Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) Program

Department of Health Care Organization and Policy
UAB School of Public Health

Academic Year
2019-2020
Dear DrPH student,

On behalf of the Department of Health Care Organization and Policy and the UAB School of Public Health, welcome to our program! You were selected to be a part of the DrPH in Health Care Organization and Policy (HCOP) because of your unique abilities, skills, and interests. The entire faculty and staff look forward to working with you over the next few years to ensure that you are provided with the tools and resources needed to help improve the lives of others through careers in public health practice and academia.

You should have received a letter welcoming you to the program and informing you of your advisor. Your advisor is ready and willing to help in the design and direction of your studies. Please make arrangements to meet with your advisor as soon as possible to discuss course planning.

In addition to using the faculty and staff as resources at the start of your program, we hope that this handbook will provide the necessary information related to the program and the department. Please review the guidebook carefully as it provides a review of policies, procedures, and resources.

We welcome you to the program and look forward to working with you! Please do not hesitate to let us know if there is anything that we can do for you.

Sincerely,

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Associate Professor and Director of DrPH Program in HCOP
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Introduction

Each student should read this guidebook carefully and is responsible for understanding and following all policies and procedures contained in it.

Introduction:
This handbook is designed to assist students in the Doctor of Public Health program in the Department of Health Care Organization and Policy (HCOP) at the UAB School of Public Health. The handbook describes the DrPH program requirements, including coursework, practicum, comprehensive examination, and doctoral dissertation.

Goal of the Program:
The DrPH degree is the highest professional degree in public health. The DrPH Program in HCOP is designed to develop public health leaders and the next generation of research faculty. Students will be exposed to complex practical challenges facing public health policy-makers and practitioners. In the program, students will develop expertise in data analysis, management, critical thinking, teaching, and the translation of research into policy and practice. This program, housed within the Department of HCOP has three concentrations (1) Health Care Organization and Policy, (2) Maternal and Child Health Policy, and (3) Outcomes Research.

Academic Requirements

Checklist
Students must complete and document the following minimum requirements in order to earn the degree of Doctor of Public Health:

- 42 course work credit hours (see curriculum planning sheet page 8)
- Written and oral examination (see Comprehensive Examination pages 11-12) (upon passing exam, see Dissertation Advisor and Committee page 12)
- Practicum (see Practicum pages. 12)
- Dissertation Proposal (see Dissertation Proposal and Candidacy pages 12-14)
- Final Dissertation to committee (Dissertation pages 14-16)
- Public dissertation defense (see Dissertation pages 14-16)
- Completion of appropriate forms and copies (see Dissertation Copies and Forms page 15)
I. **DRPH Competencies (Department Competencies Concentration-specific)**

**Health Care Organization and Policy**

MGMT 1. Apply advanced financial management concepts and methods to measure, evaluate, and improve the performance of community practice based organizations.

MGMT 2. Apply organizational theory and strategic management concepts to the effective design and operation of community practice organizations.

MGMT 3. Diagnose community level public health challenges and recommend and implement effective organizational, programmatic, and management solutions based on research findings.

**Maternal and Child Health**

MCH 1. Translate advanced research skills into policy and practice-relevant tools and techniques for the benefit of the MCH population and relevant organizations and agencies.

MCH 2. Develop approaches to policy and evaluation that enhance well-being of the MCH population and those agencies and organizations that serve the population.

MCH 3. Evaluate MCH practice in the context of leadership, research, and evaluation.

**Outcomes Research**

OR 1. Apply advanced statistical and econometrics methods to support decision analysis and outcomes research.

OR 2. Use decision analysis and computer simulation modeling to determine cost effectiveness, cost-utility, and cost benefit of clinical treatments and policy interventions.

OR 3. Communicate the ethical and political challenges of translating outcomes research into policy.
DrPH Course Prerequisites

Students without an MPH (or other master’s degree) must complete the master of public health prerequisite classes (HCO 600, EPI 600, ENH 600, HB 600, BST 601) prior to matriculation in the DrPH program. Students with non-MPH master’s degrees (i.e., MS, MSPH, MHA, etc.), may take the concentration core courses in conjunction with any prerequisites they need. Those with a non-MPH master’s degree will be exempted from PUH 695.

