

# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

## *Part I: Advising and mentoring*

Academic advising  
How to get the mentoring you need  
How to build your professional skills  
Getting ready to graduate

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## Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook

### Part I: Advising and Mentoring

#### *Academic advising*

As a student at Pitt Public Health, you have many different resources available to you. Advising systems vary among departments, but you should be able to take advantage of all of the following.

**Departmental advising:** Every student should have a faculty advisor assigned by the department, and a [departmental student services coordinator](#). This team, in addition to your program director, will be your main go-to resource for course advising, registration, and initial mentoring. As you progress through your program, you may acquire other formal mentors for your research, your practicum, etc. Faculty advisors are guided by the [University of Pittsburgh Elements of Good Academic Advising document](#).

The course registration process varies among departments but in most cases you should meet with your academic advisor, who will sign your [enrollment form](#). The [department-level student services staff](#) will take that form and activate your self-registration, at which point you can enroll yourself in classes. In some departments or programs your student services coordinator will do the registration for you. See the [classes Web page](#) for course descriptions, course schedules, and more detailed registration instructions.

For detailed information on course and credit requirements, make sure you are talking to an authoritative source. It never hurts to double check with the Office of Student Affairs, especially if you are doing something complicated like pursuing multiple degrees or transfer credits.

**Course registration process:** Although the course registration process varies among departments, the School has two general options:

1. Self-registration
2. Registration by departmental staff

Both require that you: (1) meet with your academic advisor, (2) print and take an [enrollment form](#) for signature (3) deliver the form to your department student services coordinator, who will either have your self-registration activated or complete the registration process for you.

Prior to enrollment, consult the [classes Web page](#) for [course descriptions](#), [course schedules](#), and more detailed [registration instructions](#).

For detailed information on course and credit requirements, make sure you are talking to an authoritative source. It never hurts to double check with the Office of Student Affairs, especially if you are doing something complicated like pursuing multiple degrees or transfer credits.

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**Office of Student Affairs:** The Office of Student Affairs can provide supplemental support and serves as a source of information on school-level policies and procedures. Additionally, this Office is your primary source of information on essay, thesis, and dissertation formatting and submission details.

For policy/requirements questions, see the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#).

For questions regarding the essay, thesis, and dissertation or the graduation process, see [Joanne Pegher](#).

**Course Evaluations:** When you're considering elective courses, don't forget to check past [course evaluations](#).

**Secondary mentors and advisors (including students):** To get the maximum benefit from your time at Pitt Public Health, don't forget to reach out to other faculty and students, practicum advisors, Career Services, etc. Ideally you will graduate with a rich network of contacts who will provide you with mentoring and support for many years to come.

**Grievance procedures:** The first step to resolving any dispute should be having a professional discussion with the faculty member involved. The next step is a discussion with the chair of your department. In situations in which it is uncomfortable to talk to those individuals, you can raise issues to the attention of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#), or the Associate Deans for Education and Student Affairs, [Jessie Burke](#) and [Cindy Bryce](#), respectively. Your [departmental student services coordinator](#) can also be a good source of advice.

## ***How to get the mentoring you need***

The relationships you build at Pitt Public Health will be important during and after your tenure at Pitt Public Health. This section of the handbook offers some starter advice on how to develop

these relationships. We encourage you to refer to the excellent guidebook from the University of Michigan, [How to Get the Mentoring You Want](#), for more comprehensive suggestions.

**Analyze your own needs:** Start by thinking about what your own needs are and what you hope to get from your mentors. Ask yourself: *What were my objectives in entering graduate school? What kind of training do I need? What skills do I want to develop?*

**Find potential mentors:** Next, locate potential mentors within and outside of your program, department, and school. Research the work of these faculty and see if their interests match or complement yours. You can also talk to senior students about their advisors and mentors. Then, reach out to potential mentors and ask to meet with them. Be patient and professional when requesting these initial appointments; most faculty are eager to help, but may not be available immediately. Good topics for this initial conversation depend on whether you are looking for a primary mentor or supplementary contacts. In either case, it's a good idea to start with mutual research or practice interests and professional goals.

