
Doctoral Degree Programs

Epidemiology doctoral degree programs include:

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) 72 credit minimum
- Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) 72 credit minimum
- [\(Joint\) Doctor of Medicine/Doctor of Philosophy \(MD/PhD\)](#) 72 credit minimum

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Degree Purposes

PhD in Epidemiology

The 72-credit PhD degree is designed to provide the individual with an advanced level of academic preparation to conduct epidemiological research, and to teach, supervise and mentor students in epidemiology. This includes concentrated training in epidemiological concepts and methodology and the completion of a research-based dissertation.

DrPH in Epidemiology

The 72-credit DrPH degree is designed to prepare the student for leadership in research, training, or high-level administration in a public health setting. The DrPH degree is comparable to the PhD degree in quality and innovation but has added emphasis on the use of epidemiology for public health decision making and leadership. By way of comparison, the PhD degree provides training to academically advance the science of epidemiology.

To be admitted to the DrPH program, the applicant must have an MPH degree, a graduate or professional degree in a field related to the health sciences, or an undergraduate health professional degree plus several years of work experience in a health-related field.

MD/PhD in Epidemiology

The [Medical Scientist Training Program \(MSTP\)](#) of the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University was established in 1983 to offer exceptionally talented individuals the opportunity to undertake a physician-scientist training program tailored to their specific research interests.

This program allows students to initially pursue an MD degree at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine for 2 years and apply to the Epidemiology PhD program during the second year of study, with the goal of completing it in approximately 3 years.

After earning the PhD, students return to the School of Medicine to finish the final 2 years of their medical training.

Completion Timeframes

- PhD or DrPH degree completion timeframes vary, but usually are 3 – 6 years, as some students are working professionals while others attend Pitt Public Health on a full time basis.
- MD/PhD joint degree students generally complete the requirements of both programs in 6 – 8 years.
- Policies concerning statute of limitations (for program completion) and leaves of absences are identified in the **General Policies & Procedures** section of the Student Handbook.

Simultaneous degrees

Students may choose to simultaneously pursue master's and doctoral degrees. They should consult their academic advisors concerning this option.

Students may elect to earn a master's degree in Epidemiology while pursuing their doctoral programs. Similarly, master's degree students who have successfully completed 2 terms in their programs and discussed this with their advisors may be considered for admission to a doctoral program. Students should e-mail these requests, along with a letter of recommendation and an updated statement of purpose, to the Pitt Public Health admissions manager and copy the Epidemiology student services staff.

Student services staff will present these requests to the Epidemiology Admissions Committee, who will approve or disapprove them. Students will receive notification of their acceptance status from Pitt Public Health Student Affairs.

Students may then graduate from GSPH with both master's and doctoral degrees in Epidemiology, if they apply for graduation from each and complete all program requirements.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM MILESTONE REQUIREMENTS

GSPH & Departmental core course requirements

- A table of all required courses, the Epidemiology Course Cycles document, can be found in the **Curriculum** section of the Student Handbook.
- Examples of course sequences for each degree program can also be found in the **Curriculum** section.

Doctoral Program Milestones

Milestone examinations, experiences and coursework must be successfully completed by doctoral degree candidates in order to graduate. The Report on Requirements for the Doctoral Degree form is used to process and record milestone completion. This school form is further discussed in the **Report on Requirements (R on R) form** and **Graduation** sections of the Student Handbook, and may be downloaded from the [Frequently Used Forms & Documents](#) page on the departmental website.

Generally speaking, R on R forms are completed by faculty mentors when students take milestones exams, and signed by faculty committees approved for each student after required exams are passed. Forms should then be delivered or forwarded to the Epidemiology Student Services Offices for processing and retention. **The only exception to this process involves the Preliminary Exam (details are included in the following table).**

A further explanation of how dissertation work progresses in conjunction with milestones can be found in the [Essay/Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines](#) document on the Epidemiology Web site home page.

