Social and Behavioral Sciences

Degrees Offered

- M.P.H. in Social and Behavioral Sciences
- M.P.H. ONLINE in Public Health Practice
- M.S. in School Health Education
- Ph.D. in Social and Behavioral Sciences

M.P.H. in Social and Behavioral Sciences

The M.P.H. degree in Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBHS) addresses the behavioral, social, and environmental factors related to individual and population health and health disparities over the life span. Research and practice in this track contributes to the development, administration, and evaluation of programs and policies in public health to promote and sustain healthy environments and lives for individuals and populations. The target competencies of this track include the ability to:

- Integrate the relevant theoretical concepts of program planning, intervention, and evaluation to research and practice
- Apply appropriate demographic, social, and behavioral factors to program planning
- Address the personal, social, economic, and environmental determinants of health in designing multi-component interventions to resolve population health issues
- Enhance skills in assessing and conducting research
- Comprehend the importance of eliminating health disparities and unequal power differentials

A student who graduates with a M.P.H. in social and behavioral science from WVU will be qualified to work and provide leadership in public health practice and research settings at national, state, or local levels, or work in the public or private sector on health promotion program implementation and evaluation efforts. (See below for Admission Guidelines.)

M.P.H. Online in Public Health Practice

The Online M.P.H. degree in public health practice offered by the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBHS) is designed to enable current public health and healthcare professionals to enhance their skills in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs. This curriculum couples exposure to the core public health competencies with an emphasis on methodological coursework to expand skill sets so that professionals can continue to make significant contributions to public health and healthcare. In combination, these courses provide students with problem-solving skills to translate theory and evidence into effective, multilevel strategies to improve population health and reduce disparities. An implicit assumption of the M.P.H. program in public health practice is that strategies based on theory are most likely to be effective in improving population health and reducing disparities. The target competencies of this track include the ability to:

- Improve methodological skills that result in enhanced program planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts in public health practice
- Enhance skills in utilizing basic quantitative and qualitative research designs used in public health
- Apply behavioral and social science theories and concepts used in planning and evaluating public health programs
- Address the personal, social, economic, and environmental determinants of health in designing multi-component interventions to resolve population health issues
- Comprehend the importance of eliminating health disparities and unequal power differentials

A student who graduates with a M.P.H. in public health practice from West Virginia University will be qualified to work and serve in leadership roles in public health and healthcare settings at national, state, or local levels, or work in the public or private sector on health promotion program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

M.S. in School Health Education

http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/sbhs/

The mission of the M.S. in school health education is to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to instill in school-age students the information needed to make healthy decisions regarding well-being. We believe that experiential instruction, coupled with critical thinking skills, enables students to be informed health consumers. We seek to provide an optimal experience for our students to be models and mentors for their own students.

This program is a member of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (http://www.electroniccampus.org).

Ph.D. in Social and Behavioral Sciences

http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/sbhs/
The mission for the Ph.D. in social and behavioral sciences is to provide state of the art doctoral education in the theory and application of social and behavioral science to a select group of highly qualified and committed students desiring to transform public health. Our program trains students using a research intensive curriculum led by a distinguished faculty at the cutting edge of public health science. This program emphasizes both evidence-based, theory-driven primary prevention of disease and injury and health promotion research and practice. Graduates will complete their degrees with a competitive record of research achievement, ready to embark on high-impact research careers.

Ph.D.-Specific Competencies:

1. Display broad knowledge and application of relevant public health social and behavioral theories to health promotion and disease prevention strategies
2. Demonstrate rigorous understanding of methodological and statistical principles that enhance research in the public health sciences
3. Review and synthesize pertinent behavioral literature and formulate focused specific aims and research questions that address identified knowledge gaps
4. Design and conduct original research that uniquely contributes to the social and behavioral science knowledge base
5. Disseminate research findings through appropriate peer-reviewed publications and presentations and other appropriate public health community audiences

There are 117 required credits for this degree. The curriculum is designed so that students receive methodologically-intense training and one-on-one research experience with faculty in the social and behavioral sciences. The first two years of the program emphasize research and statistical methods complemented by theoretical and process-oriented coursework relevant to the social and behavioral sciences. During the final two years of the program, students are engaged in their dissertation research while given the freedom to further diversify their training by completing teaching practica and choosing three additional electives.