**Develop the relationship:** Working with the mentor is as much your job as his or hers. It is important to have regular meetings to discuss your work and get feedback from your mentor, but it is also important to regularly re-examine your own strengths and skills and your expectations for the mentoring relationship.

**Communicate expectations for written work:** Be clear with your mentor about expectations for authorship, timelines and deadlines. Some mentors will work with students on very rough drafts or informal documents, and others expect students to produce more polished work before they look at it. In either case, do your own proofreading – don't expect your mentor to be your copy editor!

## ***How to build your professional skills***

Your in-classroom and out-of-classroom experiences at Pitt Public Health should combine to give you a strong set of professional skills by the time you graduate. You need to take an active role in this process, taking advantage of seeking opportunities to enhance your skills whenever you can. We hope you will use all of the resources described below, and many others as well.

**Opportunities to improve your communication skills:** Your written and oral communication skills will be your primary career asset. In order to hone these skills, you can:

- Get feedback from instructors on your course writing and presentations.
- Volunteer to give as many presentations as you can.
- Participate in Pitt Public Health's [Dean's Day](#).
- Present posters and talks at professional meetings and local symposia.
- Take a course on scientific communication and/or grant writing.

**External and internal speakers:** You'll see many listings for seminars, speakers, and other events that excite you, and many times your reaction will be "that sounds fantastic, but I'm so busy." **Make the time at least several times a semester to get to these events anyway.** They

are an invaluable opportunity to expose yourself to new possibilities and new ideas, and to meet new people. Sit in the front row. Ask questions. Introduce yourself to the speaker. Use the opportunity to network within and outside the school. During your first and second semesters take advantage of the access to external guest speakers during Grand Rounds events.

**Pitt Public Health Office of Career Services:** The Office of Career Services provides a number of opportunities for students to take advantage of, including:

- workshops
- one-on-one counseling
- resume reviews
- mock interviewing
- access to the school's job opportunities portal ([Pitt Bridges](#))
- online resources, such as its [Careers Web page](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts, and [LinkedIn group](#).

**Certified in Public Health Exam:** Pitt Public Health continues its program to sponsor all eligible students to take the Certified in Public Health (CPH) exam. The National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE) administers this credentialing exam for the public health profession. Read more about why it is important for public health professionals to be certified on the [NBPHE Web site](#). For details on the Pitt Public Health program, please visit the [CPH Web page](#).

## ***Getting ready to graduate***

The [graduation Web page](#) contains information on forms, logistics, and important dates for graduation. Familiarize yourself with this material before your last semester. Deadlines for graduation applications for each term are also listed on the graduation Web page.

Below is a checklist of things you should make sure you have done **well before** the semester in which you plan to graduate.

- 1) If your work involves data, policies, or experiences from an outside agency, organization, or practicum site, ensure that you follow the guidelines and check if you are required to have a member of the agency, organization or site on your 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 on their committee.
- 2) Make sure your essay/thesis/dissertation committee is in place and has been approved.
- 3) Familiarize yourself with essay/thesis/dissertation format requirements.
- 4) Meet with your academic advisor and your department student services coordinator to make sure you have [met all academic requirements](#).
- 5) Be sure you are [registered for the term in which you want to graduate](#).

# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

## ***Part II: Course and credit requirements***

School-level required (core) courses  
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## **Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook**

### **Part II: Course and credit requirements**

#### ***School-level required (core) courses***

**Required Courses:** The courses **currently** required at the school level are listed in *part IV* of this handbook. See notes below each list for information on requirements for earlier cohorts. [More detailed information on the biostatistics requirements is available [here](#).] Students should consult with their departments about these requirements, as some departments may have additional stipulations.