MILESTONE EXAM/REQUIREMENT COMPLETION ORDER	EXCEPTIONS/NOTES
Preliminary Exam	PhD and DrPH R on R form is completed by 1 department-wide committee (instead of faculty committees for individual students)
Overview Exam	May occur before Comprehensive Exam or be combined with the Comprehensive at the discretion of the academic advisor
Comprehensive Exam	May be combined with Overview Exam
Fulfilled Research Requirement	This milestone is NOT required of Epidemiology doctoral program students
Admission to Candidacy	Requirements for admission to candidacy are referenced on the Report on Requirements for Doctoral Degree form
Final Defense	
Completion of GSPH online Exit Survey	All GSPH students planning to graduate must respond to and submit an online exit survey
Graduation Certification	Certification is performed by the Epidemiology Student Affairs Manager

[Preliminary Exam](#)

This exam assesses the breadth of students' knowledge of Epidemiology, student academic progress and potential to successfully complete a doctoral program, while measuring ability to apply research methods independently and revealing areas of weakness in student preparation.

Preliminary Exam Procedures and Information

- Exam Facilitator – Evelyn Talbott, DrPh, MPH
 - Contact Dr. Talbott at: eot1@pitt.edu.
 - Exam applicants receive updates from Dr. Talbott concerning preparation, scheduling and results.

- Eligibility
 - Students must:
 - Be admitted into the Department of Epidemiology PhD or DrPH program
 - Have completed required prerequisite coursework or acceptable equivalent coursework (see below).
 - Consult with their advisors, and request them to forward notice of exam authorization to the exam facilitator.
 - Be registered for courses in the term in which the exam is taken. Students taking the exams in March must be registered for at least one credit in the spring term. Students taking the exam in August must be registered for at least one credit in either the summer or fall terms.

- Exam Parameters
 - Exam is written
 - Students taking the exam for the first time must take all three sections at one sitting
 - Three exam sections, including
 - General epidemiology (closed book, in-class)
 - General biostatistics (open book, in-class)
 - Study proposal (take home)

General Epidemiology Exam. The General Epidemiology Exam assesses knowledge from coursework in epidemiology methods, general epidemiology, clinical trials, etc. Students may bring a calculator and a piece of paper with any formulas, definitions, etc. for reference.

- This 3-hour exam consists of 55-60 questions which are primarily multiple choice.

General Biostatistics Exam. The General Biostatistics Exam is developed and administered by the Department of Biostatistics and generally consists of approximately 10 biostatistics problems/questions. Students are generally permitted to respond to 6 of these problems/questions of their choice. They should have successfully completed Biostatistics 2041 and 2042 prior to taking the exam.

Study proposal. This exam focuses on development of an independent research proposal that demonstrates an appropriate understanding of the rationale and methods for undertaking a study in a given area. The exam includes questions to assess the ability of a student to critique the current scientific understanding of a public health issue. This is a take home exam that students have one week to complete. Students in the psychiatric epidemiology area of concentration take a different exam than other doctoral students.

- Under no circumstances is the student to confer with other epidemiology students, his or her advisor or other faculty members. If there is a specific procedural question, the student should e-mail or contact the chair of the Preliminary Committee for clarification.
- Exam timeframes/exam repeats
 - The Preliminary Exams are offered twice a year, typically over spring break (March) and during the third week in August. Students not passing an exam section may re-take it one time, or they may be required to take additional coursework prior to being given this opportunity.
 - It is required that students who are taking BIOST 2042 and Epidemiology Methods 1 in spring term wait to take the exams at the August sitting. Exceptions may be granted in extremely limited circumstances.
 - Pitt Public Health policy does not allow a third exam to be administered (a second re-take) unless the Department of Epidemiology Chair requests this on behalf of a student and receives approval from the GSPH Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. The department will notify students of final decisions concerning these requests.
 - Advisors may recommend that a student who is unsuccessful in passing all three exam sections instead complete requirements for a master's degree.
- Recommended prerequisite courses*

Success on the exams requires that students have a rigorous understanding of the fundamental epidemiology and biostatistics principles, and can apply them to different situations as outlined on the exams. Precedent has shown that students who have completed the following courses have performed better on the exams than those who did not complete these courses:

- EPIDEM 2110 - Principles of Epidemiology, or an advanced introductory course at another university.
- EPIDEM 2180 - Epidemiological Methods 1.
- BIOS 2041 & 2042 - Introduction to Statistical Methods 1 & 2, or advanced comparable courses at another university.
- EPIDEM 2920 – Writing in Epidemiology: Manuscripts and Grants.
- Additionally, students should consider courses and preparation that help them in evaluating epidemiological literature.

*Exceptions to the required coursework can be granted for students who complete the equivalent of these courses at other institutions. Students requesting waivers of recommended prerequisite courses should consult with the exam facilitator.

