

2016-17
PhD ACADEMIC PRODECURES
HANDBOOK



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Introduction

This Environmental Health Sciences (EHS) PhD Handbook is intended to be supplemental to the UAB Graduate Student Handbook. All EHS PhD students are required to familiarize themselves with and understand the policies and deadlines outlined in this Departmental Handbook as well as the policies and deadlines outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook found online at: http://www.uab.edu/graduate/images/acrobat/forms/UAB_Grad_Handbook.pdf.

The PhD program in Environmental Health Sciences is a full-time program that prepares scientists for careers in one of two foci: Environmental Health Sciences and Industrial Hygiene (IH). The PhD program in Environmental Health Sciences prepares scientists for careers in research, environmental program management, and policy analysis. Education and research in the identification, evaluation, and control of hazards to human health are emphasized in this program. Students may concentrate on a wide variety of areas including exposure assessment, toxicology, environmental chemistry, air and water pollution, risk assessment and management, and environmental justice. Graduates are qualified to assume upper-level positions in the public or private sector in management, teaching, research, or consulting. Graduates are particularly qualified for teaching or research positions in academic institutions that require sound research training. The PhD in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences is an academic research degree. In addition to understanding the advanced concepts of environmental health sciences, as they are related to environmental health and toxicology, graduates of this program are expected to develop skills that will enable them to identify and define questions of environmental health importance, design research studies to address these questions, and to complete a program of research that demonstrates abilities as an independent investigator.

The PhD program in Industrial Hygiene prepares scientists for careers in research, environmental program management, and policy analysis. Education and research in the identification, evaluation, and control of hazards to human health are emphasized in this program. Students may concentrate on a wide variety of areas including exposure assessment, environmental chemistry, non-point source water pollution, risk assessment and management, and industrial hygiene. Graduates are qualified to assume upper-level positions in the public or private sector in management, teaching, research, or consulting. Graduates are particularly qualified for teaching or research positions in academic institutions that require sound research training.

The Department's Academic Procedures handout is meant to be a supplement to the School catalog and is intended to explain the policies and procedures particular to our department and the degrees we offer. Each student should access and become familiar with the UAB School of Public Health Catalog, online at <https://www.soph.uab.edu/catalog-2015-2016>. This describes the policies of the School, i.e., admissions, academic practices, etc. Additional University policies are found in the UAB Graduate School Catalog which is available online at <http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/>. The first section of the Procedures covers subjects common to the department as a whole. The subsequent sections deal with subjects pertaining to particular degree tracks. These procedures may not satisfactorily address all possible circumstances; therefore, if the need arises, the procedures may be amended during the academic year. A copy of amendments will be provided to all EHS faculty, staff, and students.

Mission of the UAB School of Public Health

The mission of the School of Public Health is to create, disseminate, and apply scientific knowledge to improve public health and well-being in Alabama and beyond by nurturing a diverse community of outstanding scholars. Because of its inherent breadth, public health is comprised of many disciplines. Thus the school achieves its mission by bringing the various disciplines together to educate individuals who will be working to prevent disease and improve the health of the school's constituent populations. These individuals include experienced public health and other health professionals, undergraduates with education backgrounds in the sciences, and persons from developing countries with health-related backgrounds. An implicit part of this mission is a commitment to increase and validate, through research and practice, the body of knowledge upon which the school's educational programs are necessarily based.

The goal of the curriculum at the UAB School of Public Health is to combine innovative teaching methods with hands-on, community-based experience to give students the depth of expertise required of the public health professional in the 21st century.

Environmental Health Sciences Foci

The Department of Environmental Health Sciences focuses on understanding the causes, mechanisms, and consequences of environmental and occupational hazards, as well as the prevention and management of these hazards.

The department has two main areas:

Environmental Toxicology

Occupational and Environmental Health

Environmental Toxicology focuses on the areas of toxicant exposure and human disease, and gene-environment interactions. It develops and uses model biological systems to determine the mechanisms through which exposure to environmental toxicants alters gene expression, and, how natural variation in gene expression causes altered susceptibility to environmental toxicants.

Occupational and Environmental Health focuses on the identification and assessment of human health threats; on the prevention of disease and injury related to occupational and environmental agents; and, on the promotion of health among workers, individuals and communities. This includes studies in Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) and Industrial Hygiene (IH).

The Department of Environmental Health Sciences offers MPH, MSPH, and PhD degree programs.

Environmental Health Science Competencies

CEPH requires competencies be identified for each degree program and area of specialization within the program. Below are the departmental competencies for the PhD program. The competencies that guide the development of specific specializations are listed under the individual programs.

General ENH PhD Competencies

- PHD-ENH 1: Comprehensively describe critical factors of exposure assessment studies.
- PHD-ENH 2: Comprehensively explain how environmental factors impact human health.
- PHD-ENH 3: Evaluate approaches for assessing environmental hazards.
- PHD-ENH 4: Employ risk assessment approaches.
- PHD-ENH 5: Communicate scientific information in public and professional venues.
- PHD-ENH 6: Demonstrate ethics in research practice, human subjects and animals.
- PHD-ENH 7: Conduct a literature review on an ENH topic.
- PHD-ENH 8: Write a research proposal appropriate for degree.
- PHD-ENH 9: Perform supervised research appropriate for degree.
- PHD-ENH 10: Write a manuscript for a peer-reviewed journal based on own research.
- PHD-ENH 11: Defend original research to dissertation committee.