**Exemption from required courses:** Exemptions from school-level required courses are made on a case-by-case basis. These are based on prior coursework, may or may not be accompanied by advanced standing credits (see below) and whether the courses were completed at an accredited school of public health. A [School Core Course Exemption form](#) should be filled out, explicitly listing the coursework on which the exemption is based. The form must be signed by the student's advisor and the instructor of the course from which the exemption is desired, before submitting to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#). If advanced standing credit is being requested, that form must also be filed.

DrPH students who have previously received an MPH from an [accredited school of public health](#) may be exempted from all requirements, *except* Public Health Grand Rounds, but a [School Core Course Exemption form](#) still has to be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs.

MS and PhD students with an MPH from an [accredited school of public health](#) can be exempted from Essentials of Public Health by submitting the [School Core Course Exemption form](#) to the Office of Student Affairs.

**Scheduling:** [Advance scheduling information for the school-wide required courses is available.](#) Most are offered twice per year. Students should plan their schedules carefully with their advisors to ensure completion of that it will be possible to complete the necessary courses.

**Grade Requirements:** A grade of B or better is required for all core courses.

***If a student earns a grade below a B,*** the student and his/her advisor should meet to discuss the grade. In these cases, the student is strongly encouraged to re-take the course. However, the final decision will be left to the advisor and the student.

***If a student receives a grade below a C,*** that student must repeat the course. This policy is effective for all students beginning in August 2009 for courses taken in the fall term 2009 and thereafter. Students have a maximum of two attempts to achieve a grade of C or better in a core course.

See the [Pitt Public Health probation and dismissal policy](#) for further details on minimum grade requirements.

**Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds course:** PUBHLT 2022, the Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds, is a required, non-credit course for all Pitt Public Health students. Two terms are required for graduation. Note that the course is offered only in the fall and spring terms; it is not offered in the summer. Students are strongly encouraged to register for Grand Rounds in the first two consecutive terms they are enrolled.

Students are exempt from this course if they:

1. are only in a certificate program.
2. are in a formal joint degree program.
3. have completed a degree program and successfully completed two semesters of Grand Rounds as a requirement for that degree, then enrolled in a second degree program immediately thereafter. Note that the summer term does not count towards continuous enrollment. If there is a break in enrollment, then the student will need to complete two successful semesters of Grand Rounds to meet graduation requirements.

**Non-credit requirements:** In addition to required courses, all students must complete the online module on [academic integrity](#) during their first semester of study.

All students who are employed by the University of Pittsburgh, including as TAs, GSRs, etc., are required to complete the [University of Pittsburgh Human Resources Sexual Harassment Prevention Module](#). Questions, concerns, or technical issues on the sexual harassment module should be brought to the attention of Employee Relations staff at the University of Pittsburgh Human Resources office at 412-624-8150.

Most students are also required to complete various research ethics modules. A list of other modules required for research and practice at the University of Pittsburgh are outlined on the [Resources for Research and Practice Web page](#).

## ***Departmental and elective coursework***

**Requirements and exemptions:** Course requirements other than those stated above are established and enforced by individual departments and/or programs. Exemptions are handled at the departmental level. Departmental procedures for exemptions should include a written (paper or electronic) record that clearly states the justification for the exemption.

**Electives:** Departments may restrict or suggest choices for elective course credits. Refer to your program handbook and get advice from faculty and students.

**Courses at other Pitt schools:** Pitt Public Health students may take courses in other schools within the university. Course schedules at other schools are available in the complete [university time schedule of classes](#) or in the Student Center of [My Pitt](#). Whether or not these credits can be applied to their degree in Pitt Public Health depends on several factors.

In general, graduate-level credits taken at the University of Pittsburgh outside of Pitt Public Health may be applied to degrees as long as they are relevant to the degree being pursued. Check with your advisor.

Upper-level undergraduate credits may be applied to a Pitt Public Health degree with the permission of the advisor, with a limit of 6 total credits. It must be clear that these credits are being taken by a graduate student enrolled in a degree program at Pitt Public Health in a degree program. Credits taken as an undergraduate or as a non-degree student cannot be considered.

