. Being within the time limit for degree completion.
5. Approval of the Track Lead.
6. A \$25 processing fee is required for re-entry.

Academic Probation

Students may be placed on probation for substandard academic performance. When placed on probation, a student will be notified by the Graduate Advisor. If the student

fails to satisfy probation requirements within one semester of being placed on probation, academic dismissal procedures may be initiated. For more information on academic probation and dismissal policies, visit [here](#).

MPH-Nutrition and Dietetics students should refer to the track-specific Handbook Addendum for more information about policies and procedures regarding academic probation.

Academic Dismissal

Zilber College programs have the right to recommend to the UWM Graduate School that an MPH or PhD student be dismissed in accordance with UWM policies and procedures.

MPH-Nutrition and Dietetics students should refer to the track-specific Handbook Addendum for more information about policies and procedures regarding academic dismissal.

Appeals

See the Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals Policy.

C. Student Feedback-Request-Response Process Policy

Date Approved: GPC 2/10/2015, PhDCC & MPHCC revised 5/1/2018, GPC revised 5/8/2018, GPC revised 2/4/2019

(Note: As of August 2024 this process is undergoing minor revisions by Zilber faculty and Student Affairs. Because the process will be largely similar, we are including the historic process in the 2024/2025 Handbook.)

Overall Statement: For graduate level academic programs to run smoothly and effectively, there needs to be a continuous flow of feedback and response between students and faculty. The goal of this feedback loop is to provide opportunities for this exchange process.

Note: This is not the only avenue for students to provide feedback to faculty; rather, this mechanism is intended as an alternative method that promotes transparency between faculty and students. Students are still encouraged to bring comments and issues forward to faculty advisors and other acceptable avenues to provide more immediate responses.

This student-faculty feedback process is coordinated by the GPC MPH/PhD Student Representatives. The following timeline outlines this process.

October

1. Students elect new leadership.

February

1. MPH Students meet as a group to gather feedback either in person or through a survey. The summary of this feedback is sent to the GPC.
2. PhD Students meet as a group to gather feedback either in person or through a survey. The summary of this feedback is sent to the GPC.

March/April

1. GPC reviews MPH and PhD feedback summaries.
2. Summaries are shared with the faculty.
3. MPH Director and GPC review faculty responses.
4. GPC shares responses with MPH and PhD students.

April

1. Faculty/Student Town Hall Meetings to discuss response with MPH Students and PhD Students (separately).
2. Town Hall meeting summaries reviewed at GPC.

May

1. MPH and PhD summaries with faculty responses and town hall feedback presented at Faculty Council meeting.

D. Graduate Student Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals Policy

Date Approved: FC 2/3/2015, GPC 8/25/2021, GPC 5/15/2023, FC 5/19/2023

I. Purpose

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Zilber College of Public Health is committed to ensuring a fair and respectful process through which students can seek resolution of complaints and/or grievances involving Zilber College representatives (i.e., faculty member, instructor, faculty body, or staff member).

II. Policy

Non-Academic Complaints

The Zilber College seeks to promote a supportive environment that values each

member of its collective body and respects the diversity that each member brings. As such, the UWM Zilber College does not tolerate harassment or discrimination based on race/ethnicity, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or other protected status designated by UWM (see UWM SAAP 5-1: Discriminatory Conduct and Consensual Relationships Policy).

If a student believes they have been the subject of discrimination or harassment by a UWM representative (faculty, staff, instructor, administrator) or student, they may discuss the matter with the Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs ("Associate Dean for ASA"), who will direct the student to appropriate resources and/or methods for resolution.