Faculty

Interim Chair

• Keith Zulllig - Ph.D. (University of South Carolina)
  Associate Professor, Director - Ph. D. in Public Health Sciences, Adolescent Quality of Life Research, Measurement, Substance Use, Community-based Interventions

Professors

• Geri Dino - Ph.D. (Kansas State University)
  Management of Public Health, Tobacco Prevention
• Ruth Kershner - Ed.D. (West Virginia University)
  Coordinator - M.S. in School Health Education, Substance Abuse Education, Violence Prevention, Women’s Health
• Ranjita Misra - Ph.D. (Old Dominion University)
  Director - MPH Public Health Practice (Online Degree), Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome
• Pete Shaffron - Ed. D. (West Virginia University)
  Injury Prevention, Driver Behavior, Impact of Physical Fittness on the Older Driver

Assistant Professors

• Christiaan Abildso - M.P.H., Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
  Physical Activity
• Haslyn Hunte - Ph.D. (University of Michigan)
• Alfgeir Kristjansson - Ph.D. (Karolinska Institute)
  Social Research Methods, Substance Abuse Prevention
• Michael Mann - Ph.D. (University of Florida)
  Management of Public Health, Tobacco Prevention
• Toni Morris - M.S. (West Virginia University)
  Community Medicine, First Aid Instruction
• Cecil Pollard - M.A. (West Virginia University)
  Survey Research Methods, Collaborative Research Efforts
• Nancy O’Hara Tompkins - Ph.D. (University of Maryland)
  Youth Physical Activity, Obesity Prevention

Faculty Emeriti

• William Reger-Nash - Ed.D. (West Virginia University)
  Wellness, Physical Activity
Adjunct Professors
• Ahmed Aboraya - M.D. (Cairo University)
• Dwight Harshbarger - Ph.D. (University of North Dakota)
• Mark Wicclair - Ph.D. (Columbia University)
• Samuel Zizzi - Ed.D. (West Virginia University)

Adjunct Associate Professors
• Joy Buck - Ph.D. (University of Virginia)
• Ilana Chertok - Ph.D. (Ben-Gurion University)
• Cindy Fitch - Ph.D. (Case Western Reserve University)

Adjunct Assistant Professors
• Muazzam Nasrullah - M.D. (Allama Iqbal Medical College, Lahore Pakistan)
• Melissa Olfert - Dr.P.H. (Loma Linda University)
• Judith Sedgeman - Ed.D.
• Thomas Sims - M.A.

Adjunct Instructor
• Danielle Davidov - Ph.D.
• Janie Leary - Ph.D., M.P.H.
• Janet Reger-Nash - B.A., MSW
• Gary Sams - M.S.
• Gina Sharps - M.P.H., RDH
• Matthew West - B.S., M.B.A.

Admission Guidelines for both the M.P.H. in Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Online M.P.H. in Public Health Practice:
• Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university with a preferred GPA of 3.0
• GRE scores of 146 (verbal), 144 (quantitative), 3.0 (analytical writing)
• TOEFL scores (minimum 550 paper-based) (minimum 213 computer-based) International Students Only

Students interested in applying for either the M.P.H. in SBHS or the M.P.H. in public health practice must:
• Complete the WVU graduate application and submit with the processing fee
  https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=wvugrad
• Submit official school transcripts and official GRE/TOEFL scores to:
  WVU Admissions and Records
  PO Box 6009
  Morgantown, WV 26506-6009
  (304) 293-2121
• Complete the M.P.H. application and indicate SBHS or M.P.H. public health practice as your preference, including three academic letters of recommendation and CV/Resume

You may mail your M.P.H. application, recommendation letters, and CV/Resume to:
WVU School of Public Health
MPH Admissions
PO Box 9190
Fall Admissions Only: Completed applications and materials for international students must be received by May 15 in order to allow for visa processing. Completed applications and materials for in-state and domestic students must be received by June 15.

Admission Guidelines for the M.S. in School Health Education

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university with a preferred GPA of 3.0
- Copy of teaching certificate

Students interested in applying for the M.S. in School Health Education must:

- Complete the WVU graduate application and submit with the processing fee
- Submit official school transcripts to:
  WVU Admissions and Records
  PO Box 6009
  Morgantown, WV 26506-6009
  (304) 293-2121
- Complete the M.S. in School Health Education application, including three academic letters of recommendation and CV/Resume

You may mail your M.S. application, recommendation letters, and CV/Resume to:

WVU School of Public Health
MS Admissions
PO Box 9190
One Medical Center Drive
Morgantown, WV 26506

Fall, Spring and Summer applications accepted for the M.S. in School Health degree ONLY. Completed applications and materials may be submitted any time.

Admission Guidelines for Ph.D.

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university (preferred GPA: 3.0 overall) or a Master of Public Health degree from an accredited program or school (preferred)
- GRE scores: 156 quantitative, 146 verbal, and 3.5 for analytical writing
- A completed Ph.D. application, including a Statement of Purpose (see below for details)
- Three letters of recommendation

Statement of Purpose

The essay is a critical piece of the admissions process. We will evaluate both the content of the essay and your writing skills in considering your application. All applicants should write an essay of 1000 words or less. In this essay, please address the following questions:

- What is it about Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBHS) that appeals to you?
- What are your long term career goals?
- What area(s) of research do you wish to emphasize and why?
- Applicants should also include any additional information about their interests, prior background or special circumstances that may be helpful to the Admissions Committee in evaluation of the application.

Students interested in applying for the Ph.D. in social and behavioral science (SBHS) must:

- Complete the WVU graduate application and submit with the processing fee
- https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=wvugrad
- Submit official school transcripts and official GRE scores to:
Overview of M.P.H. in Social and Behavioral Sciences Curriculum

Students in the M.P.H. program in social and behavioral sciences will complete a total of forty-four credit hours (sixteen credit hours of School of Public Health core courses, two credit hours of seminar, seventeen credit hours of departmental required courses, and nine credit hours of elective courses). Students have two options for the culminating experience, usually completed during the last year of the program. These options are a) the internship (five credit hours) or b) the proposal and practicum (five credit hours). Both options require a paper and poster. This degree will typically take four semesters to complete.

Department of Social and Behavioral Master Level Courses

A grade of B or higher must be earned in all required courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 601</td>
<td>Social and Behavioral Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 610</td>
<td>Public Health Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>SBHS 611</td>
<td>Community Assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 612</td>
<td>Intervention Design</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 613</td>
<td>Public Health Program Evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 614</td>
<td>Cmmnty-Bsd Participatory Rsrch</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 626</td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 627</td>
<td>Practicum Proposal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 628</td>
<td>Practicum</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 630</td>
<td>Foundations of Wellness</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 633</td>
<td>Women and Violence</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 634</td>
<td>Issues in Women’s Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>SBHS 660</td>
<td>Survey Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 662</td>
<td>Issues in Men’s Health</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
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<td>39-43</td>
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</table>

The curriculum is designed so that students have a broad exposure to the core disciplines in public health and introduction to the social and behavioral sciences during their first academic year with a greater focus on SBHS in their second academic year. The standard schedule allows for students to select three electives (nine credit hours). It is highly recommended that these electives be selected from the approved list of electives for students in SBHS. Students may also opt to complete a concentration (currently wellness or women’s health). A certificate in women’s health may also be completed with an additional six credit hours of courses (fifty credit hours).

Suggested Course Sequence (SBHS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPID 601</td>
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Social and Behavioral Sciences

BIOS 601  3 HPML 601  3
BIOS 602  1 PUBH 696  1
SBHS 601  3 SBHS 611  3
SBHS 610  3
PUBH 696  1

14  10

Second Year

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 612</td>
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<td>SBHS 613</td>
<td>3 Elective</td>
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<td>Electives</td>
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<td>4-8</td>
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</table>

Total credit hours: 40-44

Culminating Experience: Proposal and Practicum OR Internship

A primary focus of all culminating experiences is to provide skill building and practical experience in the social and behavioral sciences in most, if not all, of the listed competencies for this degree.

There are two options for the culminating experience, the nature of which would be dependent on the student and available opportunities. These include either an internship or a proposal/practicum (as described below) that focuses on SBHS (and the concentration selected, if applicable). The student will be expected to engage in meaningful participation in an agency, organization, or social and behavioral sciences project.

All students will have a faculty mentor in SBHS as well as a preceptor at the location of the practicum/internship. A written report and a poster will be required of all students.

Option 1:
Internship (five credit hours)

• The Internship will be a 300-hour placement in an agency or organization that provides an SBHS-focused experience (no less than twenty hours per week, up to forty hours per week) and include learning objectives, monthly progress reports, compilation of a portfolio, AND a final paper and poster.

Option 2
Practicum Proposal (two credit hours) and Practicum (three credit hours)

• The proposal course will be completed during the fall semester of second year. The process will be similar to what we have now except that the project and proposal would be reviewed by SBHS faculty.

• The practicum course will comprise a minimum of 180 applied hours and will be completed during the last semester and include implementing the proposed project (applied practice or research), monthly progress reports, AND the final paper and poster.

Overview of Online Curriculum in Public Health Practice

Students in the online program in public health practice will complete a total of forty-four credit hours (sixteen credit hours of School of Public Health core courses, two credit hours of seminar, seventeen credit hours of departmental required courses, and nine credit hours of elective courses). The culminating experience taken over the last two semesters requires completing a proposal (two credit hours), implementing a practicum project (three credit hours), and submitting a paper and poster. This degree will typically take four semesters to complete.

Suggested Course Sequence (Online M.P.H.)

First Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPID 601</td>
<td>3 OEHS 601</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elective</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BIOS 601</td>
<td>3 HPML 601</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOS 602</td>
<td>1 PUBH 696</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBH 696</td>
<td>1 SBHS 601</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 610</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Culminating Experience: Practicum Proposal (two credit hours) and Practicum (three credit hours)

A primary focus of all culminating experiences is to provide skill building and practical experience in public health practice. Students will be expected to engage in a meaningful project within their agency and/or job position. All students will have a faculty mentor from within the School of Public Health, as well as a preceptor at the location of the practicum.

- The proposal course will be completed during the fall semester of year two. The proposed project and proposal will be reviewed by the SBHS faculty prior to gaining permission to proceed with the practicum project.
- The practicum course will comprise a minimum of 180 applied hours and will be completed during the last semester and include implementing the proposed project (applied practice or research), monthly progress reports, AND the final paper and poster.

Overview of Online M.S. in School Health Education Curriculum

Students in the online M.S. program in School Health Education will complete a total of three credit hours of coursework. Students may transfer nine credit hours if pre-approved at admission.

For admission to this program, one must be in possession of a teaching certificate for their state of residence. The program is designed for those who do not have health teaching certification or those who do and wish to obtain a graduate degree in this area.

This program can be completed in two calendar years or less. All courses are web-based.

Overview of Social and Behavioral Sciences Ph.D. Curriculum

Our mission is to provide state of the art doctoral education in the theory and application of social and behavioral science to a select group of highly qualified and committed students who desire to transform public health. This program trains students using a research intensive curriculum led by a distinguished faculty at the cutting edge of public health science. The Social and Behavioral Sciences Ph.D. program emphasizes both evidence-based, theory-driven primary prevention of disease and injury, and health promotion research and practice. Graduates will complete their degrees with a competitive record of research achievement and the competence to embark on high-impact research careers.

PhD in SBHS Competencies

1. Display broad knowledge and application of relevant public health social and behavioral theories to health promotion and disease prevention strategies
2. Demonstrate rigorous understanding of methodological and statistical principles that enhance research in the public health sciences
3. Review and synthesize pertinent behavioral literature and formulate focused specific aims and research questions that address identified knowledge gaps
4. Design and conduct original research that uniquely contributes to social and behavioral science knowledge base
5. Disseminate research findings through appropriate peer-reviewed publications and presentations and to other appropriate public health community audiences

**Curriculum**

Students in the Ph.D. in public health sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences program will complete a total of 117 credits hours, of which fifty-three are dedicated toward research. The curriculum is designed so that students receive a methodologically-intense training and one-on-one research experience with faculty in Social and Behavioral Sciences, typically over a four-year period.

The first two years of the program emphasize research and statistical methods complemented by theoretical and process-oriented coursework relevant to Social and Behavioral Sciences. During the final two years of the program, students are engaged in their dissertation research while given the freedom to further diversify their training by choosing electives. After qualifying examinations, students will also engage in teaching practicum (to be determined by the student’s departmental advisor).

**Social and Behavioral Sciences PhD REquired courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 601</td>
<td>Social and Behavioral Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 610</td>
<td>Public Health Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 611</td>
<td>Community Assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 612</td>
<td>Intervention Design</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS 613</td>
<td>Public Health Program Evaluatn</td>
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<td>SBHS 660</td>
<td>Survey Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 701</td>
<td>Public Health Grant Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 710</td>
<td>Adv Evaluation Public Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHS Course - Research Translation for Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 712</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBHS 796</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
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<td>BIOS 601</td>
<td>Applied Biostatistics 1</td>
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<td>EPID 601</td>
<td>Public Health Epidemiology</td>
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<td>C&amp;I 789</td>
<td>Teaching In Higher Education</td>
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<td>BMS 700</td>
<td>Scientific Integrity</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMS 720</td>
<td>Scientific Writing</td>
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**Total Hours** 50

**Electives**

Students will complete a minimum of twelve credit hours of electives during their Ph.D. program. These may be selected from among the department’s, School of Public Health’s, or university’s many course offerings. These courses will be discussed and approved with the faculty advisor.

**Comprehensive Exams**

The Qualifying Examination is the capstone experience for Ph.D. program coursework. Successful completion of the examination signifies competence in the field of public health sciences and indicates readiness to engage in independent research. The Qualifying Examination consists of both a written and oral component. Qualifying exams should not include testing on content of the dissertation. The oral defense of the dissertation proposal will serve that purpose. The Qualifying Examination is planned and administered by the five-member dissertation committee, under the direction of the committee chairperson. If necessary and at the discretion of the Program Director, another faculty member may be appointed to serve on the committee.

The oral portion of the exam may not be attempted until the written component is completed and must be attempted within two academic weeks of the written component. Students are expected to take the qualifying exam during the summer sessions between their fourth and fifth academic semesters. However, the written component must be completed no later than the second week in July. Students are not eligible to begin their dissertation or enroll in dissertation hours until they have successfully completed the Qualifying Examination.

**Research**

Students will participate in research rotations during their first year, meeting and working with research faculty with similar interests in order to develop mentorships for dissertation research. A total of fifty-three credit hours of rotations and dissertation research will be completed during the program.
The Dissertation Proposal, Defense, and Approval

Although students may choose to pursue a traditional dissertation format, the majority of Ph.D. students format their dissertation using the Three Journal Article Format (JAF). The decision of which format to use is something that students should discuss with chairperson of their dissertation committee. As a reminder, students will not be allowed to defend their dissertations until they have at least one first-authored publication in any form of acceptance, based on their Ph.D. dissertation, in a peer-reviewed journal by the time of the dissertation defense. Note: This required publication does not necessarily need to be one of the three articles generated through the JAF dissertation format.

Suggested plan of study

First Year

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<th></th>
<th>Hours Spring</th>
<th>Hours Summer</th>
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<td>EPID 601</td>
<td>3 BIOS 603</td>
<td>3 PUBH 797</td>
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<td>BIOS 601</td>
<td>3 SBHS 660</td>
<td>3 BMS 20</td>
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<td>1 SBHS 611</td>
<td>3 C&amp;I 789</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3 SBHS 701</td>
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Second Year

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Third Year

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Fourth Year

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Total credit hours: 117