Environmental Toxicology focus

All General ENH PHD Competencies, plus:

- PHD-ENH 12: Demonstrate practical knowledge of environmental regulations.
- PHD-ENH 13: Comprehensively describe issues of environmental justice and impacts on health

Industrial Hygiene focus:

All General ENH PHD Competencies, plus:

- PHD-ENH 14: Apply fundamental concepts of industrial hygiene theory and practice.
- PHD-ENH 15: Demonstrate proficiency in industrial and occupational exposures and controls

Environmental Health Sciences Faculty and Staff

Faculty and Staff Contact Information

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|--|---|
| Bardhan, Rupkatha | 934-7074 | RPHB 629 | rupkatha@uab.edu | Graduate Student Trainee |
| Brown, Julie | 975-8075 | RPHB 227B | jebrown@uab.edu | Coordinators, Graduate Academic Programs |
| Crawford, Shaun | 934-6208 | RPHB 530A | crawfish@uab.edu | Instructor |
| Dickinson, Dale | 975-7493 | RPHB 524C | dadickin@uab.edu | Associate Professor and MPH Program Director |
| Harvard, Ginny | 975-7032 | RPHB 534A | ginnyd@uab.edu | Financial Associate |
| Fanucchi, Michelle | 934-7230 | RPHB 534C | fanucchi@uab.edu | Associate Professor |
| Holt, Paulisha | 934-7178 | RPHB 520A | pholt@uab.edu | Program Manager 1 |
| Holladay, Allyn | 934-7209 | RPHB 520C | allynh@uab.edu | Continuing Education Director |
| Iles, Karen | 975-9691 | AB 719A | kiles@uab.edu | Associate Professor & Director of the Conflict of Interest Review Board |
| Judd, Gabe | 934-2740 | RPHB 524A | gjudd@uab.edu | Research Engineer/EHS Safety Director |
| Kavouras, Illias | 934-6089 | RPHB 524B | kavouras@uab.edu | Associate Professor and MSPH & PhD Programs Director |
| Lungu, Claudiu | 934-2072 | RPHB 520B | clungu@uab.edu | Associate Professor Director, ERC |
| Morris, Phyllis | 934-6080 | RPHB 530 | pmmorris@uab.edu | Office Services Specialist III |
| Oestenstad, Kent | | | oestk@uab.edu | Adjunct Professor |
| Robertson, Leigh-Anne | 975-7743 | RPHB 623 | leighrob@uab.edu | Business Officer 1 |
| Wilson, Laura | 934-7178 | RPHB 520D | wilson75@uab.edu | Program Coordinator |
| Yaba, Azad | 996-0293 | RPHB 623C | ayaba@uab.edu | Financial Associate |

Faculty Research Interests

Shaun A. Crawford, PhD, CIH, Instructor. Research interests include environmental assessments, hazard assessment and risk analysis, in both environmental and industrial settings. Provides scientific expertise to environmental films and serves as an expert witness in litigation.

crawfish@uab.edu



Dale A. Dickinson, PhD, Associate Professor and MPH Program Director. Molecular mechanisms of the adaptive response to environmental toxicants and pollutants; mechanism of action of naturally occurring compounds; environmental justice; development and implementation of reflective pedagogies to enhance public health education. dadickin@uab.edu



Michelle V. Fanucchi, PhD, Associate Professor and UAB Ombudsperson. Environmental justice and community-based participatory research; childhood lung disease and its etiology; pulmonary cell biology and toxicology of air pollutants, including particulates, ozone, chlorine and various polyaromatic hydrocarbons; and cell-to-cell interactions in the developing lung as well as in repair after lung injury and disease in children. fanucchi@uab.edu



Karen E. Iles, PhD, Associate Professor and Director, Office of Conflict of Interest Review Board. Research interests include nutrient regulation of gene expression; toxicology; type II diabetes; integration of technology in research administration. kiles@uab.edu



Ilias G. Kavouras, PhD, Associate Professor and MPSH & PhD Programs Director. Health impacts of PM_{2.5} and ozone; organic aerosol characterization; atmospheric chemistry; exposure assessments; climate-sensitive (droughts, fires and weather extremes) phenomena and human health. kavouras@uab.edu



Claudiu T. Lungu, PhD, Associate Professor and Director of the Deep South Center. Evaluation of adsorption characteristics of granular activated carbon and activated carbon fibers used in respiratory protection, protective clothing and environmental remediation applications. Use of carbon nanotubes in air sampling devices. Design of new respirators using 3D scanning and rapid prototyping technology. Measurement and evaluation of VOC exposure in various workplaces; VOC emissions from building materials; Exposure to ionizing radiation. clungu@uab.edu



R. Kent Oestenstad, PhD, Adjunct Professor. Evaluation of respirator effectiveness, respirator performance modeling; aerosol measurement, aerosol behavior and health effects; noise exposure and hearing loss, and occupational safety. oestensk@uab.edu



Information for Secondary and Emeritus Faculty can be found on the department's webpage
<http://www.soph.uab.edu/ehs/faculty>

Departmental Information

General Information

Fax Machine

The department has a fax machine (205-975-6341) located in room 530. The fax machine is for the business use of faculty and staff of the department. The charge for sending a personal domestic fax is \$3 for the first page plus \$1 for each additional page and a personal international fax is \$5 for the first page plus \$1 for each additional page.

Telephones

A phone is available for student use in the Ryals Building first floor lobby. Students may use department phones for official use when approved by one of the department's faculty or staff.

Lab Access

While in the research phase of study, it may be necessary for a student to have a key for lab access. The student should contact his/her advisor who will in turn generate a request for the student to obtain a key. Presently, UAB Key Control requires a deposit of \$1 per key when the key is picked up. The money is refunded when you return the key to Key Control.

Reference Materials

Students are welcomed to use books and journals located in the department. Check with each faculty member before looking for, or borrowing, any materials from his office as each has his own "check-out" procedures. The department maintains several journal subscriptions, as well as departmental copies of theses and dissertations and other reference materials, presently in the back hall. These references can be "checked-out", but are not to be removed from the building.

Reserving Conference and Class Rooms and Equipment

Conference and class rooms and equipment (e.g. pointer, laptop) are to be reserved on-line through [25 Live](#) room reservation system. Phyllis Morris is also available to help students reserve rooms.

SOPH Addresses

Department Mailing Address

Department of Environmental Health Sciences
RPHB 530
1720 – 2nd Avenue South
Birmingham, Alabama 35294-0022

Department Web Site

For other departmental information and news please access our website at:
<http://www.soph.uab.edu/ehs>

School of Public Health Physical Address

UAB School of Public Health
Ryals Public Health Building 530
1665 University Blvd
Birmingham, Alabama 35294-0022

School of Public Health Web Site

For other student information please access the school's website at:
<http://www.soph.uab.edu>

SOPH OSAS Information

Dean's Office:

Max Michael, M.D. (205/975-7742) is Dean of the School of Public Health.