If the student's complaint pertains to the above issues, they may also choose to directly contact:

UWM's Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights
Mitchell Hall 359
3203 N. Downer Ave.
(414) 229-5923
diverse@uwm.edu

Academic Grievances

If a student believes they have been treated unfairly by a Zilber College representative with regard to an academic matter (e.g., grade, evaluation, graduation decision, scholastic standing), they may file an appeal using the process outlined below. This policy aligns with the UWM Graduate School Academic Appeals Procedure. For academic grievances related to faculty and instructors from other UWM units, please consult that unit's grievance policy. Zilber students can consult with Zilber leadership, including the Associate Dean for ASA, for guidance in this situation.

Informal Resolution to Academic Grievances

Many issues and concerns can be addressed informally. Students may reach a satisfactory resolution by speaking directly with the responsible party/body about the academic issue or concern. Ideally, the grievance process begins with a meaningful effort by the student to resolve the issue through informal discussion with the responsible faculty member, instructor, or representative of the faculty body (dissertation committee, preliminary exam committee, etc.).

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal process or is uncomfortable raising the issue with the faculty member/instructor/body, they may seek confidential guidance and consultation from their advisor (faculty or staff), program director, Faculty Chair, or Associate Dean for ASA.

Students may also choose to initiate a formal academic grievance (see Step 1 below).

Step 1: Formal Academic Grievance

A student can initiate a formal grievance by submitting a written statement to the responsible faculty member/instructor/body within 30 calendar days of the action that prompted the appeal. The student should send a copy of the grievance to the Associate Dean for ASA. The written grievance must include:

- A. A description of the specific nature of the issue, decision, or behavior
- B. The facts underlying the grievance.
- C. Any previous efforts made to address the issue.
- D. The solution sought and the rationale for the solution outlined.

The faculty member/instructor/body has 15 working days to respond in writing to the student's written grievance and should describe the reason for their decision. A copy of this response shall also be sent to the Associate Dean for ASA.

Step 2: Appeal to Zilber GPC Grievance Subcommittee

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of Step 1, the student may appeal the decision within 10 working days of receipt of the faculty member/instructor/body's written response to the grievance. Appeals should be made in writing to the Associate Dean for ASA, who will submit materials to the Zilber Graduate Program Committee (GPC) Chair to schedule a formal meeting.

Student appeals must include:

- A. A description of the specific nature of the issue, decision, or behavior.
- B. The facts underlying the grievance.
- C. Evidence of all previous efforts made to address the issue (including the written response from the responsible faculty member/instructor/body).
- D. The solution sought and the rationale for the solution outlined.

The GPC will convene a Grievance Subcommittee to address the issue and send an email to the student indicating the date and location of the meeting, as well as the timeline for review. If a member of the GPC is the faculty member responsible for the decision or behavior at issue, the faculty chair will appoint a faculty member to replace them for the meeting. The Subcommittee must take and maintain complete minutes from the appeal meeting.

The Grievance Subcommittee has 20 working days from the receipt of the grievance from the Associate Dean for ASA to respond with its determination in writing to the student's appeal. The determination must be sent via both email and certified mail to

the student, return receipt requested. The Associate Dean for ASA shall also be informed via email.

During the summer period, the Grievance Subcommittee may be comprised of an ad hoc group appointed by the Faculty Chair.

Step 3: Appeal to Dean of the UWM Graduate School

If the Step 2 decision is negative, the student may, within 10 working days from the date of notification of that decision, appeal to the Dean of the UWM Graduate School. The appeal must be made in writing and should contain the reason for the appeal, substantial evidence in support of the appeal, and the solution sought. This may be done using the Step Three Academic Appeal Form. The student should direct the appeal to the Dean of the UWM Graduate School in Mitchell Hall Room 251 (using the form linked below) and email a copy to the Zilber Associate Dean for ASA. For additional details about Step 3, students should refer to the UWM Graduate School website for timelines and policies.

Recordkeeping

The Associate Dean for ASA will maintain a record of all documentation related to Step 1, 2, and 3 student complaints and their resolution on a password-protected university server. The records will be retained for a period of seven years.

