

UIC School of Public Health Student Handbook 2006-2007

The Doctor of Public Health (Eff. Fall 2005)

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Fall 2004 DrPH matriculants may elect to be governed by the new DrPH curricular requirements. DrPH students who matriculated Fall 2004 or earlier, and elect to be governed by their original requirements are advised to consult archived editions of the student handbook: http://www.uic.edu/sph/shandbook_archives.htm#0304.

Learning objectives for the DrPH (Doctor of Public Health degree):

After completing the DrPH program, the DrPH student will be able to:

Competency 1: Demonstrate in-depth understanding of the core areas of public health practice, research, and theory.

- Analyze and critique public health as a system, including specific functions and roles of government and governmental public health agencies and other partners, assessing the system's ability to respond to public health problems and its limitations, and identifying ways to improve it.
- Integrate and apply multidisciplinary theories and research findings to solve a public health problem(s).
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ecological model and how it guides the assessment of, and solutions to, public health issues.

Competency 2: Analyze issues and problems in public health using critical evaluation, applied research methodology, and statistical methods.

- Obtain, interpret and apply appropriate quantitative, qualitative and economic measures to address public health problems.
- Demonstrate in-depth understanding through use of an applied research methodology of interest (quantitative, qualitative or economic research methods) of a public health problem or issue.

Competency 3: Access and synthesize information from a variety of sources to assess significance, identify relationships and develop strategies for addressing public health problems/issues in an area of interest or specialization in public health practice.

- Identify and apply foundation theories in area of specialization to explain and predict public health problems and solutions.
- Apply measures of population health and illness, including risk factors, in the development of community health improvement initiatives, taking into account appropriate cultural, social, behavioral, and biological factors.
- Develop and apply a logic model, or other systems applications, demonstrating interrelationships among risk and protective factors, as well as between process and outcome objectives, and targets/standards for population health.
- Apply research, evaluation and strategic planning designs to address a public health issue in an area of specialization.

Competency 4: Demonstrate leadership in designing and implementing interventions aimed at a public health problem/issue.

- Demonstrate an ability to strategically plan, implement and evaluate agency or organization improvements.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the political, cultural, social and economic factors influencing the development of, and changes in, public health programs, agencies, or interventions as well as strategies to positively affect those factors.
- Apply principles and tools of financial resource management to public health programs.
- Apply principles and tools of human resource management to public health programs.
- Demonstrate an ability to lead and manage individuals or teams in the design, implementation and evaluation of public health programs.
- Access and synthesize information from a variety of sources to make evidenced-based program decisions.
- Apply negotiation, advocacy and other skills to public policy making, demonstrating an understanding of how to influence the process.

Competency 5: Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical elements of effective oral and written communication.
- Organize and present qualitative, quantitative and economic data cogently and persuasively at scientific sessions and to lay audiences.

- Design oral and written communications for varied audiences (community and business leaders, the public, policy makers, public health professionals, the media, and other stakeholders).
- Demonstrate ability to develop a social marketing plan for a new or existing intervention.

Competency 6: Demonstrate a vision and philosophy for professional leadership in public health.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the legal and ethical foundations of public health.
- Apply principles of effective leadership in order to create a shared vision within a public health organization and foster partnerships that maximize achievement of public health goals.

Doctor of Public Health

The University of Illinois offers an advanced program leading to the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree awarded under the authority of the School of Public Health (SPH). The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree is a professional degree conferred in recognition of a candidate's command of a comprehensive body of knowledge in the field of public health, and the candidate's proven ability to initiate, organize, and pursue the investigation and resolution of significant problems in public health practice.

The Doctor of Public Health curriculum is designed to prepare public health leaders by ensuring expertise in the conceptual foundations of public health, research methods, leadership and communication skills, and a substantive area of specialization. Students are eligible for conferral of the Doctor of Public Health degree upon demonstrating mastery of the DrPH competencies through a combination of course-work, independent study, prior experience, and completion of a thesis project.

[Admission Requirements](#)

Program of Study

Courses [36 sh minimum]

Two Analytic Courses (8 sh)

- BSTT 401 Biostatistics II (4 sh)
- EPID 403 Introduction to Epidemiology: Principles and Methods (3 sh)

Two Leadership Seminars (8 sh)

- IPHS 501 Public Health Leadership Seminar 1
- IPHS 502 Public Health Leadership Seminar 2

One Integrative Seminar (4 sh)

- IPHS 503 Integrative Seminar

9 sh of courses at the 500 level in an area of emphasis

Electives as necessary to complete the 36 sh minimum

Field practicum for students without requisite experience (5 sh)*

DrPH Thesis Project (28 sh minimum)

Total 96 sh**

* Students who are deficient in the minimum requirements for admission must make up the deficiencies. Students entering without a prior masters of public health degree must complete the six core MPH courses or their equivalent. Students entering without the requisite work experience must complete a field practicum experience of 5 semester hours. Although required for completion of the degree, credits earned to complete MPH course deficiencies and/ or the field practicum will not count toward the 96 hour minimum requirement for the DrPH degree.