OSAS – The Office of Student and Academic Services:

Peter M. Ginter, Ph.D. (205/975-8970) is Associate Dean for Graduate Education
pginter@uab.edu

Cheryl Johnson (205/934-4993) is Director of Academic Accountability Services and is the Dean's Office contact for questions concerning courses, student record updates, policies and procedures – clynnj@uab.edu

OSAS Departmental contacts

Front Desk & Reservations

A variety of work study students work at the front desk; job responsibilities including helping with admission, answering general questions as well as vending machine refunds and making room reservations.

Electronic message board postings

Brad Daniel is responsible for updating the lobby message board. tbdaniel@uab.edu

Admissions

Angela Sullivan (205/934-2684) is director of admission for the school. amsulli@uab.edu

Student Engagement & Internships

Kimberly Hunter (205/934-7791) is the coordinator for student engagement and for internships.
kmhunter@uab.edu

Student activities and PHSA

Kimberly Hunter is the staff advisor for the Public Health Student Association (PHSA)
kmhunter@uab.edu

UAB Financial Aid:

The UAB Office of [Student Financial Aid](#) number is (205) 934-8223.

Useful Phone Numbers

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Barnes and Noble Bookstore at UAB | 205-996-2665 |
| International Recruitment and Student Services | 205-934-3328 |
| Disability Support Services | 205-934-4205 |
| Graduate School..... | 205-934-8227 |
| Key Control..... | 205-934-3708 |
| Lister Hill Library | 205-934-2230 |
| Mervyn Sterne Library..... | 205-934-6364 |
| Student Health Services | 204-934-3580 |
| Student Housing..... | 205-996-0400 |
| UAB Parking | 205-934-3513 |
| UAB Police | 205-934-4434 |
| Emergency | 911 |

Registration Information

BLAZER ID

Every Student is required to have a BlazerID and email, as The School of Public Health and the Department of Environmental Health Sciences uses this email to disseminate information and inform of any changes in courses or scheduling. You will also need a BlazerID to register. This [link](#) will take you to BlazerID Central; from there you will be able to get answers to any questions you may have.

Banner Registration Information

All registration is done online through BlazerNET. BlazerNET is designed especially for the internal UAB community, and provides centralized access to the information and services that students, faculty and staff need on a daily basis. From there you can get up-to-date information about UAB news and events to access to class registration, financial aid, grading, policies and forms, the Oracle Finance and HRM systems and more, BlazerNET puts what you need at your fingertips.

You can log on with your BlazerID by [clicking here](#).

From there you can look up available classes. To be able to register you have to meet with your academic advisor or Ms. Julie Brown to discuss degree planning and course selection. Your RAC (Registration Access Code) must be obtained from the Student Program Director, Julie Brown. *A new RAC must be obtained each semester* in order to register for classes

PhD Graduate Program in Environmental Health Sciences

Foci for the PhD

The PhD program in Environmental Health Sciences is a full-time program that prepares scientists for careers in one of two foci: Environmental Health Sciences and Industrial Hygiene. In addition to understanding the advanced concepts of environmental health sciences as they are related to environmental health, industrial hygiene, or environmental toxicology, graduates of this program are expected to develop skills that will enable them to identify and define questions of environmental health importance, design research studies to address these questions, and to complete a program of research that demonstrates abilities as an independent investigator. Graduates are qualified to assume upper-level positions in the public or private sector in management, teaching, research, or consulting. Graduates are particularly qualified for teaching or research positions in academic institutions that require sound research training.

Selection of Area of Research and Faculty Advisor/Mentor

Upon admission to the program, a student will have a provisional advisor assigned to them.

During the first year, students may spend time working in 2-3 different laboratory rotations to learn, firsthand, various techniques and areas of research, and how to function in a laboratory or fieldwork setting. The student must discuss selected rotations with the Graduate Program Director before starting laboratory work. **By the summer between the first and second years, the student must choose a faculty mentor and research area in which to do their dissertation project.** The selection is done by mutual agreement between the student, the proposed research mentor, and the Graduate Program Director. In most instances, the student will want to have the research mentor take over the responsibility for academic advising. In order to formally change the academic advisor, the Graduate Program Director must be [notified in writing](#).

Each year a Progress Report will be required from the research mentor of each Graduate Student using the Graduate Student Annual Review Form (Appendix B; (<http://www.soph.uab.edu/files/ehs/PhD-YearlyProgressReport.PDF>)) which briefly outlines:

- The academic (coursework) progress of the student
- The research progress of the student
- Publications, presentations, scholarships and awards won by the student
- Dates of the Dissertation Advisory Committee meetings
- A brief plan for the upcoming year

Any past or current problems experienced by the student will be discussed in the Annual Review, as well as any potential remedies, which may include a series of benchmarks that the student should attain for his/her continuation in the research mentor's laboratory. These requirements should be discussed with the Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director will keep the Environmental Health Sciences Graduate Committee and the Chair, Environmental Health Sciences apprised of all

progress. To circumvent conflicts of interest, the Chair, Environmental Health Sciences, will review Annual Reports of students who have the current Graduate Program Director as their mentor.

Transfers

Transfer from one laboratory to another after rotations are completed is permissible, but must be discussed with the Graduate Program Director prior to approaching any other faculty for potential support. Approval from the Environmental Health Sciences Graduate Committee will be required and this may involve the student and the research mentor discussing the proposed change in person with the Committee. Approval will only be granted if the Committee is convinced that this is in the best interest of the student. Transfer after passing and taking the Qualifying Examination is not encouraged and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Students who transfer from another program within UAB or from another institution should be in good standing having passed all courses at the required level. Transfers require the approval of the Environmental Health Sciences Graduate Program Committee in addition to the Graduate Program Director and may be conditional on satisfactory performance.

