
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 degree in a field or profession relevant to public health, health care, or health sciences, or an undergraduate health professional degree plus several years of work experience in a public health 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 Pitt Public Health 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

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 (R on R) form is used to process and record milestone completion. This school form may be downloaded from the [Pitt Public Health Web site](#).

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 [Doctoral Degree Dissertation Guidelines](#) section in the Student Handbook.

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	Scheduled based upon committee recommendation, but not closer than 2 weeks prior to the end of the academic term in which graduation will occur.
Completion of Pitt Public Health online Exit Survey	All students planning to graduate must respond to and submit an online exit survey
Graduation Certification	Certification is performed by the Epidemiology Student Affairs Manager

Registration for Research Credits While Completing Milestones:

With their academic advisors' approval, students may register for one of the following three courses, depending upon their academic progress, to proceed with dissertation research while completing their milestones:

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, accumulation of at least 72 credits, and passage of all three sections of the Epidemiology Preliminary Exam.	Substitutes for EPIDEM 3100 in meeting graduation requirements Special reduced tuition rate is assessed.

Preliminary Exam

These exams are designed to assess the breadth of students' knowledge of Epidemiology, the students' academic progress and achievement during the first year of study and the potential to apply research methods independently. The evaluation is used to identify students who may be expected to successfully complete a doctoral program, while measuring ability and revealing areas of weakness in student preparation.

PhD and DrPH students are required to pass all three parts of the exam within two attempts before the student can form a doctoral dissertation committee.

Preliminary Exam Procedures and Information

- Exam Facilitator – Catherine L. Haggerty, PhD, MPH
 - Contact Dr. Haggerty at: haggerty@pitt.edu.
 - Exam applicants receive updates from Dr. Haggerty concerning preparation, scheduling and results.

- Eligibility
 - Students must:
 - Be admitted into the Department of Epidemiology PhD or DrPH program and be registered for classes in Pitt Public Health.
 - 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 exam in August must be registered for at least one credit in summer term.

- Exam Parameters
 - Students taking the exam for the first time must take all three sections at one sitting over the testing period. Those who are taking the exam for a second time will only take the part(s) that they did not pass initially.
 - Three exam sections, including:
 - General Epidemiology Exam (closed-book, in-class)
 - Applied Exam (closed-book, in-class computer lab)
 - General Biostatistics Exam (open-book, in-class)

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 three-hour exam consists of 55 - 60 questions which

are primarily multiple choice or short answer (requiring a calculated answer).

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

Applied Exam. At least 24 hours before the Applied Exam, all students will receive an article that they will be tested on for this exam. Students may use any resources available to understand the article and its methods, but they will not be permitted to talk to other students, faculty or other individuals about the paper. Students will be asked to critique aspects of this article, interpret results, discuss potential biases and reflect on public health implications related to the topic. Students will also be asked a number of questions regarding how they would design a study to answer the same research question.

- 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 in August. Students not passing an exam section may re-take it one time. They may be required to take additional coursework prior to being given this opportunity.
 - 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 to 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:

- General Epidemiology (EPIDEM 2110 or an advanced introductory course at another university)
- Epidemiology Methods 1 (EPIDEM 2180)
- Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Public Health Medical Literature (EPIDEM 2183)
- Biostatistics 2041 (or advanced class at another university)
- Any course that helps students critique epidemiologic literature

Students considering requesting a waiver of the recommended prerequisite courses should consult with their advisor regarding their mastery of the material covered in these courses.

- Exam results and 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/Approval of Doctoral Committees Prior to Completing 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@pitt.edu) for approval. Another department-level committee composition review will also be performed by the Director of Epidemiology Doctoral Programs.

[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 and students via e-mail if departmental and school-wide approvals have been granted.

NOTE: If student work involves data, policies, or experiences from an outside agency, organization, or practicum site, they should ensure that they follow the guidelines that may include a requirement to have a member of the agency, organization, or site on their committee. *Any student who will use data or experiences from an experience at the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) must include their ACHD preceptor as a member of his/her committee. The agencies with which these members are associated should be identified in the e-mail to Lori.*

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.**

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@pitt.edu) who will approve or disapprove. Lori will share committee information with Dr. Thomas Songer, Director of Epidemiology Doctoral Programs, who will approve or disapprove. If both approve, she will forward the proposed change to Mary Derkach, Pitt Public Health Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, for her review and approval. Lori will communicate with faculty and their advisees via e-mail when approvals on the departmental and school levels are 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.

The student should present the dissertation topic and research plan. The meeting should allow for the committee members to provide guidance in the conceptualization and methodology of the plan.

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
 - A basic literature review may be included in this exam to demonstrate how the proposed research fills a void in the existing literature in the topic area.
 - Relationship of student project to ongoing departmental projects (if any) must be explained.
 - Data may be included in this exam, but is not required. Where applicable, the use of data to demonstrate feasibility or support for proposed evaluations is encouraged.
 - Proposal may be to carry out research elsewhere under direct supervision of person selected by dissertation committee, under special circumstances. This alternative should be discussed with committee chairperson prior to proposal presentation
 - The committee should assess:
 - If the student has the skills necessary to move forward with the proposed work.
 - If the dissertation topic is feasible and is relevant to the topic area.
 - If the proposed research plan is appropriate to address the specific aims.
 - 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

Students must present material to demonstrate mastery of the general topic of study and depth and breadth of knowledge in the area of specialization in that topic area. They must also show the ability to use the research methods of epidemiology appropriately for the dissertation plan.

- 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
 - The literature review in the Comprehensive Exam should address strengths and weaknesses of the topic area and identify gaps in knowledge in this topic area.
 - If a systematic review is performed, it may count as one of the three papers in the 3-paper dissertation format, provided that it is of publishable quality.
- The committee should assess:
 - If the student has shown a mastery of knowledge of the important concepts in the general topic area and the area of specialization of the research plan.
 - If the student has a fundamental understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the methods in the research plan.
- 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.

Final Oral Dissertation Defense

Doctoral candidates present the completed dissertation project and defend the validity of the work under examination from the committee members. The presentation should present results of the dissertation and a discussion of the meaning of these results in the topic area of study.

- 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@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.
 - Announce their dissertation defenses at least 3 weeks prior to defending, or as soon as they have all information related to the defense (location, date, time, committee chair name and committee members participating).
 - Review the Pitt Public Health [Graduation Web page](#) for more details.
 - Bring Electronic Theses and Dissertation (ETD) Approval Form to the defense for committee signatures, provided the committee is prepared to approve the dissertation in its current state for final uploading to the University library system.
- Dissertation Defense Committee chairs should:
 - Contact the Epidemiology Student Services Office to make arrangements to pick up the student's file and request generation of current transcripts, if they wish. 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.
- The committee should assess:
 - If the candidate has demonstrated full proficiency in all aspects of the dissertation research.
- Dissertation Defense
 - Any community member is able to attend (dissertations are publicly announced, by University policy).
 - An open session is held for the presentation of the research. Member of the public and University community are invited, as well as committee members.

- A closed session for the final defense must also be held with only members of the doctoral committee and the candidate present. The closed session is conducted to allow sufficient time for the evaluation of the parameters of the final defense.
- A closed session of the doctoral committee should be conducted. The committee should arrive at a decision on the results of the exam based upon material and discussion provided in both the open and closed sessions.
- 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 [Pitt Public Health Website](#) for additional information.

OTHER DOCTORAL PROGRAM REQUIRED EXPERIENCES

Pitt Public Health Academic Integrity Module Completion

Department of Epidemiology Required Internal Review Board (IRB) Module Completion

- This online training must be completed during the first term of study.
- Completion certificates and reports generated by the IRB system must be submitted to the Epidemiology Student Services Offices by students to meet master's program graduation requirements.
- Student Services will forward information to new students concerning this requirement, and explain how to access these modules.
- Contact the student services staff with IRB questions.

DrPH Practicum

DrPH students are expected to fulfill a practicum requirement to gain experience in public health practice.

*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 (contact Lori Smith, Student Services Manager, regarding this form and its online submission).

- Requirements upon completion of practicum
 - Contact Lori Smith, Student Services Manager, for more information about these requirements.