Regarding the Prevention of Retaliation

UWM's Discriminatory Conduct Policy prohibits retaliation. Retaliation is an adverse action made as a result of an individual's complaint about conduct prohibited by the University's Discriminatory Conduct Policy or participation in enforcement of this Policy. Protected activities include reporting discrimination or serving as a witness in an investigation in connection with the same. Students, staff, and faculty are thus protected from retaliation from participating in discrimination-related complaints.

III. Definitions

Associate Dean for ASA

Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs

Discrimination

UWM defines discrimination as conduct that (1) adversely affects any aspect of an individual's employment, education, or participation in activities or programs at UWM; and (2) is based on one or more characteristics of the individual that are protected under federal or state laws. Characteristics that are protected under federal or state ("protected statuses") law may include: age, ancestry, arrest or conviction record, color,

disability, gender identity/expression, genetic information, identity as a veteran, disabled veteran, or Vietnam veteran, marital status, membership in the national guard, state defense force or any other reserve component of the military forces of the United States or this state, national origin, pregnancy, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

Harassment

UWM defines discriminatory harassment as conduct that (1) is of any type (oral, written, electronic, graphic, or physical); (2) is directed towards or against a person because of the person's protected status (see the list of protected statuses above); and (3) unreasonably interferes with the individual's work, education or participation in activities or programs at UWM or creates a working or learning environment that a reasonable person would find threatening or intimidating.

GPC

Graduate Program Committee

IV. Procedures

The overarching UWM Graduate School Academic Appeals Procedure may be found [here](#).

V. Contact Information

Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs.

VI. Forms

Step Three Academic Appeal Form can be found [here](#).

E. Code of Conduct Policy

Date Approved: GPC 11/25/2014

Preamble

The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee Zilber College of Public Health is committed to fostering integrity and ethics among all of its members: students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Such an environment is built upon the honorable and ethical conduct of all Zilber College members in all context-academic, research, and professional. Zilber College expects its members to value the ethical principles underlying this Code, to conduct themselves in accordance with the Code, and to take action against any

suspected breach of the Code.

Values and Beliefs

As public health scholars, researchers, and practitioners and as members of the UWM community, we understand that:

1. Ethics are fundamental to all academic and professional activities.
2. Ethical behavior is crucial to maintaining the credibility and perceived value of our scholarship in the minds of our colleagues and the general public.
3. Academic and Professional Integrity means honesty concerning all aspects of public healthwork and studies.

Academic Conduct

Zilber College expects its members to be honest in their academic performance.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following dishonest or inappropriate behavior:

Cheating, including

1. Submitting material that is not yours as part of your course performance, such as copying from another student's exam or allowing a student to copy from your exam.
2. Using information or devices that are not allowed by the faculty, such as using formulas or data from a computer program or using unauthorized materials for a take-home exam.
3. Obtaining and using unauthorized material, such as a copy of an examination before it is given.
4. Fabricating information, such as data for a lab report.
5. Violating procedures prescribed to protect the integrity of an assignment, test, or other evaluation.
6. Collaborating with others on assignments without the faculty's consent
7. Cooperating with or helping another student to cheat.
8. Other forms of dishonest behavior, such as having another person take an examination in your place, altering exam answers and requesting the exam be discarded, or communicating with any person during an exam other than the exam proctor or faculty.

Plagiarism, including

1. Directly quoting the works of others without using quotation marks or indented format to identify them.
2. Using sources of information (published or unpublished) without identifying them.
3. Paraphrasing materials or ideas of others without identifying sources.

Allegations of academic misconduct will follow the procedures adopted by the UWM Graduate School (see, *Academic Misconduct Procedures, UWM Faculty# 1686, UWS Ch. 14.*)

Disciplinary actions will follow the procedures adopted by the UWM Graduate School (see, *Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures, UWM Faculty# 1686, UWS, Ch. 14.*)

Research Conduct

Zilber College expects its members to promote integrity in all research endeavors. Research misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following dishonest or inappropriate behavior:

1. Fabrication: Making up data or results and recording or reporting them
2. Falsification: Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record
3. Plagiarism: The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit
4. Violations of requirements for the protection of human or animal subjects, including the protocols governing the use and disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI) under the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)*.