** Includes 32 sh of masters level work

Progression Through the DrPh Program

The focus of this degree is the acquisition and demonstration of enumerated competencies in the areas of professional leadership, management, and the application of state-of-the-art knowledge and approaches to addressing public health problems.

Prior to the start of the first semester, students will be assigned an appropriate faculty advisor in relation to the student's academic interests. Faculty advisors will assist DrPH students in developing an appropriate program of study, to assure attainment of the competencies. The student's coursework, especially in their area of emphasis, may span across tracks, divisions, colleges, and universities. The agreed upon program of study will be outlined in the student's [Program Proposal](#).

Throughout their program, students will maintain an electronic Portfolio to demonstrate their acquisition of the enumerated competencies. [The Portfolio resides in the DrPH [Blackboard site](#) (listed under Content System). The Portfolio consists of Part I: the student's curriculum vitae and narrative statement of introduction; Part II: a narrative self-evaluation of the student's level of proficiency related to the competencies and a proposed program proposal; and Part III: a narrative self-assessment with supporting documentation demonstrating attainment of the competencies.

The Portfolio will provide the framework for the intentional, ongoing review of academic progress by the advisor and the DrPH Oversight Committee. Development of the Portfolio is expected to be an iterative process conducted in dialogue between the student and advisor. Students are expected to notify advisors when significant additions are made to their Portfolio and advisors, in turn, are expected to review and provide feedback in the "Add comment" section of the electronic Portfolio.

Portfolio milestones

- Prior to attaining 12 semester hours of course credit, students are to complete Parts I and II of the Portfolio, including the Program Proposal, gain their advisor's approval and alert the DrPH Oversight Committee that the Portfolio is ready for review. (The advisor signifies approval in the "Add Comment" section of the Portfolio.) A critical aspect of the Portfolio review is to determine whether the proposed Program of Study will assist the student in acquiring competencies noted as areas of weakness in the student's Part II Self-Evaluation.
- Toward the beginning of the semester prior to the one in which students intend to begin the thesis project, students are to complete Part III of the Portfolio, gain their advisor's approval and alert the Oversight Committee of the student's readiness for review. As part of its review, students may be asked to meet with the Oversight Committee as necessary to provide additional explanation of Portfolio entries and/or to discuss their potential thesis topic(s) and plans for a thesis committee. Upon Oversight Committee approval of the Portfolio, students will proceed to the thesis project
- The [DrPH Portfolio: Purpose and Guidance](#)

The DrPH Thesis Project

- Students will proceed to the DrPH thesis based upon satisfactory completion of required coursework and the Oversight Committee's determination of the student's readiness to undertake a thesis project based upon the Portfolio review.

- The DrPH thesis project may take a variety of forms including: a program evaluation, policy analysis, development of a new practice intervention, design and implementation of a public health program, development of a legislative proposal, or a traditional research thesis. The topic should be in an applied area, directed to problem solving in a specific public health activity or interdisciplinary program, and should advance the practice of public health. A critical point is that the thesis product demonstrate the student's mastery in areas of professional leadership and management, and the application of state-of-the-art knowledge and approaches to addressing public health problems.

Specific requirements for the thesis will be established by the student's Thesis Committee and subject to approval of the Schoolwide DrPH Oversight Committee.

Selection of Thesis Committee

Upon approval to begin the thesis project, the student and Academic Advisor will select a thesis advisor and Thesis Committee. (The thesis advisor may, or may not be the same as the academic advisor). This committee consists of at least five members of the faculty of The University of Illinois, at least three of whom must be members of the faculty of the SPH. The Thesis Committee must include faculty from at least two SPH divisions. The UIC SPH faculty need not be on the faculty of the UIC Graduate College. The composition of the committee must be such that its members are capable of judging the student's competence in the major area of emphasis. Up to two members (in addition to the five or more University of Illinois faculty) may be selected from outside The University of Illinois. It is strongly encouraged that one member of the committee be a public health practitioner.

Thesis Proposal Examination

The Thesis Proposal Examination, given orally by the Thesis Committee, serves two primary functions:

- To ascertain whether the student is adequately prepared to pursue the thesis topic. If deficiencies are discovered, additional course work may be required.
- To indicate to the student whether the Thesis Committee feels that the proposed project is feasible and whether it should result in a useful, satisfactory product within the time and resources available.

The SPH Thesis Proposal Examination is not judged on a pass-fail basis. Rather, it guides the student when necessary into a more feasible and/or fruitful plan. The Thesis Advisor will notify the Schoolwide DrPH Oversight Committee when the

SPH Thesis Proposal Examination has been passed. A "pass" constitutes a contract between the Thesis Committee and the student that all major elements of the thesis proposal have been identified and agreed to.

Content of the Thesis Product

The products associated with the DrPH thesis will be approved by the DrPH Thesis Committee. The student can produce a traditional thesis or can produce at least two papers of publishable quality.

Final Thesis Oral Examination

When the student has completed his/her thesis project, including the preparation of a final draft of the thesis, the Final Oral Examination is administered by the student's Thesis Committee who will evaluate and approve the content. The candidate presents his/her findings at an open seminar of faculty and students. This may be followed by further examination in closed session, to identify any further requirements or revision of the thesis. The Thesis Committee reports that the student has or has not passed the examination to both the DrPH Oversight Committee and the Dean's office. Finally, the Dean's Office reports the results of the examination and recommends to the SPH Executive Committee whether the candidate should be awarded the degree of Doctor of Public Health.

Final Thesis Product Preparation

The final thesis product must be written up in manuscript format suitable for publication in public health practice journals. The thesis project must result in two publishable manuscripts.

The following instructions are similar to those of the Graduate College for MS and PhD students, but are adapted to the SPH administrative structure. DrPH students should obtain from the SPH Office of the Dean a copy of the Graduate College brochure "Instructions for Completing Graduate Degree Requirements and Preparation of Theses" (also called "Thesis Manual"). This is available [online](#).

1. After the thesis has been successfully defended at the final oral examination, and approved for content, it should be typed in final form. The format of the thesis is the same as that required by the Graduate College. However, the title page is modified somewhat from that used by the Graduate College. Approval of format is initially the responsibility of the major advisor. The Dean's Office will review the thesis for final format approval.

2. An abstract of no more than 600 words must be included on a separate sheet or sheets. This must bear the title and authorship, and must be typed double-spaced on one side only.
3. The Graduate College approval forms will not be used. Instead, after the thesis and final oral examination have been approved, the major advisor will address a memorandum to the Chair of the Committee on Academic Progress using the form provided by the SPH Dean's Office. This memo is to be signed by all members of the Thesis Committee, and the original or a photocopy will be delivered to the SPH Office of the Dean together with the original and two photocopies of the thesis. After approval by CAP and the Executive Committee, the Dean will sign the title page and the student will be certified for graduation.
4. DrPH graduates have the opportunity to have their thesis microfilmed and indexed by University Microfilms International. The Office of the Dean will provide information on this service to all prospective DrPH graduates. Optional services available (for a fee) include copyrighting and purchase of abstract reprints.
5. Of the copies delivered to the SPH Dean's Office, one is deposited in the SPH Reading Room and the original plus one copy are sent to the University's Library of the Health Sciences.

Field Practicum Experience (where required)

DrPH students with less than 3 years of full-time, paid, professional experience in public health in a leadership position, or in mid- to senior level management positions that demonstrate progressive responsibility and evidence of leadership potential either prior to matriculation or during their academic career, must complete a 5 sh field practicum experience in addition to the thesis project.

The experience must be a structured, supervised activity which provides in-depth mid- to upper-level public health experience. The experience is significantly more than what is expected of the "MPH field practicum," as described in the MPH curriculum. Rather, it is a specific undertaking such as would be assigned to a practicing public health professional, differing only in that it is designed to provide broad, practical and new experiences in an area relevant to the student's future career. As a general example, the field experience would address needs assessment, program planning, policy analysis, program management, evaluation and/or surveillance activities within a public health setting.

The experience may or may not relate to the student's thesis. It is selected jointly by the student and his or her academic advisor and subject to the approval of the Schoolwide DrPH Oversight Committee. The academic advisor plays an active role in selecting the field practicum site and program, and ensures the quality and adequacy of both the program and its on-site supervision by local staff. A salary may be accepted. An explicit agreement on the planned activities must be

achieved and formalized in a letter of agreement among the student, the advisor, the Schoolwide DrPH Oversight Committee and the agency.

Deadline for Completing Degree Requirements

The maximum time permitted to complete the degree is six years for those students with an MPH degree or its equivalent, and requisite background experience. Students entering without a relevant masters degree, or students who are required to complete a field practicum experience, will have seven years to complete the degree. The maximum time may be extended in unusual circumstances, upon request in writing, subject to approval by the Committee on Academic Progress (CAP) and the Dean of SPH. The written request should detail the reasons for the extension and the timeline for completion of the degree. The progress of doctoral candidates will be reviewed periodically. If it is determined that the student is not making satisfactory progress, a recommendation may be made to the Dean for dismissal from the program.

SPH Doctoral Student Forum

At the request of doctoral students and with the goal of enhancing the doctoral student experience at SPH, the SPH Doctoral Student Forum was established in Fall, 2004. The forum meets 4 to 5 times a year at varying times (designed to provide an opportunity for most doctoral students to be able to attend at least one or two of the sessions in an academic year). These sessions provide opportunities for meeting other doctoral students in SPH, student-to-student mentoring, expanding one's intellectual community (including seminar type discussions with invited guests), and learning from each other (and invited guests) about how to "negotiate" the process of doctoral student education.

For more information, contact Dr. Faith G. Davis, Senior Associate Dean, by email at fayed@uic.edu or by phone at 312-996-5019.