Students in the Health Care Organization and Policy concentration will be required to meet concentration-specific prerequisites (or their equivalent as determined by the program director and advisor). The concentration-specific prerequisites for Health Care Organization and Policy DrPH students are:

- HCO 604: Health Economics & Public Health Policy
- HCO 607: Public Health Law
- HCO 609: Needs Assessment, Program Planning and Evaluation
- HCO 670: Social and Ethical Issues in Public Health
- HCO 720: Health Insurance/Managed Care

Students in the Maternal and Child Health Policy concentration will be required to meet concentration-specific prerequisites (or their equivalent as determined by the program director and advisor). The concentration-specific prerequisites for Maternal and Child Health Policy DrPH students are:

- HCO 604: Health Economics & Public Health Policy
- HCO 605: Foundations of Maternal and Child Health: Program & Women, Children and Families
- HCO 609: Needs Assessment, Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation
- HCO 625: Advanced Leadership in MCH Part I: Introduction to Leadership
- HCO 626: Advanced Leadership in MCH Part II: Collaborative Leadership & Advocacy
- HCO 670: Ethical and Social Issues

Students in the Outcomes Research concentration will be required to meet concentration-specific prerequisites (or their equivalent as determined by the program director and advisor). The concentration-specific prerequisites for Outcomes Research DrPH students are:

- HCO 604: Health Economics & Public Health Policy
- HCO 670: Social and Ethical Issues in Public
- HCO 720: Health Insurance and Managed Care

For all students, credit hours for the MPH prerequisites and concentration-specific prerequisites do not apply towards the 42 credit hours for the degree program.

University regulations state that doctoral students cannot receive credit toward their doctoral degree for any course that was required in their master's program nor for any course that was needed to complete the credit hours required by the master's program. Courses taken in a master's program that do not fall into one of these two categories and that meet a doctoral program requirement may be considered for use as credit towards the doctoral program. It is the responsibility of the student, in conjunction with his/her advisor, to assure that all School of Public Health and University requirements which apply to this degree are met.
## DrPH Course Requirements

The DrPH program must be completed within seven years. Students who have not successfully completed their comprehensive examinations within five years will be subject to dismissal from the program. A minimum of 42 credit hours, exclusive of HCO courses 793; 796-799, are required to complete the degree. Students must complete the 9 credit hour DrPH Core, at least 12 credit hours of analytical or methodological courses; at least 15 hours of concentration-core courses; and at least 12 hours of any 700-level electives (as approved by advisor). Students must also complete the doctoral seminars (HCO 796) comprehensive examination (HCO 797), practicum (HCO 793), dissertation proposal development (HCO 798), and dissertation research (HCO 799). Other requirements include completion of GRD 717: Responsible Conduct of Research Training fall of the 3rd year and prior to candidacy.

### Curriculum Outline for each concentration is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concentration:</th>
<th>Public Health Management</th>
<th>Maternal &amp; Child Health Policy</th>
<th>Outcomes Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concentration Prerequisites:</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Required for students without MPH)&lt;br&gt;(Does not count towards the DrPH degree hours)</td>
<td>• HCO 716: Advanced Leadership &amp; Practice&lt;br&gt;• HCO 717: Seminar in Public Health Policy&lt;br&gt;• HCO 735: Grant Writing &amp; Programming Awards in Public Health&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>HCO 716: Advanced Leadership &amp; Practice&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>HCO 716: Advanced Leadership &amp; Practice&lt;br&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HCO DrPH Core (9 hours)</strong></td>
<td>• HCO 716: Advanced Leadership &amp; Practice&lt;br&gt;• HCO 717: Seminar in Public Health Policy&lt;br&gt;• HCO 735: Grant Writing &amp; Programming Awards in Public Health&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>HCO 716: Advanced Leadership &amp; Practice&lt;br&gt; • HCO 717: Seminar in Public Health Policy&lt;br&gt; • HCO 735: Grant Writing &amp; Programming Awards in Public Health&lt;br&gt;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concentration Core (9 hours)</strong></td>
<td>• HCO 706: Strategic Management &amp; Theory&lt;br&gt;• HCO 715: Finance for Health Professionals&lt;br&gt;• HCO 718: Management Concepts in Public Health Programs&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>HCO 714: Advanced Leadership &amp; Practice Seminars&lt;br&gt; • HCO 718: Management Concepts in Public Health Programs&lt;br&gt; • HCO 720: Health Insurance &amp; Managed Care&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>HCO 721: Clinical Decision Making&lt;br&gt; • HCO 727: Patient-Based Outcomes Measurement&lt;br&gt; • HCO 791: Modeling &amp; Simulation&lt;br&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>Methods Core (12 hours)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• HCO 728 Qualitative &amp; Mixed Methods Research in Public Health&lt;br&gt; • HCO 781: Research Methods and Study Design&lt;br&gt; • HCO 787 Empirical Methods for Health Research&lt;br&gt; • HCO 788 Longitudinal Methods in Health Sciences Research&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>• HCO 728 Qualitative &amp; Mixed Methods Research in Public Health&lt;br&gt; • HCO 781: Research Methods and Study Design&lt;br&gt; • HCO 787 Empirical Methods for Health Research&lt;br&gt; • HCO 788 Longitudinal Methods in Health Sciences Research&lt;br&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electives (12 hours)</strong></td>
<td>Electives (12 credit hours required), Must be 700 level &amp; may be selected from anywhere within the university with advisor approval&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>• HCO 708: Reproductive Health&lt;br&gt; • HCO 729: Immigrant Health&lt;br&gt; • HCO 772: Perinatal Health: Issues, Data &amp; Policies&lt;br&gt; • Elective course of 700 level as approved by advisor&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Electives (12 credit hours required), Must be 700 level &amp; may be selected from anywhere within the university with advisor approval&lt;br&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doctoral Seminar</strong></td>
<td>796: 2 credit hours, (1 hour in each Fall and Spring semester 1st year only)&lt;br&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>DrPH Practicum, Directed Readings, Dissertation Protocol Development &amp; Research</strong></td>
<td>• HCO 793: DrPH Practicum&lt;br&gt; • HCO 797: Directed Readings for DrPH Comprehensive Exam&lt;br&gt; • HCO 798: Dissertation Protocol Development in HCOP&lt;br&gt; • HCO 799: Dissertation Research (minimum 2 semesters)&lt;br&gt;</td>
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Other required courses (Credit hours do not apply toward DrPH degree requirements):