Curriculum Requirements

The typical graduate student takes 4-5 years to complete the requirements for a PhD degree. The maximum amount of time allowed by the UAB Graduate School to complete a PhD degree is 7 years. In the first year, much of the student's time will be devoted to coursework; however, the student will also gain valuable laboratory/fieldwork research experience during research rotations. The degree planning sheets at the end of this section list typical courses of study for a doctoral student pursuing a PhD in Environmental Health Sciences with an emphasis in Environmental Health Sciences Research or Industrial Hygiene.

Special Topics and Journal Clubs

All Departmental PhD students will participate in the **Graduate Student Research Series, ENH 790 "Current Topics in Environmental Health Sciences Research"** in which students discuss relevant issues in Environmental Health. The student will also participate in a total of at least 4 semesters of journal club. In order to be considered for credit as a journal club, *the student must make a presentation*. The journal club requirement is intended to increase exposure to different areas, approaches, and techniques of Environmental Health Sciences research. Journal Clubs of the student's choosing will broaden the student's knowledge both inside and outside the student's area of thesis work and contribute to the student's ability to critically evaluate the scientific literature.

Selection of Supplementary Coursework (Electives)

Approval of additional course work should be given by the entire Dissertation Advisory Committee in addition to the mentor and the student. Practical considerations may require that the mentor (or Graduate Program Director) make the initial course selections. Committee approval of additional courses should be made by the beginning of the third year.

Departmental Seminars

All Departmental students are required to attend departmental seminars, unless there is a conflict with course times. The goals of these seminars are to serve as a learning opportunity for both students and faculty and to foster communication, collaboration, professionalism, and career development among all participants. These seminars are considered an essential part of the education of all students in Environmental Health Sciences. The department recognizes that a student may not fully understand the content of every seminar. However, the cumulative effect of all such seminars is substantial, and is an integral part of the preparation toward the future role as a professional.

Presentations at National Meetings

The presentation of original research is an important component of maturing as a researcher. Students enrolled in a PhD program are required to have presented their original research findings at least once at a relevant national or international meeting. Students are encouraged to present at meetings, including UAB Graduate Student Research Days and the SOPH Graduate Student Research Days annually starting no later than their third year; second year preferred.

Independent Funding

Students are expected, as appropriate, to seek independent funding. This can include scholarships, research awards, and travel awards. Funding opportunities should be discussed with the research mentor to ensure their relevance to the student's particular circumstances. Students must read the funding opportunity announcement carefully, and allow time for reference letters from faculty (typically the research mentor and the Graduate Program Director, although this may vary) and the preparation of the proposal.

Credit Requirements and Grade Policies

Students in the PhD program must register as graduate students for a minimum of 9 hours per fall and spring semesters and 6 hours per summer semester. Students participating in off campus research may petition the Graduate Program Director (Dr. Kavouras) to register for fewer hours. Satisfactory progress must be maintained, as determined by the Dissertation Advisory Committee.

Although all PhD students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA, additional requirements must be met for students in the Environmental Health Science PhD Program. Students who receive a grade of 'C' in a required course must retake that course the following year and receive a grade of "B" or better.

Any student who obtains an incomplete grade ("I") will have one semester to complete the requirements to obtain a grade in the course. If work is not completed in that time, the grade will automatically be changed to "F".

A student who receives two "C's or one "F" may be administratively dismissed from the Environmental Health Sciences Graduate Program. A grade of "NP" will be considered the same as an "F". Any action requiring dismissal will be decided by majority vote of the Environmental Health Sciences Graduate Committee. The Graduate Program Director will keep the Chair, Environmental Health Sciences, apprised of all recommendations.

Dissertation Advisory Committee

At the end of the second year, in consultation with the student's mentor, a Dissertation Committee must be formed to administer the Qualifying Exam and guide the student in selecting an appropriate program of advanced courses, seminars, and independent study. This program will be designed to meet the student's specific needs and satisfy EHS Program and Graduate School requirements. The student and mentor should jointly agree on the Dissertation Committee membership. This will be a permanent Dissertation Advisory Committee that must be appointed prior to initiating the procedures for admission to candidacy.

- A. All committee members must be members of the UAB Graduate Faculty. Ad hoc appointments may be made as approved by the EHS Graduate Program Director.
- B. The Dissertation Advisory Committee requires at least 5 members (6 are recommended) including the mentor. At least two members should have their primary appointment within the Department of Environmental Health Sciences, and at least two members must have their primary appointment outside the Department of Environmental Health Sciences. All committee members should bring relevant insight and expertise to guide the student.
- C. The student must notify the Graduate Program Director of the potential committee makeup prior to formal contact of these individuals and the Director must approve the committee. Once the faculty members agree to serve on the committee, the student should relay this information to the Graduate Program Director who will then submit those recommendations to the Graduate School Dean for final approval (<http://main.uab.edu/Sites/gradschool/students/current/forms/>). The Graduate School Dean, who is an *ex officio* member of all graduate student committees, is ultimately responsible for all graduate committee appointments. The Graduate School will send formal notification to approved committee members. *It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that these necessary administrative procedures are followed.*

Dissertation Advisory Committee Meetings

Frequency: The student is required to meet with his/her thesis committee at least once per year during years 2-4 in the EHS program and every 6 months after that. It is recommended that these are scheduled well in advance. At least three committee members must be present at update meetings.

Responsibility to call meetings: This is the responsibility of the mentor and the student. The dates of committee meetings will be reported on the Graduate Student Annual Review Form (Appendix A; <http://www.soph.uab.edu/files/ehs/PhD-YearlyProgressReport.PDF>) and will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Director. Reminders will be sent by the Graduate Program Director to mentors and students if they have not had committee meetings as outlined above. Failure to hold a committee meeting within one year of the previous meeting, and after sending two notices of such failure, will be cause for review of the student by the Environmental Health Sciences Graduate Committee. Continued lack of progress *may be grounds for dismissal from the program.*

Format: The student should present a brief statement of his/her progress since the last meeting and an outline of his/her proposed activities for the next six to twelve (6-12) months. Handouts are encouraged. Specific items to be reviewed should include:

1. Coursework completed since last meeting
2. Additional coursework required/planned
3. Research progress
 - a. Literature review preparation
 - b. Research techniques to be mastered
 - c. Experimental plan
 - d. Pilot studies performed
 - e. Experimental results obtained
 - f. Problems encountered

Report: The graduate student's Dissertation Advisory Committee should approve the student's proposed study plan, modified as deemed necessary. The student, in consultation with their mentor, should submit a report on each meeting to the Graduate Program Director using the Graduate Student Committee Meeting Report form (Appendix B: <http://www.soph.uab.edu/files/ehs/061510-PhDstudentmtgsform.pdf>), with attachments as necessary and listing who was present within one week of the meeting date. Any deficiencies should be carefully documented and discussed in detail with the student by the student's mentor and by the Graduate Program Director. The members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee should be sent copies of this report. Students who have selected the Graduate Program Director as their Mentor will send a copy of this report to the Chair, Environmental Health Sciences.