Research misconduct does NOT include:

1. Unintentional error
2. Honest differences in the interpretation or judgment about data

Allegations of research misconduct will follow the policy adopted by the UWM Graduate School (see, *Research Misconduct Policy, UWM Faculty #1793.*)

Research Integrity: Students are encouraged to participate in UWM's "Research Integrity Professional Development Series."

Professional Conduct

In addition to the academic code of conduct, public health students are expected to demonstrate a high level of professionalism and professional integrity. This includes:

1. showing respect for a diversity of opinions, perspectives, and culture.
2. maintaining honesty and integrity in all professional endeavors.
3. collaborating with other students and with community members when appropriate.
4. behaving in a respectful and considerate manner with colleagues, peers, supervisors, research participants and community collaborators.

Professional misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following inappropriate behavior

1. Behaving toward peers, staff, faculty, collaborators in a manner that is threatening, intimidating, harassing or overtly disrespectful.
2. Violating the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This might include (1): posting education records (e.g. grades) using a student's name, student ID number or any portion of the social security number violates FERPA; (2) leaving graded exams or papers in a public space for students to pick up.
3. Violating the rights of Human Subjects. This might include: (1) disclosing of identifying information for subjects who have participated in research; (2) the improper handling of data stored on personal or UWM computers; (3) not informing the UWM IRB research activities conducted while a student at UWM.
4. Other offenses as identified by UWM's Dean of Student Life.

Professional Appearance

All public health students shall convey a positive, professional appearance as shown by their adherence of dress-code policies at their fieldwork sites and special events in order to represent the Zilber College and UWM in a professional manner. Appearance includes a person's dress, hygiene, and appropriate etiquette for the environment.

F. Student Credit Transfers Policy

Date Approved: GPC 2/10/2015, GPC revised 1/27/2020, FC 3/27/2021

Purpose

Requests for transfer of courses taken outside of UWM or before matriculating into the public health degree program require the Graduate School's Transfer Credit Evaluation Form, in addition to the Zilber SPH Course Equivalency Request Form. The requesting student should submit the Graduate Transfer Credit Evaluation Form to the Graduate School. They first determine if transfer is possible, and then the student must follow the substitution process for the Zilber SPH to make a recommendation to the Graduate School about the transfer request. An official transcript of the coursework listed on the form must be sent directly from the transfer institution to the Graduate School. Unofficial transcripts are unacceptable.

Completion of courses in the Graduate Certificate in Public Health program does not guarantee approval of substitution or transfer into the MPH program.

The maximum number of transfer credits allowable is the higher of (a) 12 semester credits or (b) 40% of the total number of credits required for graduation. Continuing Education credits (CEU's) are not eligible for transfer.

To qualify, transferrable coursework must meet the following criteria:

Graduate level, from an accredited institution.
Taken within five years of admission to the UWM degree program.
Not have been used to meet previous degree requirements.
Grade of B or better (B- is not acceptable).
Approved by the graduate program unit.

Transfer work may fit into any of the following four categories:

- UWM coursework taken as a Graduate Non-Degree student;
- UWM coursework taken as an Off-Campus Graduate student;
- Graduate-level coursework taken at another college or university; or
- UWM coursework taken while enrolled in a previous UWM graduate degree or certificate program.

The Graduate School will inform students of the final decision for transfers, and the Zilber SPH Senior Graduate Program Manager will inform students of the final decision on course substitutions and equivalency requests other than transfer classes.

PhD Student Credit Transfers

For students with a master's degree who are admitted to a Ph.D. program, the graduate credits from the master's degree may be counted toward the doctoral program by approval of the doctoral program. Graduate credits approved by the doctoral program may not exceed 50% of the total credits required for the degree.