- **Practicum:**

  **HCO 793** DrPH Practicum in Health Care Organization and Policy (6 credit hours)
  Doctoral students are required to complete a 6 credit hour practicum working in a public health agency or organization.

- **Doctoral Seminar:**

  **HCO 796** Doctoral Seminar in Health Care Organization and Policy (2 credit hours)
  Doctoral students must register for this course in the Fall and Spring semesters of their first year in the program. Although not required after the first year, students will be encouraged to participate in events held during seminar over the duration of their time in the program.

- **Additional Course Offerings:** The university requires that students must be consecutively enrolled for a minimum of 3 credit hours per term. The following courses are offered to assist students in meeting this university requirement and program requirements.

  **HCO 797** Directed Readings for DrPH Comprehensive Exam in HCO (3 credit hours)
  Doctoral students may register for this course in the term in which they prepare for and take their comprehensive examination.

  **HCO 798** Dissertation Proposal Development in HCO (3 credit hours)
  Doctoral students are required to register for this course during the period in which they are preparing their doctoral dissertation Proposal.

  **HCO 799** Dissertation Research (3-9 credit hours)
  Doctoral students should register for this course for the terms following the approval of their doctoral proposal. Between 3 and 9 credits may be given per term, depending on the amount of time the student spends on the research and minimum credit hour requirements.

**Summary of Credit Hour Requirements:**

- Concentration core: 15
- Methods core: 15
- Electives: 12
- **Total Number of Hours:** 42 plus doctoral practicum, seminar and dissertation research hours
  (total # of hours varies by student)

**NOTE:** All DrPH students must complete a minimum requirement of 42 hours. Successful completion of the DrPH program includes HCO 793, HCO 796, HCO 797, HCO 798 and HCO 799* with varied credit hours and other required trainings as approved by advisor or program director.
Advising and Student Oversight

Advising prior to Comprehensive Examination

Upon acceptance into the doctoral program, the Director of the DrPH Program will assign each student a Faculty Advisor, based on similarity in research interests. Changes in Faculty Advisor may be made at any time upon the request of either the student or the advisor. The initial or subsequent Faculty Advisor must agree to the selection and an intra-departmental change of status form must be completed.

The DrPH Policy Committee (DPC)

The Department Chair will appoint a Director of the DrPH Program and maintain a Doctoral Policy Committee (DPC) comprised of the Director of the DrPH Program, selected faculty members, and the department’s program coordinator. The DPC will assist the Director of the DrPH Program to administer and complete tasks necessary for the successful conduct of the program.