Qualifying Exam

All EHS PhD students are required to pass a qualifying exam prior to being considered for admission to candidacy. Students must successfully complete all department track course requirements of their chosen theme before scheduling the qualifying exam. Students should have had 1 thesis committee meeting before the qualifying exam to approve the planned topic of their thesis research. Completion of a grant-writing course before the qualifying exam is highly encouraged. Students in the Graduate Program in Environmental Health Sciences will be expected to schedule their Qualifying Exam no later than the Fall of their 3rd year. The student must pass the Qualifying Exam and be admitted to Candidacy by March 31st of their 3rd year. Failure to meet these deadlines will be considered a lack of academic progress.

The Chair of the qualifying exam should be selected by agreement of the student and mentor. Each examination committee will decide the extent to which the mentor participates in the qualifying exam. If the mentor does participate in the oral examination, it is recommended that he/she only be allowed to ask questions and not otherwise contribute to the discussion.

The qualifying examination will be composed of two separate parts: a written examination and an oral examination. The written examination will be on the topic of the student's proposed thesis research. The written proposal should follow the new NIH R01 format (one page for Specific Aims; 12 pages for Research Strategy; and a Literature Cited section). The mentor and other committee members are encouraged to provide only general guidance and advice to the student as he/she writes the proposal.

A draft of the proposal should be provided to each committee member for his/her review at least two weeks prior to the scheduled committee meeting (i.e., two weeks before the scheduled oral defense of the proposal).

It is the responsibility of the committee members to notify the student and mentor if the written proposal is unacceptable prior to the oral defense meeting. If so, the student will be allowed one attempt to revise the written proposal. If the revision is also unacceptable, the student will fail the qualifying exam.

Upon approval of the written proposal by each committee member, the student may proceed with the oral defense of the proposal before the committee.

During the oral phase of the qualifying exam, each committee member shall be given the opportunity to examine the student one at a time in order to assess the student's overall knowledge of the area on which the proposal is based, ability to state hypotheses and to use his/her knowledge to test hypotheses. Questions should also be broad-based in nature that may or may not relate to the written research proposal. Open-ended questions will be encouraged to determine the ability of the student to grasp concepts from different disciplines and areas and to assess the student's critical thinking ability.

Following the oral defense, the committee may recommend corrections to the written proposal. The student should complete the corrections and re-submit the revised proposal to the committee within one month of the defense.

If the student fails the oral defense, he/she will be allowed one more attempt to pass the oral component of the qualifying exam within two months of the initial defense. Students that fail either the written or oral components of the qualifying exam twice will be dismissed from the EHS program.

Upon successful completion of both the written proposal and oral defense, the student may apply for candidacy. It is understood that the aims of the qualifying exam proposal do not constitute a binding contract for the successful completion of the thesis project.

Admission to Candidacy

Once the student has passed the Comprehensive Qualifying Exam, the Dissertation Advisory Committee will recommend to the Graduate School dean that the student be admitted to candidacy. **It is the student's responsibility to complete the necessary documentation (<http://main.uab.edu/Sites/gradschool/students/current/forms/>), and to ensure the necessary processing of the forms.** If the research involves human or animal subjects, approval from IRB or IACUC must be documented before admission to candidacy and must be kept current until the research is completed. **The student's name must appear on the IRB approval form. The IACUC form must display the appropriate protocol number.**

The Graduate School requires that students must be admitted to candidacy for the PhD degree and complete a minimum of 2 full semesters of ENH 799 AND at least 24 semester credits hours in ENH 799 (Dissertation Research) must be completed prior to graduation.

Research

The remaining two to three years are spent in intensive research activity. During this time, the student will learn a variety of specialized laboratory/research techniques and how to interpret and evaluate data. It is anticipated that the student will mature intellectually and gain confidence designing and conducting research, discussing literature, presenting work at scientific meetings, and in publishing peer-reviewed articles.

An intensive period of original research will be performed by the student, the length of which will be decided by the Dissertation Advisory Committee. During this time the student will carry out the studies presented in the experimental plan, as presented at the Dissertation Advisory Committee meetings. Prior to the Qualifying Exam the student will register for ENH 798, Environmental Health Sciences Directed Research for the number of credit hours commensurate with his/her other responsibilities within a given term. Following the Qualifying Exam the student will be allowed to register for ENH 799, Dissertation Research.

Presentation and Defense of Dissertation

A formal dissertation document and its public defense before the dissertation committee and colleagues represent the culmination of the student's graduate career in Environmental Health Sciences.

A complete dissertation prepared according to the graduate school guidelines must be submitted to the Committee at least two weeks prior to the defense. Drafts or partially completed documents are not acceptable. The Environmental Health Sciences program accepts a dissertation in the chapter format in which distinct areas of the project are described and can be selected from publications or unpublished work. Alternatively, a dissertation may be composed of papers intended for publication or published – referred to as the preprint/reprint option. In either case an introduction describing the scope and nature of the work and a summary chapter describing future directions must be included.

At the time of the defense the student should have a minimum of one first author research paper acceptable for publication. It is important to note this is the minimum requirement and the committee has discretion in determining whether the dissertation constitutes a sufficient body of work to qualify the candidate for the final defense. It is anticipated that the typical student will have 2-3 scientific articles published arising from his/her studies towards the degree. It is recognized that this is highly dependent on the subject area and again the committee is charged to assess the performance of the student in all aspects of his/her research.