- Expected characteristics of exam proposals written by students
 - Rigorous and well defended study designs
 - Demonstration that the proposed study is feasible and makes sense
 - Well defended and reasoned sample sizes and an appropriate interpretation of the statistical power available in the study
 - Well defined and justified endpoints or outcome variables and well defined and supported interventions or exposure variables with research hypotheses and the appropriate analyses of these hypotheses

- Exam results & reporting
 - A Report on Requirements for Doctoral Degree form will be completed by the Department of Epidemiology Preliminary Exam Committee to record each PhD student’s passage of the Preliminary Exam. The committee will submit the form to the department’s Student Services Office for processing. **The same department-wide committee assesses the performance of all doctoral students taking the exam.**
 - The chair of the Preliminary Exam Committee will notify students of their exam results via e-mail or letter.

CREATION OF DOCTORAL COMMITTEES PRIOR TO OTHER MILESTONE EXAMS

The doctoral program committees are comprised of faculty members responsible for advising students and assessing their performance throughout their dissertation research.

Soon after a student has completed the Preliminary Exam milestone, a doctoral committee for the Overview Exam, Comprehensive Exam and/or the Final Defense is selected by the primary academic advisor (often selected as the committee chair) who submits the proposed list of faculty members via e-mail to Lori Smith, Epidemiology Student Affairs Manager and Program Administrator (smithl@edc.pitt.edu) for approval. Committee [composition](#) must comply with policy set forth by Pitt Public Health and the

University of Pittsburgh. If departmental approval of committee composition is granted, the proposed composition is forwarded to the Pitt Public Health Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Mary Derkach, for her additional approval. Lori Smith will notify committee chairs via e-mail if departmental and school-wide approvals have been granted.

When communicating with Lori, faculty should specify in the e-mail subject line that the proposed committee is for the student's Overview, Comprehensive, and/or Final Defense.

The composition of each type of doctoral committee must conform to [Pitt Public Health requirements](#).

Committee chair/member replacement

New committee composition must be conveyed in writing (via e-mail, letter or memo) to Lori Smith, Epidemiology Student Affairs Manager and Program Administrator (smithl@edc.pitt.edu) who will approve or disapprove, and forward the proposed change to Mary Derkach, Pitt Public Health Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, for her review and approval. Lori Smith will communicate with faculty via e-mail when approval on the departmental and school levels is granted.

Committee members leaving the university are generally replaced unless the dissertation is almost complete or they have had an essential role on the committee. If an essential role has been played, the Pitt Public Health Assistant Dean for Student Affairs' approval should be obtained.

Committee chairs leaving the university who cannot be conveniently replaced, are replaced by a co-chair who must be appointed from within the department, unless the Final Oral Defense takes place within a few months of the departure. In this case, the appointment of a co-chair is usually waived.

Overview Exam

All Doctoral candidates must have their dissertation topic and outline of proposed research approved by their doctoral committee. The Overview Meeting is the first official meeting of students with their doctoral committees, and may or may not be combined with the Comprehensive Exam.

- Eligibility
 - Preliminary Exam must have been passed
 - The doctoral committee for the Overview must be formed and approved (see previous section entitled CREATION OF DOCTORAL COMMITTEES PRIOR TO OTHER MILESTONE EXAMS.
 - A general area for the dissertation must have been chosen
 - Literature review for the chosen area should be completed

- Academic advisor must agree that the student is ready for this exam
- Exam Parameters
 - Oral format for both PhD and DrPH candidates
 - Committee members provide guidance in shaping the conceptualization and methodology of the proposed dissertation
 - Relationship of student project to ongoing departmental projects (if any) must be explained
 - Proposal may be to carry out research elsewhere under direct supervision on person selected by dissertation committee, under special circumstances. This alternative should be discussed with committee chairperson prior to proposal presentation
- Proposal overview approval/disapproval & reporting
 - Students obtaining Overview approval are not yet admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree, but have made progress towards that goal.
 - Students not obtaining Overview approval will receive written comments regarding this assessment from their dissertation committee, including suggestions and/or recommendations for action(s) prior to scheduling a second Overview Exam.
 - If the second attempt to pass the Overview Exam is not successful, students will be unable to continue their current pursuit of a doctoral degree within the department, and may be given the opportunity to earn a master's degree.
 - A [Report on Requirements for Doctoral Degree form](#) must be completed and submitted to the Student Services Office when the overview proposal is approved. The form should be completed by the committee chair and brought to the Overview Exam for committee signatures.