DPC activities will include the following:

**Program Development:**
- Develop or review specific educational objectives for the DrPH program that will be cross-listed with required courses and used as the basis for the development of new courses, the revision of current courses, the revision of DrPH program course requirements, the development of comprehensive examination questions, the development of student recruitment materials, and the annual program review (Objectives will be reviewed annually by the DPC and updated as necessary),
- Maintain, update, and revise a departmental DrPH Program Policy and Procedures Manual,
- Prepare and submit necessary documents for EPC approval in regard to any curricular changes,
- Schedule and conduct, in conjunction with the annual doctoral student review, a review of the program based on developed objectives, and
- Assist with marketing of the program

**Student Admission and Review**
- Distribute all DrPH applications for DPC review,
- Schedule interviews for students considered eligible for admission,
- Advise the Director of the DrPH Program regarding admission and advisor selection decisions,
- Schedule and conduct an annual review of all doctoral students (current and new), including a review of each student’s DrPH Planning and Review Form (Appendix A: to be completed/updated by advisor prior to the review),
Comprehensive Examination

Student Requests for Comprehensive Examination

When the doctoral student has completed the 42 hours of required courses and the student and his/her advisor determines the student is prepared to take the comprehensive examination, he/she will submit a request for an examination to the DrPH Program Director. The Faculty Advisor must be in support of this request. The Faculty Advisor and student should have reviewed the student’s record prior to making a recommendation to take the examination. The program coordinator and program director will conduct a second review of the student’s academic record and determine if the student's request should be approved. If the student's request is approved, the comprehensive examination will be prepared for the student. If the student's request is denied, a new request cannot be made for 30 days or until the academic deficiencies identified have been redressed. A student must be registered for at least three hours of graduate work during the term in which the comprehensive examination is taken. The course HCO 797, Directed Readings for DrPH Comprehensive Exam in HCO, has been developed for this purpose.

Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to evaluate the student’s ability to synthesize information related to general public health, health policy, and research methodology, and to discuss these topics with a faculty committee. Students are expected to be familiar with a wide range of topics on public health, health care organization and policy, as well as research methods. Students are expected to be able to articulate a clear understanding of the general models, theories, and current issues in the field and in their specific area of interest. This will require knowledge of the scholarly literature and policy debates as they pertain to relevant issues.

The comprehensive exam consists of a 2-day written component followed by an oral examination. On Days 1 and 2 of the written exam students will have 8 hours (typically 9am-5pm) to complete their answers. A laptop will be provided, but the exam is expected to be "closed book.” Thus, accessing outside material of any kind is strictly forbidden. Students may take a short break for lunch but are encouraged to bring food, drinks, and snacks to maximize the time available for their answers.

Day 1
Part I: General Public Health (8 hours for completion)
  o 3 questions
    o Students will specify their area of interest and one question will be written on this topic of specialization. It is expected that the student will be familiar with the scholarly literature (especially as it pertains to their chosen area of interest) and be prepared to critically appraise the relevant literature.
    o Faculty will write 2 additional questions, focusing on general public health issues.

Day 2
Part II: Research Methodology (8 hours for completion)
  o 3 questions
    o Questions will be designed to assess the student’s knowledge of the material covered in the core methods courses, their understanding of research design, and their ability to describe and interpret empirical results.
Faculty will prepare the appropriate questions, one of which may ask students to critically appraise the methodology of a published article relevant to public health or health care organization and policy.

**Day 3**

**Part III: Oral examination**

- The oral component of the comprehensive examination will typically take place 1-2 weeks after the written exam.
  - A faculty committee will review the exam and meet with the student to discuss each of his or her answers from Part I and Part II.
  - Students will be given an opportunity to elaborate upon and/or amend or refine their answers during the oral component of their examination.
  - Students will be notified of his or her grade upon completion of the oral examination.

The program director will organize and administer the examination; however, a committee will be responsible for the development and grading of the examination. The student will be graded pass/no pass on each section (GPH/Methods) of the exam and will have two opportunities to pass each section of the examination. If the student does not pass the second time, he or she will be dismissed from the program.

**Practicum**

The DrPH is a professional degree designed to enhance an individual’s public health skills to an advanced level, allowing graduates to pursue careers as practicing public health professionals in leadership positions. The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), our accrediting agency, requires that each DrPH student be able to demonstrate the application and achievement of the DrPH competencies through a practicum experience in addition to course work, the comprehensive examination, written and oral presentation of the dissertation proposal, and a public final defense of the dissertation research. The practicum will enhance the overall preparation and experience of the DrPH student, allowing them to gain specific high-level skills related to the competencies. The practicum will be discipline-specific and individualized, allowing the student to work in collaboration with an academic practicum advisor and a field mentor.