A Graduate Transfer Credit Evaluation form is not required for these credits, however, students must still complete the Zilber SPH Course Equivalency Request Form. The doctoral program should indicate in the student's program of study that these credits were met via the master's degree.

If a course was taken prior to the course being offered by the Zilber School, beginning Fall 2011, the Zilber School Graduate Program Committee will recommend to the Graduate School that students receive transfer credits provided that the course meets all Graduate School conditions for transfer.

The transfer of other graduate credits not from a master's or other graduate-level degree may be permitted, subject to doctoral program approval, and the following Graduate School requirements:

- Coursework used toward any other degree cannot be transferred.
- Coursework must be at the graduate level.
- Coursework must be from an accredited institution.
- Coursework must have received grades of A, B, or equivalent (a B- is not acceptable).

- Coursework must have been taken within five years prior to enrollment in the doctoral program.
- Coursework cannot be used to meet the doctoral residency requirement.

The Graduate School will inform students of the final decision for transfers, and the Zilber SPH Academic Affairs Office will inform students of the final decision on course substitutions and equivalency requests other than transfer classes.

Certificate Credit Transfers

Zilber School students that have taken a UWM graduate course toward a Graduate Certificate or in another course of study must complete the Graduate School's required Transfer Credit Evaluation Form.

Policy on Credit for Non-Course-Based Prior Work

Zilber SPH does not permit credit for knowledge and skills obtained in past work or life experience. Zilber SPH does not provide opportunities to obtain credit for courses by taking an exam to demonstrate knowledge and competencies in the area, that is, there is no "testing out" of courses.

Section VIII: Procedures

A. UWM Graduate School Grading Procedures and Policies

Information regarding Academic Policies and Procedures can be found [here](#).

B. UWM F-Grade Policy

When reporting a grade of 'F,' the instructor will also report a number corresponding to the student's "week of last participation" in the course. This is the last week of the term for which there is documented evidence of the student's participation in the course.

"Documented evidence of participation" may include any work or materials received from the student, such as exams, quizzes, projects, homework, etc. Documented evidence of participation might also take the form of an attendance roster (if attendance is taken in class), an annotation by the instructor that the student was observed attending class or otherwise participating in the course on a certain date, etc. Documented evidence of participation may not take the form of simply logging into an online class without active participation.

The mechanism to report the week of last participation shall be that, when reporting an 'F' grade, the instructor will follow the 'F' with a numeral showing the student's last week of participation, such as, for example, 'F0,' 'F1,' 'F16,' and so on, with 1 equating to the first week of the course, 2 to the second, etc. A student receiving the mark of 'F0' would, therefore, be one who never attended or participated, whereas a student marked 'F16' would have completed the entire term (assuming this was a full-term course during a 16- week semester). For a six-week summer session course, the possible marks would be 'F0' – 'F6' and so on.

On official transcripts, only the mark 'F' will be reflected. The numeral for "week of last participation" will be reflected on internal, unofficial transcripts and grade reports only.

More information can be found [here](#).

C. Course Equivalency, Zilber College

A Course Equivalency is an internal Zilber College process that allows faculty to review your prior successfully completed graduate-level courses, so that you don't have to repeat a highly similar required course at Zilber/UWM. This situation is most common when students have a prior MPH or MS in a related field. Course Equivalencies become part of a student's Plan of Study, to document that requirements toward graduation have been fulfilled, but do not result in these past

credits appearing on a student's UWM transcript. The process is:

1. Examine the required courses for your PhD against your previously-completed courses to identify similar courses. Note that course equivalencies are most appropriate for master's-level courses (numbered in the 700s at the Zilber College).
2. Consult with your Major Professor for guidance on courses that are likely to be approved.
3. Obtain the syllabus for your completed course. Ideally the syllabus will list the semester and year, the number of credits, the textbook, the instructor, the course learning objectives and topics, the readings, and the assignments. Translate the syllabus into English if needed.
4. Complete the PhD Course Equivalency Approval Form.
5. Send the completed form along with the syllabus to the Professional Academic Advisor and cc your Major Professor. The Professional Academic Advisor will send your request to a recent instructor of the similar Zilber course, who will review your syllabus against the Zilber course to check that the learning objectives have been covered and will send their evaluation of whether equivalency is met.
6. Your Major Professor will have final approval of the Course Equivalency.
7. The Professional Academic Advisor will keep the completed form in your academic files at Zilber.
8. Check in with the Professional Academic Advisor to make sure that your request is moving through the approval process and is filed.

D. Credit for Non-Course-Based Prior Work and Testing Out

The Zilber College of Public Health does not currently permit credit for knowledge and skills obtained in past work or life experience. Zilber College does not provide opportunities to obtain credit for courses by taking an exam to demonstrate knowledge and competencies in the area, that is, there is no "testing out" of courses.

E. Grade Point Average (GPA)

Students will take most of their course work on a graded basis. The general quality of class performance is expressed in terms of the grade point average (GPA). The number of grade points earned in a course is computed by multiplying the points for the grade by the number of credits for which the course is offered. For example, if a student earns a B in a three-credit course, they would earn nine grade points. GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of graded credits taken. The highest possible average is 4.000 or an A in every subject.

The grade point average recorded on the official UWM transcript is based solely upon credits earned or attempted at UWM. UWM credits taken as audit or credit/no credit do not apply to the UWM GPA.

Grades or course status outcomes of **D+**, **D**, **D-**, **F+**, **F**, **E**, **I**, **PI**, **NC**, **U**, **W**, and **WR** may not be used toward meeting degree requirements. The **P** course status designation must be converted to a grade upon the completion of the course requirements.

F. Grade Reports

Following the completion of a semester, students can view their grades and print a copy of the grade report via PAWS. Students can see their grades as they are posted, but complete grade reports are typically available within two weeks from the last day of final exams.

To check the grade report, follow the steps below:

1. Log in to [PAWS](#).
2. The "Student Center" page will appear.
3. Click "Grades" under the 'Other Academic Information' dropdown.
4. Click the arrow button to the right of the dropdown.
5. Select the term and click "Continue"
6. To print a grade report, click "Print Official Grade Report" on the bottom of the page.

G. Permanent Incomplete

Refer to the Graduate School's Permanent Incomplete section on their [Academic Policies and Procedures page](#).

H. Grade Changes

Students anticipating a grade change may view their grades in PAWS daily to confirm whether a grade has been changed.

Only instructors assigned to teach a course may give or change grades for that course. The process is available online.

I. Poor Academic Standing & Dismissal from the PhD Program

Not obtaining acceptable grades in more than 3 courses at UWM (earning a letter grade of B- or lower) will result in the student being dismissed from the program. If a student receives a letter grade of unsatisfactory (U) while enrolled in research for credit, they will be dismissed from the program. If the student is receiving funding in the form of a fellowship, TAsip, PAsip, or RAsip, that funding shall be forfeited immediately.

J. Residency Requirement

All doctoral students must meet the Graduate School's [residence requirement](#). Always check with the Graduate School if there are questions regarding the requirement.

K. Time Limit

The doctoral degree must be completed within the [time limit requirement](#) set by the Graduate School.

L. Graduation

The Graduate School administers graduation for all graduate students. To graduate, meet these deadlines:

1. Apply for graduation in [PAWS](#) by the [posted deadline](#) for the semester in which the student intends to graduate. Applications do not carry forward; a student must re-apply if they did not graduate in the semester anticipated.
2. At least two weeks before the graduation ceremony date: Hold the dissertation defense.
3. Submit the final dissertation by the [posted submission deadline](#). Submission to the Graduate School must include:
 - An electronic submission of the thesis through [ProQuest ETD Administrator](#). More information on the submission process found on the [UWM ETD Web site](#).
 - Thesis & Dissertation Approval and Publishing Options Form with an original signature from the student and the Major Professor.
 - Complete the online [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#).

