Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

Part III: Research, practice, and examination, and final paper requirements

Practicum requirements
Research requirements
Examination requirements
Essay, thesis, and dissertation requirements

Part III: Research, practice and examination, and final paper requirements

Practicum requirements

MPH and DrPH students: All MPH and DrPH programs in Pitt Public Health require a practicum of at least 200 hours. Specific requirements vary by department. All departments should have a process for helping students identify appropriate practica, for establishing expectations, and for evaluating the practicum and any competencies that are based on it. Model forms for evaluating MPH practica are on the [Teaching & Advising Resources page](). (Some departments use these forms and some use their own.)

Programs other than the MPH and DrPH: Programs other than the MPH and DrPH may also require practica or clinical experiences.

Certifications for working with children and other legal requirements: Students who will be working with children in the course of their practicum experience will need appropriate clearances. Please discuss these requirements with your advisor and with the practicum supervisor well in advance, as some clearance processes are lengthy. Some practicum sites may also require specific site agreements or other legal arrangements. In addition, some practica include a research component, in which case you will need to complete appropriate research modules (see below).

Research requirements

Requirements: All doctoral degrees and most MS degrees in Pitt Public Health include a research component. The process of choosing a research advisor is critical. Start this process early in consultation with your advisor and other mentors. Be sure that you know what departmental rules and expectations are. Consult your advisor or program director for specifics.

Evaluation of student research progress: Student research progress should be evaluated regularly in a formal process – at least once a year for doctoral students, preferably twice. Processes differ among departments. See the TA and GSR policy for specific requirements for students with GSR appointments. Evaluations of research progress for the purposes of academic standing should be clearly differentiated from evaluations of job performance in a GSR. Depending on the situation it is possible for a student to have acceptable employment performance but not make the necessary progress toward the thesis research, or conversely to have unacceptable job performance but acceptable academic research progress.

General Research Training Requirements: The university maintains a resource for researchers and the training requirements specific to different groups. View the Research Conduct and Compliance Office Training Web page. Students are advised to verify the specific modules required by their department, research mentor, and/or academic advisor.

Online research integrity module: This module is required for all University of Pittsburgh students who are conducting research. You will be alerted by your research mentor, academic advisor or other departmental representative if this module is a requirement for your work. To access the module, create an account on the University of Pittsburgh's HSConnect site. The modules are located on the Pitt CITI Access Portal. More information can be found on the CITI Web site.

Online module on human subject research: All students conducting human subject research within either the ***biological sciences*** field or ***the behavioral and social sciences*** are required to take training via online modules. Research mentors, academic advisors or other departmental representatives should alert you if any of these modules are requirements for your work.

To access the module, create an account on the University of Pittsburgh's HSConnect site. The modules are located on the Pitt CITI Access Portal. More information can be found on the CITI Web site.

Examination requirements

General: Requirements for exam committee memberships can be found in part IV of this handbook. Policies on exam re-takes and appeals can be found in the Pitt Public Health probation and dismissal guidelines, also in part IV. When each milestone exam is completed, a Report on Requirements form must be signed by the committee and the department chair and returned to the Office of Student Affairs. In some departments it is the responsibility of the student to bring this form to the exam; check with your departmental student services coordinator.

MS degrees: Per University of Pittsburgh policy, all MS degrees require a comprehensive examination and a thesis defense. These take different forms in different Pitt Public Health departments; consult your program handbook.

Doctoral degrees: All doctoral degrees require a preliminary examination, a comprehensive examination, a dissertation overview, and a dissertation defense. Many Pitt Public Health programs combine the comprehensive examination and the dissertation overview. Consult with your department and advisor.

Other degrees: Most other degrees do not require comprehensive examinations, but consult with your advisor and program handbook to be on the safe side.

Multiple degrees: Students pursuing multiple degrees independently must complete all examinations for each degree; combining examinations is not allowed.

Essay, thesis, and dissertation requirements

General: All Pitt Public health degree programs require a final written product, which can be an essay, a thesis, or a dissertation, depending on the program. You should talk to your advisor and other mentors early on to make sure you understand what is expected. Some programs maintain thesis or essay handbooks. Detailed format requirements and rules for committee composition are located in part IV of this handbook, and final submission instructions are located on the graduation web page of the Pitt Public Health intranet.

MS degrees: All MS degrees at Pitt Public Health require a thesis and thesis defense. In some programs this takes the form of an original, publishable research project. In others, it may be a policy paper, literature review, or applied data analysis. MS degrees generally do not involve a thesis proposal or overview, but some departments may require one.

Doctoral degrees: All doctoral degrees at Pitt Public Health require a dissertation and a defense of that dissertation. *For PhD degrees*, this is a major body of original research. *For DrPH degrees*, it may take the form of an applied policy analysis or similar product. The dissertation may be a single unified document, or it may take the form of published or publishable papers. Be aware of the two dissertation formats and discuss them with your advisor. Either your department or your advisor will determine which formats are permissible.

MPH degrees: MPH programs may require an essay or a thesis, or may give students a choice of the two formats. Consult with your advisor and your program handbook to ascertain differences and expectations.

For students who wish to base their essay on practicum/internship experiences with the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), please note that your essay requires approval from your ACHD preceptor/site supervisor. In addition, a member of the ACHD should serve on your essay committee.

Multiple degrees: Students pursuing multiple degrees independently must complete the essay/thesis/dissertation requirements for each degree separately; combined documents are not allowed.

Public defense announcements: MS thesis defenses are not required to be public, but they may be so at the discretion of the department. Doctoral defenses are required to be public, and have very specific publicity requirpements. Consult the graduation page for more detailed information.