More detailed information about the practicum requirements is available on the SOPH website under Current Students tab [https://www.soph.uab.edu/fieldplacements/students/practicum/overview](https://www.soph.uab.edu/fieldplacements/students/practicum/overview)

**Dissertation**

*Working closely with the HCOP program coordinator is very important when completing the dissertation Proposal and defense. Deadlines are critical!*

**Dissertation Advisor and Committee**

After the student has passed the comprehensive examination, the next step is to select a Dissertation Advisor and along with this advisor, a Dissertation Committee. The student may choose his/her current Faculty Advisor or another faculty member. The Dissertation Advisor must be an HCOP department faculty member. Requests for an exemption allowing for a Dissertation Advisor outside of the HCOP Department will be considered on a case by case basis. The Dissertation Advisor must agree to serve and,
from that point forward, will assume the role of Faculty Advisor. The Dissertation Advisor will serve as the Chair of the Dissertation Committee.

The Dissertation Committee will be composed of a minimum of five graduate faculty members. Two of the members should be from outside the Department of HCOP. Each member should be able to bring some relevant insight and expertise to guide the student. The Dean and the Associate Dean will be ex officio members of the Dissertation Committee.

The Dissertation Committee may have additional members (beyond the required five) and these additional members need not meet the above criteria. One member of the Dissertation Committee must be a methodologist with expertise relevant to the dissertation topic area, e.g. biostatistician, epidemiologist, econometrician, qualitative methodologist, etc. The chair of the Dissertation Committee and the DrPH Program Director must approve the appointment of all committee members. Once the committee is approved, the student must complete a “DrPH Dissertation Committee Form.” This form can be found at http://www.soph.uab.edu/students/studentforms. Changes in the Dissertation Committee may only be made in exceptional circumstances. The request for such changes must be submitted by the Dissertation Advisor to the Director of the DrPH Program and the Associate Dean, using the “Adjustment to Committee” form. These forms can be found at https://www.soph.uab.edu/students/studentforms. All forms must be submitted to the program coordinator.

**Dissertation Proposal**

The dissertation must be based on original research relevant to public health. Doctoral students may register for HCO 798 during the period in which they are preparing their doctoral dissertation proposal.

The doctoral candidate must submit a draft dissertation proposal including a time-frame to his/her Dissertation Advisor. The Dissertation Advisor will guide the student in preparing the final Proposal. The student is encouraged to share the dissertation proposal with faculty and other doctoral students for feedback and comment prior to completion of the final Proposal. When the Proposal is completed to the satisfaction of the Dissertation Advisor, he/she will schedule a Dissertation Committee meeting at which the student will defend her/his proposal. The student must send a memorandum along with a copy of the Proposal to each member of the Dissertation Committee at least 10 days prior to the scheduled defense. Successful acceptance of the dissertation proposal makes students eligible for admissions to Candidacy. Students should check the deadline dates before scheduling a proposal date. Deadline dates for candidacy are published on the UAB Graduate School’s website at https://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students/completing-your-degree/application-deadlines

The student must bring a written application for IRB human subjects approval to the Proposal committee meeting. A majority of the members of the Dissertation Committee must agree to accept the Proposal. If the majority of the Dissertation Committee does not accept the Proposal, it must be revised with the guidance of the Dissertation Advisor and another defense of the Proposal must be held. If only minor revisions are required and the Dissertation Committee agrees, the Dissertation Advisor may accept the Proposal on behalf of the Dissertation Committee after the minor revisions have been completed. Once the Proposal has been accepted and appropriate human subjects review board (IRB) approval is obtained, the student may proceed with his/her research. If a student decides to change his/her dissertation research topic, a new dissertation Proposal must be prepared and submitted to the Dissertation Committee for their review and acceptance before the student may start on the new research topic.
Candidacy

Acceptance of a dissertation Proposal makes the student eligible for admission to candidacy. An “Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Public Health” form and an “Admission to Candidacy Research Compliance Verification” form, found at https://www.soph.uab.edu/students/studentforms should be completed by the Dissertation Committee at the meeting in which the proposal is approved. The completed application is submitted to the Associate Dean by the program coordinator. A student must be in good academic standing and apply for candidacy at least two terms before the expected graduation. Prior to candidacy students must complete GRD 717.