No later than 2 weeks (10 business days) before your final defense, submit the on-line request for your approval forms. (Approval forms cannot be completed before the Graduate School has received your application for degree). Fill out this form carefully. Be certain to list the correct **graduate program name** (which often differs from the academic department name). If there have been changes to your committee, these changes must be entered on the Change of Committee Form found at (<http://www.uab.edu/graduate/apply/acrobat/changecom.pdf>) before your approval forms can be completed. You will be notified via e-mail when your forms are ready to be picked up in the Graduate School office (HUC 511). Check your printed approval forms carefully for accuracy. Your name, the

names of your committee members, your program name, and the title of your thesis/dissertation must precisely match your official UAB records.

The scheduling of the public defense should be coordinated with the Department Chair's and Graduate Program Director's schedules. The final examination should take the form of a presentation and defense of the dissertation, followed by an examination of the candidate's comprehensive knowledge of the field. The time, date, and location of this examination is reported to the Graduate School via the online Request for Thesis or Dissertation Approval forms (submitted at least 10 business days before the public defense) and allows for the attendance of the Graduate School dean. The meeting must be open to all interested parties, publicized on the UAB campus, and must take place before the posted semester deadline. Candidates must be registered for at least 3 semester hours of graduate work during the semester in which the final examination is taken.

The final defense should be accomplished on a single day, with the public defense (public presentation at a seminar advertised throughout UAB) followed by the private defense (with the Dissertation Advisory Committee). At the private defense, as in the Qualifying Exam, the mentor should not contribute to the discussion unless specifically addressed by one of the other members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee. The student is advised to schedule at least two hours for the private defense.

As soon as possible after your defense, complete any changes or corrections to your manuscript that were requested by your committee and obtain signatures of all committee members and the Graduate Program Director in blue or black ink on your approval form.

No later than 2 weeks (10 business days) following your public defense, your committee approved dissertation and all applicable forms are due in the Graduate School. Please see the UAB Graduate Student Handbook for details (<http://main.uab.edu/Sites/gradschool/programs/71925/>) Upon completion of all requirements and submission of all required documents to the graduate school, a student will be recommended to the Dean of the Graduate School. Once approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, the student will be awarded the PhD in Environmental Health Sciences.

Grievances

Although rare, disagreements may arise that can affect a student's progress toward the completion of the degree. The parties involved in such a dispute should make a good faith effort to discuss and resolve the disagreement. If a resolution is not reached, the Graduate Program Director can be asked to suggest an impartial third party mediator who will respect the confidentiality of the situation.

If a resolution is still not reached, the disagreement may be brought to the Departmental Graduate Program Committee. Each party should submit a written description of the disagreements to the Departmental Graduate Program Director. Please include a description of the actions taken to resolve the dispute to date, and the name of the mediator who was involved. The EHS Graduate Program Director along with the Graduate Program Committee will review the written documents. If the Director or a member of the Committee is involved in the dispute, that individual will be excused from deliberations. The Committee may request additional information from the parties involved. The Committee will meet to discuss the problem within 10 business days following the receipt of the written

document. The result of the Committee's deliberations will be communicated in writing to the parties involved within 10 business days of the meeting.

If a party involved in the dispute is not satisfied with the outcome of the arbitration process, an appeal may be submitted to the Graduate School Appeals Board. Please refer to the Graduate School Handbook for specific information and steps for filing an appeal at the graduate level.

Foci-Specific Competencies

The PhD in the Department of Environmental Health is an academic research degree. In addition to understanding the advanced concepts of environmental health sciences, as they are related to environmental health, industrial hygiene, or environmental toxicology, graduates of this program are expected to develop skills that will enable them to identify and define questions of environmental health importance, design research studies to address these questions, and to complete a program of research that demonstrates abilities as an independent investigator. Below are the departmental competencies that guide the specific PhD specializations.

Environmental Health Sciences focus:

- PHD-ENH 1: Comprehensively describe critical factors of exposure assessment studies.
- PHD-ENH 2: Comprehensively explain how environmental factors impact human health.
- PHD-ENH 3: Evaluate approaches for assessing environmental hazards.
- PHD-ENH 4: Employ risk assessment approaches.
- PHD-ENH 5: Communicate scientific information in public and professional venues.
- PHD-ENH 6: Demonstrate ethics in research practice, human subjects and animals.
- PHD-ENH 7: Conduct a literature review on an ENH topic.
- PHD-ENH 8: Write a research proposal appropriate for degree.
- PHD-ENH 9: Perform supervised research appropriate for degree.
- PHD-ENH 10: Write a manuscript for a peer-reviewed journal based on own research.
- PHD-ENH 11: Defend original research to dissertation committee.
- PHD-ENH 12: Demonstrate practical knowledge of environmental regulations.
- PHD-ENH 13: Comprehensively describe issues of environmental justice and impacts on health

Industrial Hygiene (IH) Focus:

- PHD-ENH 1: Comprehensively describe critical factors of exposure assessment studies.
- PHD-ENH 2: Comprehensively explain how environmental factors impact human health.
- PHD-ENH 3: Evaluate approaches for assessing environmental hazards.
- PHD-ENH 4: Employ risk assessment approaches.
- PHD-ENH 5: Communicate scientific information in public and professional venues.
- PHD-ENH 6: Demonstrate ethics in research practice, human subjects and animals.
- PHD-ENH 7: Conduct a literature review on an ENH topic.
- PHD-ENH 8: Write a research proposal appropriate for degree.
- PHD-ENH 9: Perform supervised research appropriate for degree.
- PHD-ENH 10: Write a manuscript for a peer-reviewed journal based on own research.
- PHD-ENH 11: Defend original research to dissertation committee.
- PHD-ENH 14: Apply fundamental concepts of industrial hygiene theory and practice.
- PHD-ENH 15: Demonstrate proficiency in industrial and occupational exposures and controls