Comprehensive Examination

This examination will be given by a doctoral comprehensive committee to assess student mastery in his/her chosen area of concentration within the Department of Epidemiology and depth and breadth of knowledge, as well as the ability to use the research methods of the discipline.

- Eligibility
 - Students must have:
 - Passed their Preliminary Exam
 - Completed most or all formal course work requirements
 - Obtained Dissertation Overview approval
 - Comprehensive Exams may be combined with Dissertation Overview or Prospectus Meetings at committee discretion

- Registered in the term in which the exam is given
 - Exam cannot be taken in the same term in which graduation will occur
- Exam parameters
 - Exam is oral
 - Focus is primarily on student knowledge in the area of the dissertation topic
- Exam results & reporting
 - Results must be reported to the Pitt Public Health Assistant Dean for Student Affairs' office no later than the last day of the term in which the exam is administered.
 - A [Report on Requirements for Doctoral Degree form](#) must be completed and submitted to the Student Services Office when the exam is passed. The form should be completed by the committee chair and brought to the Overview Exam for committee signatures.

Admission To Candidacy

Admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree represents student promotion to the most advanced level of graduate study, and provides formal approval to devote exclusive attention to dissertation research and writing.

- Candidacy prerequisites
 - Full (not provisional) graduate status
 - Preliminary Exam passage
 - Successful dissertation Overview meeting
 - Approval of dissertation proposal
 - Comprehensive Exam passage
 - Formal course work completion with minimum 3.0 grade point average
- Candidacy approval & reporting
 - A [Report on Requirements for Doctoral Degree form](#) must be completed and submitted to the Student Services Office when candidacy status is attained.
 - Refer to **Report on Requirements form** section of the Student Handbook for additional instructions.
- Candidate registration for dissertation research and development
 - With their academic advisors' approval, students may register for one of the following two courses to proceed with dissertation research and

writing, depending upon their full or part-time status, and continue progress in meeting credit and course requirements:

COURSE	TITLE	CREDITS	STUDENT STATUS	PREREQUISITES	OTHER INFORMATION
EPIDEM 2210	Special Studies	01.0 – 15.0	Full or part time		Students may register for EPIDEM 2210 to begin work on their dissertations (with advisor authorization) if they have <u>not</u> yet passed <u>all</u> of these exams: Preliminary or Qualifying Exam, Comprehensive Exam and Overview exam.
EPIDEM 3100	Research & Dissertation for the Doctoral Degree	01.0 – 15.0 credit option. Minimum of 3 is required or FTDR 3999 registration prior to graduation. Discuss credits taken with advisor.	Full or part time	Passage of the Preliminary or Qualifying Exam, Overview, <u>and</u> the Comprehensive Exam.	At this stage, all required coursework for the degree may not be completed and/or 72 credits might not yet have been earned.
FTDR 3999	Full Time Dissertation Research	No credits (0)	Candidates are considered full-time	Completion of all coursework required for the degree and accumulation of at least 72 credits	Substitutes for EPIDEM 3100 in meeting graduation requirements Special reduced tuition rate is assessed

Final Oral Dissertation Defense

This final oral examination may be either a defense of the dissertation, an examination in the field of the dissertation, or a combination of both.

- Eligibility
 - Preliminary Exam passed
 - Dissertation Overview approved
 - Comprehensive Exam passed
 - Admission to candidacy attained

- Defense timeframe
 - Defense should be scheduled at least one or two months before expected degree completion
 - Defense may be scheduled not earlier than two weeks following submission of the dissertation
 - Defense must be held at least two weeks before:
 - End of the term of graduation
 - Degrees are awarded

- Students should:
 - Select a time and place for the defense, and notify Lori Smith, Student Services Manager and Program Administrator (smithl@edc.pitt.edu) and Pitt Public Health Graduation Coordinator, Joanne Pegher (jpegher@pitt.edu) of this information.
 - Submit final dissertation drafts to committee at least two weeks prior to the Defense
 - Send notices of dissertation defense one month in advance to several University publications
 - Contact the Pitt Public Health Graduation Coordinator, Joanne Pegher (for additional information
 - Bring Electronic Theses and Dissertation (ETD) Approval Form (from Student Affairs graduation packet) to defense for committee signatures

- Dissertation Defense Committee chairs should:
 - Contact the Epidemiology Student Services Office to make arrangements to pick up student files and request generation of current transcripts. Since time is required to generate student transcripts, requests for these documents should be submitted at least one day in advance of the defense.
 - Bring a completed [Report on Requirements for Doctoral Degree form](#) to the defense in preparation for committee signatures.

- Dissertation Committee
 - Any graduate faculty member may attend and participate
 - Committee may invite other qualified individuals to participate
 - Only committee members may be present during the final deliberations

- Defense/exam results & reporting
 - The [Report on Requirements for Doctoral Degree form](#) must be submitted to the Student Services Office when the Final Oral Defense has been passed.
 - Refer to the **Graduation** section of the Student Handbook for additional information.

OTHER DOCTORAL PROGRAM REQUIRED EXPERIENCES

DrPH Practicum

DrPH students are expected to fulfill a practicum requirement to gain experience in public health practice. Students required to complete a practicum include students who matriculated in the DrPH program in fall term of 2012 or thereafter.* Students who matriculated before fall term 2012 are not required to complete a practicum (although it is recommended).

*In rare circumstances, a practicum requirement waiver is granted. Students should discuss this with their advisors, and be able to provide detailed justification for their request.

- Eligibility
 - Students must have completed two terms of course work in the program:

- Student responsibility
 - Arrange for practicum/internship at an outside organization. Practicum should involve experience in leadership, advocacy, and communication as appropriate to supplement a student's prior experience.. The minimum duration is 250 hours. The practicum may be a paid or unpaid position.
 - Identify a practicum preceptor
 - Register for Epidem 2214 (1-4 credits)
 - Complete Practicum Placement Approval form
 - Check practicum/internship web page for additional details and all forms

- Requirements upon completion of practicum

- Prepare a poster presentation
- Complete practicum evaluation form and submit to internship office
- Ensure that practicum preceptor submits evaluation form to internship office.

Teaching Practicum (PhD & DrPH)

Doctoral students are expected to fulfill a teaching requirement by enrolling in the Teaching Practicum (Epidem 2215). Students must be a TA for an epidemiology course or for a professor with a primary appointment in the Dept of Epidemiology.

Students required to complete a Teaching Practicum include*

- Students who matriculated in the doctoral program in fall, 2004 and thereafter
- Students who began an epidemiology masters program before fall, 2004 then were accepted into the doctoral program in fall of 2004 or thereafter

Students are not required to complete a Teaching Practicum (although it is recommended) if they matriculated in the doctoral program before fall of 2004

*In rare circumstances, a Teaching Practicum requirement waiver is granted. Students should discuss this with their advisors and be able to provide detailed justification for their request. If the teaching practicum exemption is approved by advisor, the student should ask the Student Services Office staff for assistance with processing an official waiver request.

- **Eligibility/course assignments**

- Students must have completed the course for which they will be a TA (or an equivalent course with permission of the instructor)
- Doctoral students who are **non-native speakers of English** and whose undergraduate degree programs were not taught in English (as the official language of instruction) must take and pass the University's English Comprehensibility Test prior to registering for EPIDEM 2215. More information about the test is available on the final page of the **General Policies & Procedures** section of the Student Handbook.
- TA positions for required Department courses must be filled before students can register as a TA for an elective course

- **Student responsibility**

- Contact faculty of selected course to determine if teaching assistance is needed.

- Participate in University seminars/workshops providing teaching assistance training as announced by the department, if course instructor approves the Teaching Practicum experience request.
- Register for 2 credits of EPIDEM 2215 in the Student Services office for the term in which the Teaching Practicum will be done.
- Download a Teaching Practicum Agreement form from the Epidemiology Web site. This form identifies parameters of the experience, and must be completed by the course instructor and signed by both students and instructors. It may be accessed on the **Frequently Used Forms & Documents (Forms) page**.
- Discuss the experience with the instructor upon completion and complete and sign a Teaching Practicum Student Evaluation form (downloadable from the **Frequently Used Forms & Documents** page of the Epidemiology Web site. This form allows students to document their assessment of their Teaching Practicum experiences.
- Obtain instructor's signature on the Teaching Practicum Student Evaluation form.
- Remind instructor to complete and sign the Teaching Practicum Instructor Evaluation form. Sign this form after discussing it with the course instructor.
- Return all forms to the student services offices (A536 or A537 Crabtree) for retention by the department.

▪ **Instructor responsibility**

- Meet with students interested in fulfilling their Teaching Practicum experiences in their course.
- Complete a [Teaching Practicum Agreement form](#) specifying the parameters of the experience.
- Ensure the TA experience includes lecturing or leading review sessions in front of the class. The amount of work for the TA should be equivalent to work in other 2-credit courses.
- TAs should not be used for setting up A/V equipment, photocopying, or other clerical jobs. The teaching practicum is designed to provide students with exposure to basic teaching skills, such as preparing lectures, leading discussions, and grading.
- Discuss experiences with students at the end of the course.
- Complete a [Teaching Practicum Instructor Evaluation form](#) at the end of the course to document student performance and any suggestions for improvement.
- Obtain student signature on the Instructor Evaluation form.
- Enter grade (H [Honors], S [Satisfactory] or U [Unsatisfactory]) into the PeopleSoft grade roster for EPIDEM 2215 during appropriate grading period for current term (entering grades on the Instructor Evaluation form without **also** entering them electronically or via a Grade Change Request

form will **not** post them to student records). Student Services staff will notify faculty when electronic grade rosters are open each term.

- Remind students to submit the Teaching Practicum Agreement and both Instructor and Student Evaluation forms to the Student Services office (A536 or A537 Crabtree) for departmental retention.

Competency in Communications (DrPH & PhD)

Students matriculating in the fall of 2012 or thereafter are required to submit at least two abstracts about their research and give at least two oral or poster presentations at Dean's Day, the Epidemiology Department annual poster session, or scientific conferences.

DOCTORAL STUDENT FUNDING OPTIONS

Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) positions

Graduate Student Researchers in the Epidemiology Department are doctoral degree candidates who are receiving financial support from research funds secured by faculty in return for duties performed to meet the goals for which the funds were awarded. Candidates interested in obtaining funding must apply for these positions, as described below.

The typical GSR arrangement is 20 hours/week of work in exchange for tuition plus a living stipend. The primary goal of a GSR appointment is to provide financial support to the graduate student.

Most students who enroll in Epidemiology Department doctoral programs do so after receiving funding through GSR appointments. **However, funding is not guaranteed for accepted doctoral applicants due to a limited number of GSR positions and the volume of applications received. Prospective and continuing students should be prepared to rely upon their own sources of financial support if departmental funding is not available.**

- Electronic GSR application
 - Applicants applying for admission in fall or spring terms are encouraged to forward their applications by the stated admissions deadlines for those terms.
 - Doctoral students who are continuing to seek funding support should update their submitted applications on an ongoing basis so faculty reviewing them are aware of their most recent credentials.
 - GSRs begin their positions in fall or spring terms. Most are awarded their positions in fall and begin them at that time.

- Doctoral program applicants and students who desire funding may submit a GSR Consideration Request Form (application) and their resume/CV electronically to the Department of Epidemiology
 - Applicants may access the online GSR Consideration Request Form (application) and other GSR information on the department website at <http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/form.asp>. Submission of GSR application is **not** part of the SOPHAS (School of Public Health Application System) online process required by Pitt Public Health for application to the school, but is instead a separate requirement of the department for those seeking financial support.
- Eligibility
 - Pitt Public Health applicants
 - Applicants must have received a formal Pitt Public Health offer of admission.
 - Those deferring their admission offer acceptance to the following academic year must submit an updated GSR Consideration Request Form and resume/CV to the department.
 - Those deferring their admission to a subsequent term in the same academic year do not need to submit another GSR Consideration Request Form unless they wish to include updated information.
 - Continuing doctoral students
 - Students must be enrolled in Pitt Public Health courses
 - Those who have not received funding and desire ongoing consideration should submit updated GSR Consideration Request Forms and CVs at least once each academic year, and more frequently if necessary to include updated credentials.

Application consideration process

- GSR applicants will receive an e-mail from the Department of Epidemiology student services coordinator confirming receipt of GSR Consideration Request Forms and resumes/CV's.
- Faculty will e-mail and/or telephone applicants to initiate communication concerning positions.
- Applicants are offered positions if:
 - Adequate funding from appropriate sources is available to faculty whose research projects or interests coincide with theirs.
 - They have skill sets and/or academic or professional experience commensurate with faculty project requirements.
- Applicants awarded positions are notified by:

- The Student Services Program Administrator on behalf of the department chair via e-mail
 - Departmental appointment letter
 - Fall term positions – letter mailed in August
 - Spring term positions – letter mailed in December
 - Summer term positions – letter mailed in April
 - Applicants not awarded positions may:
 - Receive an offer at a later date in the academic year (although this is never guaranteed).
 - Review faculty research interests identified in the Faculty page of the department website (www.epidemiology.pitt.edu) and e-mail faculty with similar interests to inquire about future funding possibilities.
 - Choose to defer Pitt Public Health admission to the following term or year.
 - The Pitt Public Health Student Affairs admissions manager and the Epidemiology Student Services staff must be e-mailed concerning final admission decisions.
 - Choose not to attend Pitt Public Health
 - The Pitt Public Health Student Affairs admissions manager and the Epidemiology Student Services staff must be e-mailed concerning final admission decisions.
 - Explore financial assistance alternatives through the University and/or other external sources.
 - Alternative financial assistance information may be accessed at:
<http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=107>.
- Supervision & evaluation
 - GSR supervisors are either the student’s academic advisor (typical but not required) or another member of the Epidemiology faculty.
 - Students and faculty are required to meet within the first month of the first GSR appointment term to discuss, complete and sign a **GSR Objectives Form** (downloadable at the Student Handbook’s **Frequently Used Forms and Documents (Forms) page of the Epidemiology Web site**), so that a clear understanding of responsibilities and goals is set forth. This form must be completed and submitted to the Student Services Office, and should be submitted thereafter at the beginning of each academic year if the GSR position is continued.
 - Students and faculty must meet to discuss progress in meeting objectives and goals annually, and must submit a **GSR Evaluation Form** (downloadable at the Student Handbook’s **Frequently Used Forms and Documents (Forms) page of the Epidemiology Web site**), to the Student Services Office. The Student Services staff will remind faculty to submit this form at the appropriate time during the term.

- Appointment timeframe & renewal
 - Appointments are usually for one or two terms (fall & spring [8 months, September – April]) subject to performance review and funding availability.
 - 20 hours per week minimum must be devoted to GSR responsibilities as identified by GSR supervisors.
 - Summer term – requires separate appointment and is subject to performance review and funding availability.

- Coursework requirement
 - Epidemiology Department GSR's must maintain full time student status by taking 9 – 15 credits in fall and spring terms, and a minimum of 3 credits in summer term (if a separate summer term appointment is awarded).

- Compensation & benefits
 - Stipend (salary)
 - Set by Department within range established by University policy
 - Currently \$1,663.75/month (annual cost of living increases are usually given)
 - Full tuition scholarships for up to 15 credits for full time GSR's
 - Tuition e-bills received from the university should be brought to the Student Services Office in A536 Crabtree Hall for payment processing
 - Student Activity Fees identified on e-bills must be paid by students and will not be reimbursed by the department
 - Health insurance
 - Free to student
 - Family coverage available at student cost

- Additional GSR information
 - www.pitt.edu/~graduate at [Financial Information](#), [GSR Stipend Rates](#) then [GSR Policy Statement](#)

Training grant (trainee) positions

Students or accepted applicants who are US citizens or permanent residents may contact [designated representatives of grants](#) associated with the Department of Epidemiology to determine if any funded positions are available.

GRADUATION CERTIFICATION

Students should meet with their advisors and contact the Epidemiology Student Services Offices to ensure they have met all departmental graduation requirements and to verify that all supporting documentation has been submitted.

Students should also make arrangements to meet with the GSPH Graduation Coordinator, Joanne Pegher, to discuss their plans to graduate and confirm that their research projects comply with University and school formatting standards.

Detailed school graduation policies and procedures are included on the [Pitt Public Health Web site](#).

- A final [Report on Requirements for Doctoral Degree form](#) will be completed by the Student Services Office on the student's behalf (with Item I checked and appropriate signature indicated) when all graduation requirements have been fulfilled.
- Students should talk with Gwen O'Brien (Student Services Specialist – doctoral students) obrieng@edc.pitt.edu or Lindsay Flinn (Student Services Specialist – master's students) with questions about their academic records, and their readiness for graduation. Gwen and Lindsay forward detailed graduation information to each student when they receive word that s/he has applied for graduation.
- Lori Smith, Epidemiology Student Affairs Manager and Program Administrator, finally certifies all Epidemiology students for graduation.
 - Refer to **Report on Requirements form** and **Graduation** sections of the Student Handbook for additional information.