Dissertation

Students may register for HCO 799 during the terms following the approval of their doctoral proposal. Between 3 and 9 credits will be given per term, depending upon the amount of time the student spends on research and minimum credit hour requirements.

The Dissertation Advisor will guide the candidate during her/his dissertation research and the preparation of the dissertation. The ongoing involvement of the other members of the Dissertation Committee is highly encouraged. With the approval of the dissertation committee, students may choose to prepare their dissertation in one of two formats: 1) The traditional dissertation option, or 2) The publication or preprint/reprint option. The requirements for each format are outlined in the SOPH DrPH Dissertation Guidelines found at https://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students/theses-dissertations/timeline. When the dissertation is completed to the satisfaction of the Dissertation Advisor, it will be circulated to the other members of the Dissertation Committee.

After the Dissertation Committee members have reviewed the dissertation the Dissertation Advisor will poll the committee to see if there is consensus that a defense should be scheduled. If the majority is not in favor of scheduling the defense, the Dissertation Advisor will guide the student in revising the dissertation. If the majority is in favor, the Dissertation Advisor will schedule a dissertation defense, at which time the student will present his/her dissertation and answer questions.

The dissertation defense will be open to the public and must be scheduled at a time that encourages attendance. The defense must be held no later than 30 days before the date of graduation. No later than two weeks prior to the defense, a memorandum and copies of the completed dissertation will be sent to each Dissertation Committee member. The program coordinator will publish the defense announcement by sending flyers to each department in the School of Public Health for posting. A copy of the memorandum will also be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Academic Services. Immediately after the defense, the Dissertation Committee will meet in private to determine if the dissertation is Accepted, Accepted with Revision (Minor or Major), or Rejected. The Dissertation Committee must unanimously accept the dissertation in order for the candidate to be recommended for a doctoral degree. The acceptance of the dissertation after Minor Revision will be delegated to the Dissertation Advisor. The acceptance of the dissertation after Major Revision must be approved by the full Dissertation Committee after another meeting with the student. In the event the dissertation is rejected by the majority of the Dissertation Committee, the student will be terminated from the program.

The student must request the “Doctor of Public Health Dissertation Approval Forms” at least 10 days prior to the final defense date. The form can be requested on-line at
http://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students and must be picked up by the student from the Graduate School, and taken to the final defense. The “Doctor of Public Health Dissertation Approval Forms” will be signed by all members of the Dissertation Committee at the completion of a successful defense. This form should be given to the program coordinator who will send to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs through Cheryl Johnson for processing to the Graduate School.

Dissertation Copies and Forms

Deadline dates for the DrPH program (last day for final defense and for submission of final version of dissertation) are published at http://www.uab.edu/graduate/deadline-dates on the UAB Graduate School’s website. Students should work closely with the Graduate School as described below.

Copies of the dissertation must be submitted to the UAB Graduate School. One error-free, unbound copy (on plain paper) of the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School on or before the due date listed for submission of the final version of dissertation. This copy should be approved by the dissertation committee chair. It should be prepared according to the guidelines stated in the DrPH Dissertation Guidelines, which are available on the UAB Graduate School web site at http://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students. The student must meet with the Graduate School representative to get appropriate guidance and approval for the dissertation format. The Graduate School sends the copy to a reader to assure compliance with all formatting standards and to assure that the document is error free. The Graduate School will return the edited copy to the student for corrections. The forms (listed below) will be completed at this time. A corrected copy (on plain paper) must be submitted to the Office of Student and Academic Services along with the edited copy returned by the reader. The Office or the reader will check the document one final time.

After making any necessary changes, the candidate must submit to the Office of Student and Academic Services two original copies of the dissertation on 100% rag bond paper. These copies will be bound and placed in the appropriate UAB library. The student may also submit additional copies to be bound for personal use. The student must pay all binding, microfilm, and copyright (optional) fees. The student must submit three original copies of the Abstract of Dissertation, a Survey of Earned Doctorates, and a Microfilm Copyright Form prior to being cleared for the awarding of the degree.

Award of Degree

Upon approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the School of Public Health and the Graduate School and payment of outstanding financial obligations to the university, the candidate will receive the degree of Doctor of Public Health (DrPH). Diplomas are issued at the end of each term. Degrees are formally awarded at commencement exercises in December and May.
Student Policies and Procedures

**Academic Performance**
For a student to maintain good academic standing, a grade point average of at least 3.20 and satisfactory performance on pass/no pass courses is required. Satisfactory performance on pass/no pass courses is defined as the earning a P grade in all course graded as P of NP.