**Environmental Health Sciences PhD Degree without a Masters degreee
Curriculum Planning Worksheet**

| Name: | Admission Date: | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----|-----|--------------|-------------|-------|
| Banner ID: | Candidacy Date: | | | | | |
| Current GPA: | Graduation Date: | | | | | |
| Course Name | Term | | | Credit Hours | Term / Year | Grade |
| | Fall | Spr | Sum | | | |
| Core Requirements: 18 Hours | | | | | | |
| BST 611: Intermediate Statistical Analysis I (or equiv.) | C | O | | 3 | | |
| ENH 700: Scientific Basis of Environmental Health | | C | | 3 | | |
| ENH 752: Biochemical and Molecular Toxicology | | C | | 3 | | |
| ENH 770: Advanced Topics in Environmental Disasters | | C | | 3 | | |
| EPI 616: Environmental Epidemiology (or equiv.) | | | C | 3 | | |
| GRD 717: Scientific Integrity | C | C | C | 3 | | |
| Electives (15 or 6 hours)/ IH Required Courses (min 9 hours) | | | | | | |
| ENH 680: Field Interdisciplinary Studies | CO | | | 1 | | |
| ENH 681: Worksite Evaluations | | CO | | 2 | | |
| ENH 763: Aerosol Technology | | C | | 3 | | |
| ENH 701: Environmental Chemistry | | C | | 3 | | |
| Elective | CO | CO | CO | 3 | | |
| Elective | CO | CO | CO | 3 | | |
| Department Seminar (4 hours) and Journal Club (4 hours) for a total of 8 hours | | | | | | |
| Journal Club - approved by committee | C | C | | 1 | | |
| Journal Club - approved by committee | C | C | | 1 | | |
| Journal Club - approved by committee | C | C | | 1 | | |
| Journal Club - approved by committee | C | C | | 1 | | |
| ENH 790: Current Topics in Environmental Health Sciences Research | C | C | | 1 | | |
| ENH 790: Current Topics in Environmental Health Sciences Research | C | C | | 1 | | |
| ENH 790: Current Topics in Environmental Health Sciences Research | C | C | | 1 | | |
| ENH 790: Current Topics in Environmental Health Sciences Research | C | C | | 1 | | |
| Directed Research (minimum 7 hours) | | | | | | |
| ENH 798: Directed Research | C | C | C | 4 | | |
| ENH 798: Directed Research | C | C | C | 3 | | |
| Dissertation Research (min of 24 hours over the course of at least 2 semesters candidacy) | | | | | | |
| ENH 799: Dissertation Research | C | C | C | 12 | | |
| ENH 799: Dissertation Research | C | C | C | 12 | | |
| Total Credit Hours Earned for Degree | | | | 72 | | |

**Environmental Health Sciences PhD Degree Entering with MS, DVM, DMD, DDS, etc
Curriculum Planning Worksheet**

| Name: | Admission Date: | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----|-----|--------------|-------------|-------|
| Banner ID: | Candidacy Date: | | | | | |
| Current GPA: | Graduation Date: | | | | | |
| Course Name | Term | | | Credit Hours | Term / Year | Grade |
| | Fall | Spr | Sum | | | |
| Core Requirements: 18 Hours | | | | | | |
| BST 611: Intermediate Statistical Analysis I (or equiv.) | C | O | | 3 | | |
| ENH 700: Scientific Basis of Environmental Health | | C | | 3 | | |
| ENH 752: Biochemical and Molecular Toxicology | | C | | 3 | | |
| ENH 770: Advanced Topics in Environmental Disasters | | C | | 3 | | |
| EPI 616: Environmental Epidemiology (or equiv.) | | | C | 3 | | |
| GRD 717: Scientific Integrity | C | C | C | 3 | | |
| IH Required Courses (6 hours) | | | | | | |
| ENH 680: Field Interdisciplinary Studies | CO | | | 1 | | |
| ENH 681: Worksite Evaluations | | CO | | 2 | | |
| ENH 763: Aerosol Technology | | C | | 3 | | |
| Department Seminar (4 hours) and Journal Club (4 hours) for a total of 8 hours | | | | | | |
| Journal Club - approved by committee | C | C | | 1 | | |
| Journal Club - approved by committee | C | C | | 1 | | |
| Journal Club - approved by committee | C | C | | 1 | | |
| Journal Club - approved by committee | C | C | | 1 | | |
| ENH 790: Current Topics in Environmental Health Sciences Research | C | C | | 1 | | |
| ENH 790: Current Topics in Environmental Health Sciences Research | C | C | | 1 | | |
| ENH 790: Current Topics in Environmental Health Sciences Research | C | C | | 1 | | |
| ENH 790: Current Topics in Environmental Health Sciences Research | C | C | | 1 | | |
| Directed Research (minimum 3 hours) | | | | | | |
| ENH 798: Directed Research | C | C | C | 3 | | |
| Dissertation Research (min of 24 hours over the course of at least 2 semesters candidacy) | | | | | | |
| ENH 799: Dissertation Research | C | C | C | 12 | | |
| ENH 799: Dissertation Research | C | C | C | 12 | | |
| Total Credit Hours Earned for Degree | | | | 53-59 | | |

Department of Environmental Health Sciences
Mentoring Policy

Approved September 9, 2011

This EHS departmental policy clarifies the responsibilities of the faculty advisor for MSPH and PhD students and the procedure that must be followed in order to change the faculty advisor. The intention of the policy is to provide a transparent set of responsibilities and procedures that protect both student and departmental interests.

Responsibilities of the Faculty Advisor

1. Following Graduate School policy, the advisor should “confer with the student about courses and any special work to be taken on the basis of the student’s previous experience and the requirements of the graduate program.”
2. To ensure this graduate school policy is followed in a timely manner, the appointed advisor must be available to the student at least once per semester, in the month preceding course selection.
3. Within the first year of study, the student and faculty advisor should determine the broad topical interest for their thesis or dissertation project. At a minimum, the appointed faculty advisor should meet with the student once in the first year of study to determine the focus of the thesis or dissertation.
4. Once the thesis or dissertation project topic is established, the faculty advisor and student should agree upon a regular meeting schedule to ensure timely organization of a committee, preliminary examination, and defense.

