Doctor of Philosophy

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required.

- BIOS 603  Applied Biostatistics 2  3
- BIOS 604  Applied Biostatistics 3  3
- BMS 700  Scientific Integrity (and Ethics)  1
- PUBH 610  Contemporary Foundations of Public Health Practice  2
- PUBH 611  Epidemiology for Public Health Practice  2
- PUBH 612  Research Translation and Evaluation in Public Health Practice  4
- PUBH 790  Teaching Practicum (Two 1-hour experiences)  2
- PUBH 796  Graduate Seminar (Taken 2 times for 1 credit)  2
- PUBH 797  Research (Two 1-hour research rotations)  2
- SBHS 701  Public Health Grant Writing  3
- SBHS 715  Intervention Design  3
- SBHS 760  Survey Research Methods  3
- SBHS 761  Qualitative Research Methods (Offered only during even years)  3
- SBHS 763  Advanced Evaluation Public Health (Offered only during odd years)  3
- Electives  12

Qualifying Examination - written and oral components

Dissertation Proposal

Dissertation Research (minimum credit number shown)  27 PUBH 797  Research

Dissertation Defense

Total Hours  75

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS ENTERING WITH ADVANCED STANDING

Students entering the SBHS PhD program that are admitted with advanced standing (that already hold strongly relevant Master’s degrees) will work with the departmental PhD advisor for a recommended course of study. This includes initiating a selection of course credits that can be transferred (600 level and above, graded B or above, passed in the last 5 years) and/or waived that ultimately will be reviewed and approved by the PhD Program Director in consultation with the PhD Advisory Committee. Under typical circumstances a student with a recent MPH degree or similar, can expect to transfer and/or waive up to 20 credits or roughly one year of course work.

ELECTIVES

Courses may be selected from among the department’s, School of Public Health’s, or university’s many course offerings. This will allow students to develop an area of focus. These courses will be discussed and approved with the faculty advisor.

TEACHING PRACTICUMS

Students will complete two (1 credit) teaching practicums (PUBH 790) during which they will spend time in a mentored relationship with a faculty member, assisting with the administration and teaching of a course. These may be graduate or undergraduate level courses. Students who have a strong interest in teaching should also consider taking C&I 789 Teaching in Higher Education (3 credits). This is a general methods course involving instructional concepts and strategies for present/prospective faculty in higher education.

*Full-time HSC-funded stipend students are expected to participate in the SPH teaching mission to a greater degree.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

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. Following completion of the majority of the PhD coursework, students are then eligible to take the qualifying examination, which consists of two components, a written exam and an oral defense as follows:
**Written exam:** The written exam consists of questions related to social and behavioral sciences generally as well as those pertinent to the student’s research focus.

**Oral defense:** The oral component consists of a defense of student’s answers to the written exam and includes additional questions that further test the student’s understanding of key concepts in social and behavioral sciences and knowledge specific to the student’s research focus. The oral defense of the written exam must be attempted within two academic weeks of completing the written exam. Note: Students are not eligible to begin their dissertation, or sign up for dissertation credits, until they have successfully completed both components of the qualifying examination.

**RESEARCH**

The research component of the SBHS PhD program consists of both a dissertation (27 credits, minimum) and completion of two research rotations (2 credits).

**Research Rotations:** Students will participate in two research rotations in their first year, meeting and working with research faculty with similar interests in order to develop mentorship for dissertation research.

**Dissertation:** Students will complete a dissertation in which they design and conduct an original work of research. First, students will develop a proposal for an original research project. This proposal will be presented and defended orally before the student’s dissertation committee. Upon successful completion of the proposal defense, students are admitted to PhD candidacy and may then complete their dissertation research. There are two options for the dissertation format, a traditional book format or a three Journal Article Format (JAF). The decision of which format to use is something that students should discuss with their committee chairperson. Regardless of the format selected, students must have a minimum of one first-authored publication based on their dissertation topic area, at least under review in a peer-reviewed journal before they can defend their dissertation. While the required publication may come from one of the student’s three dissertation articles if using the JAF, this is not mandatory. Upon completion of the written dissertation, the student will present and defend their work before the dissertation committee. Note: The dissertation defense is open to all members of the WVU community and the public.

**University Doctoral Degree Requirements:** For further details on WVU’s requirements for Doctoral programs please visit the following website: http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/advisingcoursesdegrees/degree_regulations/.

**PLAN OF STUDY**

Upon matriculating into the PhD program, students should contact the SBHS PhD Program Coordinator, or their advisor if already identified, to discuss the course requirements and to develop a plan of study (POS) to meet their individual needs. Below is a suggested POS with the minimum requirements for students entering the program with a BA/BS. Note: Research credits show below reflect the minimum requirements. Students may enroll in additional research credits as necessary to achieve the degree competencies.

**SUGGESTED PLAN OF STUDY**

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**Notes:**

- Research credits show below reflect the minimum requirements.
- Students may enroll in additional research credits as necessary to achieve the degree competencies.
Dissertation Proposal

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Total credit hours: 75

**Major Learning Outcomes**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Program Competencies**

- Develop effective strategies for teaching in higher education
- Review and synthesize pertinent literature and formulate focused research questions that address identified knowledge gaps
- Design and conduct original research that uniquely contributes to the public health scientific knowledge
- Disseminate research findings through appropriate peer-reviewed publications and presentations, and to other public health community audiences

**Major Competencies**

- Display broad knowledge and application of relevant public health social and behavioral theories to health promotion and disease prevention strategies
- Demonstrate rigorous understanding of methodological and statistical principles that enhance research in the public health sciences
- Create comprehensive translational intervention and evaluation plans in research or practice settings to inform policy or practice.