Full-time students are expected to complete all required course work for the degree within 2 years of matriculation and are encouraged to graduate in within 5 years. The School of Public Health allows a maximum of seven years from initial matriculation to complete a DrPH degree (course work plus all other requirements). Credits older than seven years cannot be counted toward a doctoral degree. In general, retention in the school is contingent on the faculty's belief that the student is likely to complete the program in a timely fashion. A student must complete the degree requirements within specified time limits or otherwise exhibit satisfactory progress in their academic program to avoid the risk of being dismissed from the program.

**Academic Probation and Dismissal for the Program**

Strong academic performance in required coursework is essential. The following policies pertain to the academic requirements of the DrPH program in HCOP. These policies are in addition to the policies of the UAB Graduate School and/or the School of Public Health.

Students are not permitted to earn a grade of “C” or “F” in more than one course as a doctoral student at UAB. Upon earning the second “C” or “F” grade in any course as a doctoral student, dismissal from the program will occur immediately.

Students earning less than a “B” grade in any HCO class will be required to retake that class and earn at least a “B” grade in that course.

In addition to maintaining a 3.2 GPA overall, students must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average in each semester as a doctoral student to remain in good academic standing. Those students whose grade point averages fall below this level will be placed on academic probation.

Students earning any grade of NP (not pass), regardless of grade point average, will be placed on academic probation.

Students placed on academic probation will be given a “remediation plan” which will be drafted by the program director and the student’s advisor. The remediation plan will outline how the student can come off academic probation by addressing the deficiencies in their academic record. Students placed on probation in any term prior to graduation must re-establish good academic standing by earning necessary grades in a sufficient number of hours within one semester or face academic dismissal from the program.

Note: During a probation period, students should not receive "I" or "N" grades. Also, a student's academic advisor can petition, in writing, the academic dean for an extension of the probationary period.

Failure to come off academic probation within the specified time period outlined in the remediation plan (usually 1 semester) may result in dismissal from the program.
Readmission after Academic Withdrawal
Students dismissed for failing to meet scholastic or other degree requirements are considered withdrawn for academic reasons and will be considered for readmission only with a written recommendation from the faculty responsible for the program. A written statement from the student's advisor and department chair justifying a readmission decision should support the student's written petition for readmission. The statement should clearly set forth conditions that the student must meet in order to establish good academic standing and complete the degree requirements within the required time limits for the degree.

Grading System, Pass/No Pass, Incomplete and No Grades Reported
Grading in the School of Public Health is based on a 4.0 scale. The grade of A is used to indicate superior performance; B, for adequate performance; C, for minimally adequate performance. Performance below C is recorded as an F and negatively affects the student’s total quality point rating. Some classes are designated as pass/no pass courses, for which a grade of P (passing) signifies satisfactory work and the grade of NP (not passing) indicates unsatisfactory work. Temporary notations used by the school are N for no grade reported, I for incomplete. The letter N denotes late or no submission of a grade by the instructor. An “I” may be requested by a student and submitted at the instructor's discretion, to indicate that a student has performed satisfactorily in the course but due to unforeseen circumstances has been unable to complete requirements. Students requesting consideration for an I grade must discuss with the instructor and agree upon a schedule for completing all course requirements and submit the "Request for Incomplete Grade Form". If no permanent grade is reported by the end of the following term, the I or N grade will automatically convert to an F. Extension of I grades may be granted only upon written request of the instructor to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Cumulative Credits and Grade Point Average
Semester Hours Earned: The student's "semester hours earned" are increased by:
1. earning a grade of C or better in a course for which the student was registered on a regular (letter grade) basis, or
2. obtaining the P grade in a course taken on a pass/no pass basis

Semester Hours Attempted: The student's "semester hours attempted" are increased by:
1. receiving an A, B, C or F in a course for which the student was registered on a regular basis, or
2. receiving an NP grade in a course taken on a pass/no pass basis.

Quality Points: Four quality points are awarded for each semester hour for which the student receives a grade of A, three quality points are awarded for each semester hour in which a B is earned, and two quality points are awarded for each semester hour in which a C is earned. No quality points are earned for P grades.

Grade Point Average: The grade point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the total quality points awarded by the semester hours attempted. The transcript will show cumulative GPA's for students who have completed previous graduate work at UAB and those students who are enrolled in dual programs; however, to determine the student's current academic status the GPA for each program will be calculated separately by each program.