A PhD student’s first year

According to the Graduate School Policies and Procedures (Sections 9 and 10, Policy 1 and 2, for MSPH and PhD level, respectively), a faculty advisor should be assigned to incoming students, and this can be a temporary assignment. As stated in the EHS student handbook, EHS PhD students complete three research rotations in their first year. By the end of their first year, the student, along with the appointed faculty advisor and Graduate Program Director will formalize the faculty advisor for the student based on the student’s interest and faculty capacity.

Procedures for changing the faculty advisor--initiated by the student

1. The student should meet with the current faculty advisor to discuss the desire to change advisors. If the change in advisor is mutually agreeable to the current faculty advisor and requested future faculty advisor, a “change in advisor form” should be submitted to the Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director can choose to approve the change directly. A denial must be reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee and the Department Chair. The final decision is made by the Graduate Program Director with input from the Graduate Program Committee and the Department Chair.
2. Alternatively, the student has the option of presenting a written request directly to the Graduate Program Director that describes the specific reasons for requesting the change. In this case, the Graduate Program Director will evaluate the request and aid the student in identifying a new faculty advisor. In addition, the Graduate Program Director will communicate with the current faculty advisor and request a written evaluation of the mentoring relationship, including a thorough account of meetings held and outcomes of those meetings. The Graduate Program Director will present the student’s request and the current faculty advisor will present his/her evaluation of the mentoring relationship to the Graduate Program Committee and Department Chair. The Graduate Program Committee and Department Chair will then provide recommendations to the Graduate Program Director, who will make the final decision.
3. If the request is approved, the Graduate Program Committee and Department Chair will then provide recommendations to the Graduate Program Director to appoint the identified new faculty advisor.

4. If the faculty advisor change request is denied or if submission of dismissal forms is approved by the Graduate Program Director in the case where a new advisor cannot be identified, the student may then request an external faculty advisory committee be formed to re-review the request. This request will be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Strategic Programs, who will lead the formation of the advisory committee and review of the request.

Procedures for changing the faculty advisor--initiated by the faculty advisor

1. The faculty advisor should meet with the student to discuss the desire to be relieved of his/her duties as the student's advisor. If the change in advisor is mutually agreeable to the student and to a requested future faculty advisor, a change in advisor should be submitted to the Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director can choose to approve the change directly. A denial must be reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee and the Department Chair. The final decision is made by the Graduate Program Director with input from the Graduate Program Committee and the Department Chair.
2. Alternatively, the faculty advisor may present a written request directly to the Graduate Program Director that describes the specific reasons for requesting the change. In this case, the Graduate Program Director will schedule a Graduate Program Committee meeting where the current faculty advisor will present his/her justification for being relieved of his/her mentoring role. The Graduate Program Director will present an evaluation of the student's progress and the student's needs in terms of mentorship. The Graduate Program Committee and Department Chair will provide recommendations to the Graduate Program Director, who will make the final decision.
3. If the request is approved, the Graduate Program Director will then work with the student to identify a new faculty advisor. If the request is denied, or the student is not in good academic standing and a new advisor cannot be identified, the Graduate Program Director shall submit dismissal forms for the student.

Appendix A: Yearly Progress Report

**Environmental Health Sciences Program
Students Yearly Progress Report
_____ Academic Year**

**To be completed by mentor and returned to Graduate Program Director
(kavouras@uab.edu) by middle August**

Students Name: _____

Date: _____

- 1. Date of Qualifying Exam and/or advancement to candidacy: (only if in the past academic year).**

- 2. Dates of committee meetings in the past academic year. Outcomes of meetings.**

- 3. Has the student been involved in other course work that is not part of our curriculum during the past academic year?**

- 4. Please list all conferences the student has attended in the past year. Include whether the presentation was oral or a poster, the date of the presentation.**

- 5. Please list all awards, fellowships or travel grants the student has received in the past academic year.**

- 6. Please list any papers the student has had published during the last academic year.**

7. Please describe the student's progress in their research for the past year. Have there been any alterations in the direction/aims of the student's project? If so, please explain.

8. Please describe any concerns/issues with the student's progress that need to be addressed.

Mentor's Name (please print) _____

Mentor's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Appendix B: Graduate Student Committee Meeting Report

Department of Environmental Health Sciences Semiannual Graduate Student Committee Meetings Suggested Committee Meeting Outline

Students may use this as a basic outline for an Advisory Committee meeting. Your Mentor or Committee Chairperson may have more specific instructions for you.

Student's Name, Meeting Date:

Committee Members Present:

Committee Members Absent:

I. What has happened since our last meeting (date of that meeting)

A. List classes you've taken, fellowships you've applied for, papers you've worked on, meetings you've attended, or classes you've taught. Discuss any impacts these things have had on your progress towards your degree.

B. Start with a brief overview of your project. Remind your committee members of the important details about your research. A short background, the overall hypothesis and the specific aims should be discussed.

C. Discuss any research gains you've made either in the lab or in the field. This is also a good time to get advice on things that aren't working in lab or in the field.

II. Future Research Directions

A. Whatever is appropriate for your work.

III. Determine timeline for the following

A. Future classes to take, conferences to attend, field trips, addition of committee members, teaching assistantships, summer workshops.

B. Interdisciplinary seminar, research seminar, written and oral exams, Master's By-Pass, Thesis or Dissertation defense.

C. In general, make sure everyone agrees about which degree you're working towards and what sorts of requirements they have for you to get it.

Department of Environmental Health Sciences Graduate Student Committee Meeting Report

Student must file this completed report form with the EHS Graduate Program Director following each Committee Meeting.

Name of Student: _____

Date/Place of Committee Meeting: _____

Committee Members Present: _____

Committee Members Absent: _____

Student's summary of this meeting (*e.g.*, progress on coursework and research, plans for future research, tentative scheduling of required examinations and seminars, comments/general recommendations of committee etc.):

EHS Graduate Student Committee Meeting Report: _____

Comments by Research Mentor:

Signature:

Comments by Committee Chair (if different than Mentor):

Signature:

Comments by Committee Member:

Signature:

EHS Graduate Student Committee Meeting Report: _____

Comments by Committee Member:

Signature:

Comments by Committee Member:

Signature:

Comments by Committee Member:

Signature:
