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The Health Systems and Policy PhD Program Handbook is available online. Forms and other online resources referenced in this handbook can be linked from the electronic version.
Overview of the HS&P Doctoral Program

The Doctoral Program in Health Systems and Policy (HS&P) is an interdisciplinary program of study. It is administered through the OHSU and PSU School of Public Health and draws on faculty with educational backgrounds in public health, health policy, health services research, public affairs, management, economics, epidemiology, social work, psychology, systems science, and sociology from the OHSU & PSU School of Public Health, PSU’s College of Urban and Public Affairs, and other academic units at Portland State University (PSU) and Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU).

The program is designed to provide doctoral students with advanced knowledge, analytic skills, and competencies in conducting research and developing teaching and learning skills in health systems and policy with foundations in public health, management theory, health services research, and policy analysis. The program provides a unique educational experience for students interested in immediately applying theory to practice as they prepare for careers as researchers and teachers.

The HS&P program is one of the three doctoral programs established for the new OHSU and PSU School of Public Health (SPH). It is designed to reflect the vision, mission and core competencies for the SPH:

**OHSU/PSU SPH Vision Statement:** Through education, research and community engagement, the School of Public Health will be a leader in promoting health and eliminating disparities in Oregon and beyond.

**OHSU/PSU SPH Mission Statement:** The mission of the School of Public Health is to prepare a public health workforce, create new knowledge, address social determinants, and lead in the implementation of new approaches and policies to improve the health of populations.

**OHSU/PSU SPH Core Competencies:** All graduates of the School of Public Health will act ethically and demonstrate cultural competence to 1) Integrate social determinants into public health science, practice and policy; 2) Engage with communities to improve population health; and 3) Apply public health knowledge and skills to eliminate health disparities.

The HS&P curriculum includes core content in health systems and public health, extensive study of policy domains and applications, and intensive training in research methods and research design. This design helps students to integrate coursework with applied research and practice, and emphasizes community-engaged learning and scholarship reflecting both the missions of PSU and the SPH.

**HS&P Program Competencies**

Students in the HS&P PhD program will master the following competencies by graduation, as evident through their demonstrated ability to:

1. Recognize and respond to ethical issues in the conduct of health systems and policy research and education.
2. Identify, interpret, apply and develop theories and frameworks that are relevant to the study of health system and policy issues.
3. Employ appropriate qualitative and quantitative research techniques to identify factors and strategies to improve health system effectiveness including population health, individual health, and cost.
4. Engage with diverse cultures, communities, health systems organizations, and other stakeholders in the development, conduct and dissemination of scholarly activities.
5. Develop, evaluate and advance evidence-based public health policy and health systems transformation strategies.
6. Critically and reflectively analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources to identify and monitor emerging issues concerning health systems and policy.
7. Employ effective communication techniques in the development, conduct and dissemination of scholarly activities.
8. Demonstrate leadership and management skills that reflect personal integrity, advance equity and inclusion, foster innovation and motivation, and draw upon research-based evidence.
9. Create and deliver effective presentations on public health systems and policy to academic and lay audiences.
**PhD Program Faculty**

Faculty members participate in the HS&P PhD program through teaching, advising, mentoring, and governance. The core faculty include faculty with expertise in health systems and policy who are the core faculty for the Health Systems Management and Policy group in the School of Public Health; they are listed on the HS&P faculty webpage. Many other faculty teach required and elective courses, and may participate in advising, mentoring, and student supervision for academic committees and research projects.

**Admissions**

The HS&P program is open to students with a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds. Students must have completed a relevant masters program with a GPA of at least 3.5, and provide evidence of combined verbal and quantitative GRE scores above 1000 (old scoring system) or 326 (new scoring system). In evaluating applications for admission, the HS&P Admissions Committee considers many factors, including a demonstrated capability for academic research and participation; engagement in the health policy process; evidence of a clear professional aim and career pathway; and fit with program goals and faculty. Doctoral students are admitted to begin in the fall of each academic year. Details on the admissions process may be found on the program website: [http://www.pdx.edu/hspschool/health-systems-and-policy-phd](http://www.pdx.edu/hspschool/health-systems-and-policy-phd).

**Degree Requirements: General**

The award of the PhD in HS&P is the culmination of a sequential process of coursework, comprehensive examinations, and the research, writing, and defense of a dissertation. The program includes 104-116 required credits, including 21-27 credits in required core courses, 19-21 credits in policy courses, 12 credits in health systems courses, and 19-23 credits in research design and research methods courses. The variation in course credits reflects the options available for elective courses. Students are required to enroll in a one-credit health systems and policy dissertation seminar each quarter during their first two years of coursework to help prepare them for the dissertation process (up to 6 credits). Finally, students complete 27 credits of dissertation preparation.

The comprehensive examination that follows the completion of all course requirements typically asks students to think prospectively about the application of this material to their dissertation work. This is a written examination, followed by an oral defense with the examination committee. Successful completion of the examination enables the student to advance to the dissertation. The four primary emphasis areas for dissertation research reflect faculty expertise, and are: 1) health systems organization, financing and delivery; 2) health policy analysis and application; 3) health services access, quality and cost; and 4) community-based health and social services. Students develop a dissertation topic in consultation with their selected committee; complete a written dissertation proposal with an oral defense; and finally submit a written dissertation with an oral defense.

In addition to completing the degree requirements, students may also engage in teaching or research not directly related to their doctoral program of study. These are intellectually enriching experiences, but may extend the time it takes to complete the degree. University time limits on the completion of degree requirements are discussed below.

**Timeline to Degree Completion**

In general, students pursuing the HS&P degree on a full-time basis should complete the degree in four to five years. Part-time enrollment will extend the time to completion. A student who waives courses based upon a previous masters degree could complete their course work in 1½–2 years, and then proceed with their dissertation. A student who does not transfer in any previous equivalent coursework would need 3 years of full-time study to complete the coursework.
Expectations of Student Excellence

Students enrolled in the HS&P program are expected to meet the highest standards of honesty, diligence, fairness, integrity, and professionalism in all of their program activities. These standards are in addition to those required by the PSU Student Code of Conduct.

Curriculum Requirements

In general, courses meet once per week, and are offered Monday to Thursday in the late afternoon and evening time periods. The School of Public Health uses the quarter system, and students are expected to enroll in fall, winter and spring quarters. Limited course offerings are available in the summer session. Students should plan ahead by referring to the Course Planner. Note that effective Fall 2016, courses that previously had the “PAH” prefix now have the “HSMP” prefix; course numbers did not change.

Core Courses (21-27 credits, all required): The core courses provide the foundation in health systems and policy. A student who has completed an MPH in health management and policy or a comparable masters degree could potentially waive some or all of the first six courses in the core. HS&P students will usually enroll for the 600 level section of these courses.

- HSMP 641 Organizational Behavior in Health (3)
- HSMP 671 Health Policy (3)
- HSMP 673 Values and Ethics in Health (3)
- HSMP 674 Health Systems Organization (3)
- HSMP 677 Health Care Law and Regulation (3)
- HSMP 686 Introduction to Health Economics (3)
- HSMP 660 Contemporary Research in Health Systems and Policy (3); may be taken up to three times (9)

Policy Courses (19-21 credits): The policy courses provide students with foundational as well as elective topics, selected to prepare the student for the policy applications of their dissertation.

Required:
- HSMP 575 Advanced Health Policy (3)
- PAP 616 Policy Process (3)
- USP 615 Economic Analysis of Public Policy (4)

Choose 3 from the following (others may be accepted with advisor approval):
- PAP 653 Policy Analysis: Theoretical Foundations (3)
- PAP 656 Advanced Political Economy
- PHE 657 National Long-term Care Policy (3)
- SOC 684 Social Inequality (4)
- SOC 686 Health and Inequality (4)
- SOC 687 International Health Inequalities (4)
- SW 652 Advanced Social Policy Analysis (3)
- USP 536 Policy Evaluation Methods

Health Systems Courses (12 credits): Students select health systems courses from existing 500 and 600 level courses across relevant graduate programs at PSU and OHSU, with advisor approval, to create a relevant knowledge base and complement their interests.

Required:
- PHE 622 Health and Social Inequalities (3)

Electives (three)

Research Design and Methods Courses (19-23 credits): In addition to the required courses listed below, students select elective courses in research design and methods that will help prepare them with relevant knowledge and skills for their dissertation research.

3 courses on research design

Required:
- HSMP 689 Research Design in Health Services (3)

Choose two (others may be accepted with advisor approval):
- CPH 536/636 Community Based Participatory Research (3)
HSMP 588 Program Evaluation and Management in Health Services (3)
PAP 690 Research Design for Politics and Policy (4)
PHE 524 Social Epidemiology Methods and Theory (3)
PHPM 610 PhD Epidemiology Methods Seminar (3)
PS 595 Introduction to Research Methods for Political Science (4)
SOC 538/638 Integrating Qualitative & Quantitative Methods (4)
USP 630 Research Design (4)

3 courses on analytic methods
Required:
PHE 520/USP 683 Qualitative Analysis (4)
Choose two (others may be accepted with advisor approval):
BSTA 511/611 Estimation and Hypothesis Testing for Applied Biostatistics (4)
BSTA 516 Design & Analysis of Surveys (4)
EC 569 Introduction to Econometrics (4)
PA 551 Analytic Methods for Public Administration (3)
PAP 607 Research Methods for Political Science (3)
PHPM 636 Epidemiologic Data Analysis and Interpretation (4)
PSY 597 Applied Survey Research (4)
PSY 610 Categorical Data Analysis (4)
PSY 610 Multilevel Regression (4)
PSY 621 Univariate Quantitative Methods (5)
SOC 593 Quantitative Methods (4)
SOC 695 Advanced Methods in Sociology (4)
SYSC 513 Holistic Strategies for Problem Solving (4)
SYSC 551/651 Discrete Multivariate Modeling (4)
USP 520 Applied Demographic Methods (4)
USP 531 Geographic Information Systems for Planners (4)
USP 634 Data Analysis 1 (4)
USP 654 Data Analysis II (4)

**Doctoral Seminar in Health Systems and Policy (6 credits):** Students enroll in a one-credit seminar (HSMP 607) each quarter of their first two years to help prepare them for the dissertation process. The seminar meets regularly with a selected faculty mentor to discuss research topics, including critical evaluation of health systems and policy research, framing research questions, proposal writing, the grant application process, data collection and synthesis, human subjects review, dissertation writing and presentation, the review process, program requirements, and publication opportunities. HS&P students present their dissertation research at the seminar, offering them an opportunity to receive feedback on their dissertation at every stage of its development. The seminar also provides an opportunity for HS&P students to regularly interact with other students in the doctoral program.

**Core Public Health Credits:** All students are required to satisfy core public health curricular requirements. Transcripts of students who have completed an MPH previously are reviewed at admission to determine any remaining requirements. A student who does not have an MPH or equivalent courses would be required to take the masters level core courses in epidemiology, biostatistics, and foundations of public health; these are not included in the HS&P curriculum credits.

**Comprehensive Examination:** The comprehensive examination is taken after the student has finished all required and elective coursework. The examination is administered and evaluated by the student’s Comprehensive Examination Committee (see below) and is designed to evaluate the student’s expertise in health systems and policy as well as the more specific field of study. Students work with their committee to determine the timing and format of the examination based upon their program of study. The examination requires a response to three questions (required and/or selected from up to six questions) and covers specific areas that link together the student’s coursework and their planned research. The specific questions are given to the student when the examination is administered; students have five consecutive days to complete the examination, working off-campus at a location of their choice.
The written examination is followed by an oral defense at which the Committee determines the scope of the student’s expertise, and provides further direction as the student begins preparation of the dissertation proposal. The oral defense is scheduled approximately two weeks after the examination is submitted.

The examination may be taken in the final quarter in which the student is completing their coursework. It may not be administered when the university is not in session and the student must be registered during the quarter in which the examination is taken.

If the student fails the comprehensive examination, they may repeat it three months later if the Program Director and examination committee agree to a second attempt. The results of the second attempt are final.

**Dissertation (27 credits):** The dissertation is the doctoral student’s most substantial achievement — a significant work of research built upon an immersion in the academic literature, informed theoretical reasoning, and original research and analysis, intended for an educated readership of one's peers.

The dissertation is a book-length manuscript built upon a thorough review of the relevant academic literature, informed by theoretical reasoning and the application of policy in practice, and based upon original research and analysis. It is defended in an oral presentation that presents the dissertation project's purpose, implementation, findings, contribution to scholarship, and implications for future research.

During the research and writing of the dissertation, students enroll in at least 27 dissertation credits (PAH 603). This is done using a By Arrangement Request form indicating HSMP 603 as the course number (there is no course reference number (CRN) for this course). A student should register for HSMP 603 dissertation credits anytime they are working substantively on their dissertation with faculty members, including prior to the formation of a dissertation committee as part of initial research or preparation for a dissertation proposal meeting. A student does not need to have completed their comprehensive examination in order to enroll in dissertation credits.

The doctoral student’s working relationship with the dissertation committee chair and other members is a function of the student’s background and experience, the nature of the project, and the expertise of the faculty supervisors. Students work very closely with their committees, seeking guidance and feedback frequently throughout the process of research and writing. The dissertation chair provides considerable oversight and guidance, so careful selection of a chair is vital for the student and will help facilitate completion of the dissertation in a timely manner.

**Dissertation Proposal:** PhD candidates are students who have completed “all but the dissertation” (ABD). Candidacy requires appointment of the dissertation committee, submission of a dissertation proposal to the dissertation committee, and a successful oral defense. Strong dissertation proposals establish the viability of a project and its potential contribution to scholarship on health systems and policy. Proposals set out the statement of the problem, literature review, and proposed methods for data collection, analysis and reporting (usually framed as the first three chapters of the dissertation).

**Human Subjects Review and Approval:** Portland State University has specific policies concerning research involving human subjects. Although most HS&P student research involving human subjects is not subject to a full review, requests for waivers and expedited reviews must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Review Committee (HSRRC). Students conducting human subjects research must complete human subjects research training; there are two options – the CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative or the NIH Human Subjects Protection Training. Both may be accessed Human Subjects Research Training (IRB) at this site [https://sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/research/integrity/responsible-conduct](https://sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/research/integrity/responsible-conduct). Information on the HSRRC process may be found [here](https://sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/research/integrity/responsible-conduct).

After receiving confirmation from the HS&P Program Director that the dissertation proposal has been approved, and once the HSRRC has approved the application for proposed research involving human subjects, the Office of Graduate Studies changes the student’s status and advances them to PhD candidacy.

**Written Dissertation and Oral Defense:** The dissertation defense is an oral presentation by the PhD candidate of the completed written dissertation. A typical written dissertation includes a statement of the problem, research question, literature review, methods of data collection and analysis, presentation and discussion of findings, limitations
and assumptions, conclusions, and implications for future research (often presented in five or six chapters). The oral defense lays out the purpose, implementation, and findings of the dissertation project, and makes a case for the project’s contribution to scholarship in a particular field of study. The presentation is directed mainly to the dissertation committee, who are expected to be present (except in unusual circumstances). The actual dissertation defense is open to the public, and current doctoral students are strongly encouraged to attend (as well as others who are interested in the topic and/or wish to support the candidate by their presence). At the defense, the dissertation committee members question the candidate on the significance, limitations and implications of the work and findings.

The defense must be completed no later than the end of Week 6 in the quarter in which the candidate wishes to graduate. The candidate, with the consent of the committee, informs the HS&P Program Director no later than two weeks in advance of the dissertation defense so that a public announcement may be circulated. Once successfully defended, the dissertation becomes a public document available through the PSU Library. Graduates are also asked to post a brief written summary explaining the content and significance of their work for the public on the HS&P program website. A list of recently defended dissertations is available at the program website.

Advising and Committees

**Faculty Advisor:** Upon entry to the doctoral program, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. The advisor helps to guide and familiarize the student with the faculty, available courses, and other resources in the HS&P program. Positive relationships between doctoral students and their advisors can be a major factor in successful progress to timely program completion. However, a student may identify an alternative faculty advisor, and may switch advisors if the other faculty member (who must be a core faculty in the HS&P program) agrees to assume the advisor role. A student should inform the HS&P Program Director when they wish to change their primary advisor, and provide evidence of the new advisor’s agreement.

The advisor reviews the student’s “Program Planner” and works with the student throughout their coursework to ensure they complete all required courses, as well as electives relevant to their proposed dissertation research. The advisor recommends approval of transfer courses and course substitutions, and the HS&P Program Director gives final approval. Pass/no pass courses may not be used for course credit.

The advisor is not required to serve on the student’s comprehensive or dissertation committees, but often will be a member of either or both committees, and may be the chair.

**HS&P Program Director:** The HS&P Program Director coordinates the doctoral program and is the main point of contact regarding rules, procedures, leave of absence, complaints, and other administrative matters. The HS&P Program Director convenes the core faculty regularly to review curriculum, monitor student progress, plan for accreditation or other reviews, and address any other programmatic issues.

**Comprehensive Examination Committee:** Approximately two academic quarters prior to completion of all curriculum credits (other than dissertation credits), students assemble an examination committee consisting of three faculty members, one of whom is designated as chair. The committee composition must be approved by the HS&P Program Director, using the Comprehensive Examination Committee form. The chair must be a core faculty member in the HS&P program. Upon completion of the comprehensive examination, this committee will offer advice to the student regarding composition of the dissertation committee.

**Dissertation Committee:** The dissertation committee is chaired by a core HS&P program faculty member, and includes two additional HS&P of SPH program faculty members plus one additional faculty member from PSU or OHSU with an appointment outside of the School of Public Health, who serves as a representative of the University’s Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). In addition to providing academic advice, the role of the Graduate Office Representative is to ensure that OGS rules and procedures pertaining to the dissertation process are followed. The chair and the Office of Graduate Studies representative must be full-time, tenure-line faculty. All committee members must have doctoral degrees. One of the faculty members on the dissertation committee may be from another institution provided they have relevant expertise. The dissertation committee is formed using the GO-16D form. The dissertation committee guides the student through the dissertation process.
Good academic advice and mentoring will have a profoundly positive effect on the student’s experience in the doctoral program, general intellectual development, and career prospects. Advisors and committee chairs are particularly important to a student’s progress through the doctoral program. Careful composition of the dissertation committee is essential to meet students’ academic interests and facilitate successful completion of the dissertation.

**Other Curriculum Requirements**

*Grading Standards*

The following definitions are used in grading work completed by doctoral students in the HS&P program. The use of standard definitions helps to provide students with realistic and useful feedback on the quality of their work compared to their peers, and assists faculty in evaluating students and making appropriate interventions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent. An above-average grade. Significantly exceeds the highest expectations in many important ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Excellent. An above-average grade. Exceeds expectations in many important ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Satisfactory. An average grade. Meets all expectations for graduate coursework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Satisfactory. A below-average grade. Meets most expectations for graduate coursework. Equivalent to 3.0 GPA. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all graduate courses is necessary to maintain good academic standing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Satisfactory. A below-average grade. Meets several expectations for graduate coursework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+/C/C-</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory. Meets few expectations and falls below the standards expected of graduate coursework in some or many ways. Such grades are not acceptable for credit for core courses and require approval for credit in other courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/F</td>
<td>Failure. Significantly falls below minimum standards for graduate coursework. Suggests a disregard for the expectations of graduate coursework. Will compromise the students’ progress towards the degree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Transfer Credits*

Students may transfer relevant course content and credit hours from previously completed graduate coursework to the HS&P program. There is no limit on the number of credits that may be transferred, but all courses must be relevant to the HS&P program. Semester-based credits may be counted as the equivalent of 1.5 PSU/OHSU (quarter) credits. Students must have received a grade of B or higher in each transfer course. Students seeking to receive transfer credits work with their advisor to determine which courses fit within their program of study. The student and their advisor document the comparison of course descriptions and syllabi on the student’s Program Planner.

Use of transfer credits is requested via submission of a GO-21D form to OGS, which should be submitted as soon as transfer credits are approved by the HS&P Program Director. Use of pre-admission credits earned at PSU is requested by the academic unit using the online Graduate DARS Exception Request form.

*Limitation on Graduate/Undergraduate Courses*

Students in the HS&P program are strongly advised to use no more than 12 credits of courses offered simultaneously at the 400 and 500-level in support of their degree program. These courses must be an integral part of the student’s program, and courses with the same content must not be available on a purely graduate basis. Students should review these courses with their advisor to verify their relevance to the HS&P program of study.
Limitation on By-Arrangement Courses

Admitted PhD students may utilize no more than 12 credits of Research and/or Reading and Conference credits (HSMP 601 and 605). In cases where more than 12 credits are needed because of the lack of regularly scheduled classes, the student must submit a written request waiver to their advisor for approval.

Rules and Procedures

Most of the rules and procedures to be followed during each stage of the HS&P doctoral program are mandated by OGS and are detailed in the University’s Annual Bulletin, under “Graduate Studies”. A useful summary of OGS requirements regarding dissertation procedures is available on the OGS website. These, along with the rules and procedures specific to the HS&P program, are summarized here.

Communications

Students must maintain constant and timely contact with their program advisors and course instructors. Students who have progressed to candidacy should provide at least annual updates to their dissertation advisors on their progress. For communications purposes, the student’s @pdx.edu email account should be used. Students are expected to check this email account regularly for official communications (and may link it to their preferred email for ease of communications).

All HS&P students and faculty are subscribed to the HS&P program listserv. As a subscriber, students may post to the list by sending messages to hsp_phd-group@pdx.edu. PhD students in all 3 PhD programs affiliated with the OHSU & PSU School of Public Health are also subscribed to a listserv for PhD students, to facilitate communication and exchange of information. Please observe good listserv etiquette and only post relevant information to the lists, moving other communications to private emails or other mechanisms.

Desire2Learn (D2L) is Portland State University’s online learning management system (LMS). Students can access D2L using their personal computer or lab computers on the PSU campus. A student’s D2L Homepage is the first page seen after signing into D2L. On this page there is a list of all the courses for which a student is registered. Please note that not all Portland State courses use online resources or D2L. Verify with course faculty to determine if D2L will be used in each course. D2L creates D2L email accounts for all users. This account is different from an @pdx.edu email account because it is only for communication within D2L and uses the domain @d2l.pdx.edu instead. Faculty may ask students not to use D2L Mail and contact them via their @pdx.edu account. More information on using D2L is available here http://www.pdx.edu/oit/d2l.

Documenting and Monitoring Progress

Several forms are used to document and monitor the student’s progress in completing degree requirements. All forms are available online. The Program Checklist (reprinted at the end of this handbook) provides a checklist of key tasks that must be completed as the student moves through the program. The Program Planner allows the student, the advisor, and the HS&P Program Director to keep track of the student’s progress through the coursework phase of the doctoral program, including transfer credits brought into the program. Students should keep these forms up to date and provide copies to the program office at the end of each academic year so that they are available for end-of-year assessments. Students should ensure that both their advisor and the HS&P Program Director have approved proposed courses (including transfers and substitutes) before obtaining signatures on the Program Planner form. OGS tracks student progress using the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS). Once all coursework requirements are complete, students should work with the program administrator to ensure that the approved Program of Study is reflected in the student’s DARS report, if necessary through the online Graduate DARS Exception Request form.

The Report on Comprehensive Examination is maintained by the HS&P office as part of the student’s file and documents successful completion of the comprehensive examination. Once signed by the student’s examination committee and the HS&P Program Director, it is also submitted to OGS.

The appointment of the dissertation committee, including the Graduate Office Representative, requires OGS approval upon submission of the Appointment of Doctoral Dissertation Committee (GO-16D) form at least six
weeks prior to the dissertation proposal defense. The proposal defense may not be scheduled before OGS approval of the dissertation committee.

The Report on Dissertation Proposal Defense documents the student's successful defense of the dissertation proposal and is signed by the dissertation committee and the HS&P Program Director. Upon receipt of this form and, if required, HSRRC approval of research involving human subjects (or a waiver), OGS will confirm that all requirements for PhD candidacy are met. The GO-23 form requests advancement to candidacy.

The final form, Doctoral Recommendation for the Degree (GO-17D), documents the student's successful defense of the dissertation and assigns a letter grade to all accumulated dissertation credits. The requirements for electronic submission of the approved dissertation are specified by OGS.

Failure to Meet Degree Requirements

Course Grades. Generally, a course is satisfactorily completed when a student receives a grade of B- or better. A C+ or below grade in a required course will normally not be approved for credit, and the student must repeat this course. To count toward the fulfillment of HS&P elective course requirements, PSU courses in which the student received a grade of C+, C, or C- must be approved by the HS&P Program Director upon recommendation of the student’s advisor. A student who receives more than 9 credits of C+ or below in all coursework attempted after admission to the PhD program will be ineligible to continue in the program.

As a minimum standard, doctoral students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average throughout the program. Failure to meet these minimum requirements places the student on academic probation. Students are disqualified from further coursework if these minimum requirements are not met after 9 additional credits of coursework, or after being placed on academic probation for a second time. Disqualified students may apply for readmission to the program after one year.

A student on academic probation or with one or more “incomplete” courses may be ineligible for a graduate assistantship. Grades of “in progress” (IP) (given for dissertation credits, but sometimes also for research credits) are not the same as grades of “incomplete” (I) and do not affect the student’s eligibility for an assistantship. Students have one year in which to complete a course for which they received a grade of incomplete (I); there is no deadline for completion of IP-graded credits.

Comprehensive Examination. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination is a key indicator of the student’s progress and prospects for success in completing the dissertation. In the case of a failed comprehensive examination, the HS&P Program Director, in consultation with the student’s advisor and the examination committee, may decide to give the student a second opportunity to pass the examination. Students have two full academic quarters (not including summer) following the term of the first examination to complete the second examination. Failure of the second examination is considered grounds for dismissal from the program.

Dissertation Defense. The dissertation is accepted by the dissertation committee when there is no more than one dissenting vote after the dissertation defense. If there are two or more dissenting votes, the committee may recommend that the candidate be given a second opportunity to defend the dissertation. The option of a second defense must be approved by OGS and may take place no sooner than three months after the first defense.

Dismissal for Poor Academic Performance

The grounds for dismissal from the HS&P program include failure to complete any of the formal program requirements as stated above and below and in the PSU Bulletin. Students are also expected to comply with the PSU Student Code of Conduct. In addition, OGS maintains that “departments can be expected to have additional degree requirements beyond those listed” in the PSU Bulletin. The Bulletin notes that students who “do not make satisfactory progress toward the degree (as determined by the department) may have admission to the degree program cancelled.”
The HS&P Program Director, in consultation with faculty, will judge whether students are making adequate progress or otherwise performing satisfactorily to remain in the program. The additional grounds for dismissal could include any number of factors, including:

- failure to provide evidence of continued progress on the dissertation once the proposal is approved;
- failure to meet the standards of the profession that the student will be entering;
- failure to meet standards of honesty, diligence, fairness, and integrity;
- failure to communicate in a timely manner with program advisors, course instructors, or the HS&P Program Director;
- failure to comply with faculty or HS&P Program Director requests for action on course or program requirements; and/or
- obstruction or disruption of program teaching, research, or administration.

Students deemed to not be progressing adequately or performing satisfactorily will be provided with a written notice from the HS&P Program Director and an opportunity to show improvement, where feasible. Should improvement be insufficient, the HS&P Program Director will provide a second written notice of planned dismissal, giving the student a final opportunity to respond. Should the matter remain unresolved, the HS&P Program Director will issue a notice of dismissal from the program.

*Time Limits, Advancement and Commencement*

Full-time HS&P students should normally pass the Comprehensive Examination by the end of their third year; the University has set five years as the absolute limit on this phase of a student’s doctoral studies (full-time or part-time). After passing the comprehensive examination, students have a maximum of three years to submit and defend a dissertation proposal and advance to candidacy. Failure to meet either of these deadlines results in removal from the doctoral program.

Once advanced to candidacy, students have five years in which to complete graduation, including submitting, defending, and (if required) revising the dissertation and submitting it to OGS. If this deadline passes, students are removed from candidacy. Readmission to candidacy requires passing a new comprehensive examination and the time limit on this second period of candidacy (less than five years) will be determined by the HS&P Program Director, in consultation with the student’s dissertation committee chair and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Students who intend to participate in the annual university and college commencement ceremonies at the end of spring quarter in June must have completed all graduation requirements by the relevant deadlines in spring quarter.

Deadlines for various submissions required by the Office of Graduate Studies may be found [here](#). Information on time limitations relevant to PhD students may be found [here](#).

*Enrollment and Residency*

Students enrolled in at least 9 credits (which may include dissertation credits) are considered full-time students. All students holding graduate assistantships at PSU must be enrolled in 9 credits in each quarter when they hold an assistantship.

The University’s residency requirement for doctoral students requires that a student must register for and satisfactorily complete a minimum of three consecutive terms in full-time residence (minimum 9 graduate credits applicable to the degree program each term) after admission to the doctoral program at PSU. Summer term may be included or excluded in calculating consecutive terms. Normally, full-time HS&P students will have fulfilled the residency requirement after their first year. Part-time students should be careful to plan their coursework so as to fulfill this “one year full-time” requirement. All students should be careful to ensure that they do not withdraw from or fail credits that may cause their continuous residency period to be “reset” to zero. Students should verify their enrollment with their advisors.

Even when not engaged in coursework, students must enroll in at least one credit per term if university resources, including faculty time, are being utilized. Students who must disengage from the HS&P program
temporarily may apply for a leave of absence. A leave of absence of no longer than one year is approved by the HS&P Program Director and filed with OGS. A request for a second leave must be approved by the HS&P Program Director and OGS. A student who is not on a leave of absence and has not enrolled for three consecutive terms (excluding summer) is required to submit a Graduate Re-enrollment Request. Non-enrollment, even during an approved leave of absence, does not change the time limits on completion of degree requirements.

Appeals and Grievances

The exact procedure to be followed when a student wishes to contest a decision or the behavior of an HS&P instructor, advisor, or administrator will depend on the circumstance and the nature of the grievance. As a general practice, it is usually best to try to resolve the issue with the individual whose decision or behavior the student finds objectionable and then, if the outcome is not satisfactory, to move up the “chain of command.” For such matters, the HS&P administrative hierarchy is as follows: advisor or dissertation committee chair, HS&P Program Director, Interim Associate Dean Academic of School of Public Health, Dean of School of Public Health, Dean of Graduate Studies.

OGS oversees all graduate programs at PSU and provides mechanisms to ensure that the HS&P program is in compliance with the rules and regulations pertaining to doctoral studies at the University. Those rules and regulations are subject to policies recommended by the Graduate Council and approved by the University Senate. Students may petition the Graduate Council to waive a university rule or degree requirement. Graduate petitions are used under extenuating circumstances and not as a remedy for poor planning or advising.

A student whose grievance concerns possibly discriminatory behavior on the part of HS&P faculty, staff, or anyone else at PSU may also turn to the University’s Office of Equity and Compliance. Grievance procedures appropriate for these and other situations are detailed in the PSU Bulletin.

Student Funding

Internal and External Scholarships

The primary source of funding for HS&P students is usually the “internal market” of opportunities within PSU and OHSU. This includes graduate assistantships (see below) within the School of Public Health, graduate assistantships in other university units at PSU and OHSU, and part-time administrative or research positions within the universities. In addition, there are several scholarships, fellowships, and other awards administered through the Office of Graduate Studies and available at the scholarship and awards website. The PSU Laurels Graduate Tuition Remission Program provides up to 3 years of tuition remission for graduate students based on both merit and need. An external scholarship is the Oregon University System Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (Sylff) Graduate Fellowships for International Research.

The identification of external funding sources can involve more effort but often comes with significant professional and financial rewards. HS&P program faculty and staff can advise students on funding opportunities for students in the program. Many HS&P faculty have considerable experience securing external grants and contracts for research projects that involve doctoral students or have worked with foundations and agencies that fund doctoral studies and research. Some useful sites may be found here.

Graduate Assistantships

While completing their coursework, some HS&P students also serve as graduate research assistants (GRAs). These positions are usually funded by the School, faculty-supervised contracts, or external grants in support of faculty research. They usually include both a tuition remission and a stipend, with a variable stipend based upon the number of hours per week that the student is expected to devote to the project (calculated as a proportion of a full-time equivalent (FTE)). GRA positions attached to the HS&P program usually include 10 credits of tuition remission per quarter and a 0.15 FTE (full-time equivalent) stipend of approximately $3,000 for the year ($300 per month) in exchange for approximately 6 hours of research assistance per week. The FTE may increase depending on the funding source, and summer employment at a higher FTE may be possible on some research projects. Comparable GRA positions may also be negotiated with other health services research organizations in Portland; the core faculty can advise on these opportunities and they are
usually coordinated through the Program Director. Graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs) are occasionally available, and provide doctoral students with classroom experience as teaching assistants or as instructors of their own courses. GTAs are normally a 0.30 FTE to teach one class per quarter with stipend adjusted accordingly, and also include 10 credits of tuition remission per quarter.

Graduate assistantships are annual appointments. Incoming students who wish to be considered for an assistantship submit a GA application with their admission application. Appointments are made at the discretion of the HS&P Program Director in consultation with the core faculty. Positions that are fully funded (tuition remission and stipend) by external sources are made at the discretion of the responsible faculty member. Assistantships are subject to cancellation at any time if the student fails to maintain good academic standing. The availability of some assistantships may not be known until the summer or early fall before the start of the academic year.

Continuing students should advise the Program Director in the spring of the academic year of their interest in an assistantship for the following academic year. The Program seeks to identify assistantships for every student who seeks one, but cannot guarantee these as they are dependent upon “soft” funding.

**Other Useful Information**

A common question from many students relates to the use of library resources. HS&P students have access to both the PSU and OHSU library facilities, including access to library stacks, accessing library-owned journals, inter-library loan for other journal articles and books, and librarian assistance with professional literature searches. On and off-campus access is available with relevant identification. Multiple databases and search engines are available through both libraries. The lead librarians who work with HS&P students are Emily Ford at PSU (forder@pdx.edu) and Laura Zeigen at OHSU (zeigenl@ohsu.edu).

There are many resources to help you in writing academic papers, let alone your dissertation. Professors may indicate their preferred citation format. Some resources to review are:

- Purdue OWL: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/)

Books for classes may be available at the PSU bookstore, or may be ordered online independently. Professors will indicate how to access journal articles and other resources required or recommended in their course syllabi. Syllabi are often posted on D2L at the relevant course site; contact professors directly if you would like to see a syllabus in advance of the beginning of class.

Students seeking other information that they think should be in this handbook are encouraged to contact the Program Director and ask that this information be added either to the handbook or the program website. The website is updated periodically throughout the year, and the handbook is updated annually.
Relevant Website Links

OHSU & PSU School of Public Health
http://ohsu-psu-sph.org/

Mark O. Hatfield School of Government
www.pdx.edu/hatfieldschool

College of Urban and Public Affairs
www.pdx.edu/cupa

University Application for Graduate Admission
www.pdx.edu/admissions/graduate-applicant

HS&P Application for Graduate Assistantship

Office of Graduate Studies
www.pdx.edu/ogs/

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List of Online Forms
http://www.pdx.edu/hatfieldschool/hsp-forms

HS&P Program Checklist

HS&P Program Planner

HS&P Formation of Comprehensive Examination Committee

HS&P Report on Comprehensive Examination

Appointment of Doctoral Dissertation Committee

HS&P Report on Dissertation Proposal Defense

Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects
sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/research/integrity/human-subjects

Doctoral Recommendation for the Degree
www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.ogs/files/GO-17D.pdf

OGS Electronic Dissertation Information

Graduate Re-enrollment Request

Graduate Council Petition

PSU Office of Equity and Compliance
www.pdx.edu/diversity/office-diversity-and-equity-ode

OGS Scholarship and Awards
www.pdx.edu/ogs/scholarships-and-awards
Program Completion Checklist

Student Name: ______________ ID Number: ______________

☐ Initial meeting set up by student with faculty advisor
☐ Completion of core public health credits (five courses)
☐ Core and elective courses completed
☐ Comprehensive examination committee formed; Appointment of Comprehensive Examination Committee form signed and submitted by student to HS&P Program Director
☐ Comprehensive examination completed; Approved Report on comprehensive examination submitted by committee to OGS
☐ Program Planner completed by student and submitted to HS&P Program. Once approved by HS&P Program Director, HS&P Program will submit to OGS
☐ Dissertation committee formed; Appointment of Doctoral Dissertation Committee form (GO-16D) completed by student and submitted to HS&P Program. Once approved HS&P Program Director, HS&P Program will submit to OGS
☐ Dissertation proposal submitted by student to committee
☐ Dissertation proposal defense, committee approval
☐ Report on Dissertation Proposal submitted by HS&P Program to OGS
☐ Human Subjects Research Review application completed and approved (if necessary)
☐ Doctoral Request for Advancement to Candidacy form (GO.23) submitted by HS&P Program to OGS
☐ Application for Awarding of Doctoral Degree form submitted by student to OGS
☐ Completed dissertation submitted by student to dissertation committee
☐ Details of dissertation defense meeting given to HS&P Director by student two weeks before defense
☐ Dissertation defense, committee approval
☐ Dissertation Signature Page submitted by HS&P Program to OGS
☐ Final copy of dissertation submitted by student to OGS
☐ Doctoral Recommendation for the Degree form (GO-17D) submitted by HS&P Program to OGS
PhD Program in Health Systems and Policy
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