Request for "I" Incomplete Grade
The UAB Incomplete Grade Policy states that a temporary grade notation of "I" for incomplete may be requested by the student prior to the end of the term and submitted at the course master's discretion due to unforeseen circumstances that effect the student's ability to complete course requirements. Students requesting consideration of an "I" grade must discuss with the course instructor, and agree upon a plan and a schedule for, completion of course requirements. It is the student’s
responsibility to initiate this discussion, assure completion of the "I" request form and return it to the Office of Student and Academic Services. If no permanent grade is reported by the end of the subsequent term, an "F" will be automatically assigned to replace the "I". Extension of "I" grades may be granted only upon written request of the course instructor to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

**Transfer of Credit**
This policy pertains to transfer of credit from other universities, course work taken in other graduate degree programs or course work taken at the UAB School of Public Health as a non-degree seeking student.

Previously earned graduate credit (up to 12 semester hours) that has not been applied toward another degree is eligible for transfer into the student's current degree program if the following criteria are met:
- An official transcript showing the course work must be on file.
- Course content information must be provided to determine comparability.
- The course(s) must be at the graduate level.
- The course(s) must not have been used to complete another degree.
- No grades below "B" will be acceptable.

All transfers must be initiated by the student through the Office of Student and Academic Services and require the approval of the advisor, department chair, and academic dean. Transfer of credit, including non-degree credit, cannot take place until one term of course work toward a degree has been completed and/or until probationary status has been removed. Once the transfer of credit has been accepted, it will NOT be included in the grade point average (GPA) calculation in the student's current program.

**Course Waiver**
A course waiver indicates that a course was completed, most likely as part of another degree, but it is felt by the student in consultation with his/her advisor that the student has sufficient knowledge in a particular area and is not required to complete a course that would be redundant. In the case of "core" courses, the core instructor must determine if the student can waive the course. A waiver request must be accompanied by a written explanation for the request as well as a copy of a syllabus or course description. Receiving a waiver of a required class does not remove the obligation to earn sufficient credit hours as required for the degree. The deficit in credit hours due to course waivers must be made up by determining course options in consultation with the advisor.

**Procedure for Grade Appeal**
The only legitimate bases for appealing a grade assigned for School of Public Health courses are:
- a belief that an error was made in the determination of the grade; and
- a belief that a grade was arrived at unfairly or on the basis of inconsistent application among students of the stated evaluation standards.

Should a student believe that either of these circumstances applied and that an appeal is warranted, the following procedures are to be followed:
1. Clarification should be sought from the course instructor in an attempt to resolve the disagreement without further appeal.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved in consultation with the course instructor, the student may submit a written appeal to the Academic Dean requesting consideration of the appeal. This request should include a description of the basis for the appeal and the failed attempt to resolve it with the
Upon receipt of such a request, the Academic Dean will bear responsibility to solicit information relevant to the situation from the student and the course instructor, and on the basis of that information to make a determination for or against the appeal. If in the judgment of the Academic Dean there is a legitimate basis for the appeal, the chair of the course instructor's department will ensure that the assigned grade is appropriately changed.

3. If the Academic Dean determines that there is an insufficient basis for a grade change and rules against the appeal, the student may submit a final written appeal to the Academic Dean requesting him or her to convene a panel of three faculty and one student to consider the appeal and make a recommendation to him or her on its disposition. Similarly, if the Academic Dean rules for the appeal, the Instructor may appeal the decision by going through the same process. Based on the recommendation of the panel, the Dean will issue a decision. This decision will be final.

4. Appeals of grades in courses taken outside the School of Public Health will be handled according to the policies and procedures of the schools within which the courses reside. Final disposition of grade appeals for courses in Graduate School programs resides with the Dean of the Graduate School.

**UAB School of Public Health Honor Code**

As a student in the School of Public Health, you are subject to the SOPH Honor Code (found at https://www.soph.uab.edu/school-public-health-student-handbook). You are responsible to understand the contents of the Honor Code and to abide by it. Violations of the Honor Code will potentially result in immediate dismissal from the program.

**Changes and additions to this handbook and to the UAB School of Public Health Student Handbook**

The UAB School of Public Health Department of HCOP reserves the right to change the policies, curricula, or any other matter in this handbook without prior notices. Students will be notified of major changes as soon as possible after they are decided. In addition, students are encouraged to review the UAB School of Public Health Student Handbook and the UAB Graduate School webpage for changes.

UAB Graduate School
http://www.uab.edu/graduate/