Teaching Practicum (PhD & DrPH)

Doctoral students are expected to fulfill a teaching experience requirement by enrolling in the Teaching Practicum course (EPIDEM 2215). Students must act as a Teaching Assistant (TA) in one of the following designated Department of Epidemiology required core courses.

NOTE: Although students may choose to serve as a TA in an elective Epidemiology course to obtain additional teaching experience, they may **not** serve as a TA in an elective class to fulfill their Teaching Practicum requirement.

COURSE CATALOG NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	TERM OFFERED
2110	Principles of Epidemiology	Fall & summer
2185	Introduction to SAS	Fall
2160	Epidemiology of Infectious Disease	Fall
2170	Chronic Disease Epidemiology	Fall
2181	Design & Conduct of Clinical Trials	Fall
2187	Epidemiological Methods 2	Fall
2260	Epidemiological Basis for Disease Control	Fall
2180	Epidemiological Methods 1	Spring
2230	Advanced Topics in Epidemiological Methods	Spring
2600	Introduction to Molecular Epidemiology	Spring

2920	Grant Writing	Spring
2183	Reading, Analyzing, & Interpreting Public Health / Medical Literature	Summer

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 Epidemiology Student Services Manager 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.

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

NOTE: The Epidemiology Department Director of Doctoral Programs or course instructors may also contact students regarding some Teaching Practicum opportunities.
 - 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 Department of 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.
 - Discuss the experience with the instructor upon completion and complete and sign a [Teaching Practicum Student Evaluation form](#). 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 Office (5117 Parran Hall) 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](#) while meeting with the student, 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.
 - TA responsibilities should not include 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). The Student Services Manager 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. A [Communications Competency Requirement Record form](#) must be completed and submitted to the Student Services Offices to document fulfillment of this requirement.

Data Collection, Measurement, and Management Requirement Record (DrPH & PhD)

Epidemiology PhD & DrPH students matriculating as of fall 2017 must develop proficiencies in data collection, measurement, and management as part of their dissertation work or other graduate-level experiences outside of the classroom. Academic advisors should meet with their advisees to discuss experience or training options.

This requirement must be fulfilled prior to student graduation.

- Experience options

Two or more of the following are required:

- Surveillance (i.e. systematic collection/recording of disease data for the purpose of monitoring over time)
 - Primary collection of new data to define an exposure or outcome
 - Obtaining and generating new data from existing specimens, tests, or large datasets
 - Chart or electronic record abstraction
 - Questionnaire or survey design and validation
 - Data management (i.e. monitor progress of data collection, examine data for errors and apply correction, merge and maintain large datasets, design and assess quality control measures, etc.)
- Requirement form completion and submission
 - Advisors should complete a [Primary Data Collection, Measurement, and Management Requirement Record form](#) to document student experience or training plans, and both advisors and students should sign as indicated. Forms should be submitted to the Epidemiology Student Services Manager, Lori Smith.

DOCTORAL STUDENT FUNDING OPTIONS

Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) positions

Graduate Student Researchers in the Epidemiology Department are doctoral degree students 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.

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.

Some 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.**

- Eligibility
 - Continuing unfunded Epidemiology doctoral students and continuing Pitt Public Health students who are newly accepted doctoral applicants
- How to request position consideration (PhD or DrPH applicants / continuing unfunded doctoral students)
 - **Continuing doctoral students** - Contact Lori Smith, Epidemiology Student Services Manager and Program Administrator smithl@pitt.edu for details.
 - **Applicants** – respond affirmatively to this question when applying to your degree program through the [School of Public Health Application System \(SOPHAS\)](#): “Do you wish to be considered for financial assistance?” Those doing so will automatically be considered; no additional application must be submitted.
- 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 from the Department of 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 from the Department of 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
 - Current rate is posted to the [Pitt Public Health Web site](#).
 - 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 5117 Parran 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

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 Manager and Program Administrator, Lori Smith smithl@pitt.edu to learn about the process for ensuring they have met all departmental graduation requirements and verifying that all supporting documentation has been submitted.

Students should also make arrangements to meet with the Pitt Public Health Student Affairs Graduation Coordinator, Joanne Pegher jpegher@pitt.edu 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](#).

- Lori Smith finally certifies all master's and doctoral students for graduation on behalf of the Department of Epidemiology.