If any of these deadlines are not met, the student must apply and graduate in the next semester. The student will not be required to register for the next semester if they follow the [Window Graduation Dates and Deadlines](#) set by the Graduate School. The date of graduation, however, will be the next semester.

PhD students who plan to participate in commencement must review the Graduate School [Commencement Ceremony](#) page.

Graduation ceremonies are held in May and December. August graduates attend the December graduation ceremony.

About one month before graduation, all eligible degree candidates will receive a letter from the Secretary of the University's office containing the date, location, and time of the ceremony, as well as information on ordering caps and gowns. Any

questions about the commencement ceremony should be directed to the [Secretary of the University](#).

M. Diploma

Visit the Graduate School [Diploma](#) page.

If there is a hold on the record, it must be cleared before the diploma will be mailed.

N. Dean's Approval Required to Continue

Students may need the Dean's Approval to continue following substandard academic performance. For more information on the Graduate Dean's Approval Required to Continue, visit this [page](#).

O. Academic Dismissal

Zilber College programs have the right to recommend to the Graduate School that a PhD student be dismissed in accordance with [UWM policies and procedures](#).

P. Appeals

See the [Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals Policy](#).

Q. Accommodations for Disabilities

The UWM Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) provides reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities and accessibility concerns. PhD students can request accommodations through ARC. When requesting accommodations, students may be asked to provide documentation of their disability for the purpose of determining appropriate accommodations. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty of accommodations identified by ARC before the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has occurred or been recognized. Disability information is confidential and is protected under FERPA. Students can apply for accommodations through the ARC [website](#).

R. Professional and Academic Conduct

The professional and academic conduct of PhD students are governed by the Code of Conduct of the Zilber College and UWM as a whole. The UWM Student Code of Conduct/Policies are listed on the Dean of Students [page](#). The UWM Graduate School has clear policies and procedures for handling academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, cheating), including a process for appeals, detailed [here](#)

Appendix A: Forms and Downloads

A. Graduate School

More Information can be found [here](#).

B. Zilber College

More information can be found [here](#)

Appendix B: Campus Resources

An array of resources is available to support the needs of UWM graduate students. The Graduate School maintains an extensive, organized list of resources available that can be found [here](#). A select few are provided below:

A. Learning resources and support services

- [The UWM Student Success Center](#) offers a variety of academic and personal support services including peer mentoring, academic skill development, and tutoring.
- [The UWM Writing Center](#) offers one-on-one confidential writing assistance for UWM students, faculty, and staff. The Writing Center offers graduate-level peer tutoring as well as the opportunity to work with volunteer faculty consultants on writing projects.
- [The UWM Accessibility Resource Center \(ARC\)](#) offers a comprehensive array of services and accommodations for students with disabilities, as well as accessibility training for instructors.
- For students needing support with English as a second language, UWM's offers an Intensive English Program through the English Language Academy. More information can be found [here](#).

B. Technology

- University Information Technology Services (UITS) provides IT services and support to the UWM campus and community. More information can be found [here](#).

C. Campus equity and diversity

- UWM students have access to the [LGBTQ+ Resource Center](#), [Women's Resource Center](#) and several multicultural student centers including the [American Indian Student Center](#), [Black Student Cultural Center](#), [Roberto Hernandez Center](#), and the [Southeast Asian American Student Center](#).
- [The Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights](#) will investigate and help resolve complaints made by UWM students who experience discriminatory conduct.

D. Health

- To support the physical and mental health and well-being of its students, UWM offers students (who pay student segregated fees) access to the Student Health and Wellness Center (<https://uwm.edu/wellness/>) including Counseling Services and programs.
- [The UWM Food Center and Pantry](#) is available to UWM students.