**Courses at other colleges and universities:** Pitt Public Health students may register for courses as part of the [Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education \(PCHE\) program](#). Registration for these courses must often be done earlier than standard University of Pittsburgh registration deadlines. The student must be registered full-time at Pitt Public Health (FTDR or 9 credits minimum) before they request cross-registration at another school. Cross-registration is allowed in the fall and spring terms only. The PCHE registration form is [available online; however, a hard copy with all the necessary signatures must](#) be taken to the Office of the Registrar, in G-3 Thackeray.

**Total credit requirements:** In addition to required courses, each degree or certificate also has a minimum number of credits required. These should be clearly stated in the program handbook. Advanced standing credits (see below) can count toward this total credit requirement. Credit sharing for students in two or more programs is also possible (see below). Both advanced standing credit and credit sharing are limited.

## ***Grades and academic standing***

**Minimum grade point average:** Students who fail to make satisfactory progress may be subject to academic probation and/or suspension and dismissal. Students who have completed at least 9 quality point credits and whose GPA falls below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation. Full time students have 2 semesters and part time students have 18 credit hours to bring their GPA to at least a 3.0. Students on probation are not eligible to take the PhD preliminary evaluation, the MS or PhD comprehensive examination, or to graduate.

**Grades:** Letter grades A, B, C, and D are considered to be passing grades. A letter grade of F is a failing grade.

**G and I grades:** G grades indicate that a course has not been completed because of extenuating circumstances. G grades must be resolved within one year. Students may not accumulate more than 15 credits of G grades. Special studies courses, thesis or dissertation credits and other courses that are normally not graded at the end of one term receive I grades. See the [probation and dismissal policy](#) for details.

### ***Enrollment requirements***

**Full-time registration:** Full-time registration is 9-15 credits. More than 15 credits is an overload which will incur additional tuition charges.

**Registration in the term of graduation:** All degree-seeking students must be registered for at least one credit or FTDR in the term of graduation. See the [graduation Web page](#) for details.

**Lapses in registration:** Students who do not register for three consecutive terms are considered inactive and [must re-apply via SOPHAS](#) if they wish to re-register.

**Requirements for international students:** Students with visas should contact the [Office of International Services \(OIS\)](#) and be sure to follow the enrollment requirements. Generally, full-time registration (9 credits or FTDR) is required. International students who have completed most course requirements can petition OIS for permission to take a reduced load.

### ***Course scheduling preference for veteran students***

Students who have served in the military and have registered with the Office of Veterans Services at the university are granted a priority enrollment appointment to enroll in classes prior to the standard enrollment appointment period. See [registrar's Web page](#) for complete details.

### ***Academic integrity and plagiarism***

All individuals (students, faculty, post-doctoral researchers, and staff) at Pitt Public Health abide by the [University's policy on academic integrity](#) as well as the [Pitt Public Health academic integrity procedures](#).

All students are required to complete the online academic integrity module in the first semester of enrollment at Pitt Public Health by the deadline established by the Office of Student Affairs. See the [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Web page](#) for further details and instructions.

*Policy revised June 8, 2010 and submitted to EPCC for a vote, approved by EPCC on June 14, 2010 with revisions | approved by GSPH Council July 2010*



Pitt Public Health Policy for Student Completion of Student Academic Integrity Module Effective August 30, 2010, all enrolled students at the Graduate School of Public Health are required to complete the *Student Academic Integrity Module* by the last day of the month of September. This is to ensure that GSPH students are familiar with the University of Pittsburgh's academic integrity policy, and to prevent violations of academic integrity.

Students will be deemed to have completed the module satisfactorily by scoring 80% or higher on the module assessment. Those who have not successfully complete the module assessment with a qualifying score of 80% or higher by the first business day of October will not have the advising hold removed from their student registration account. This hold does prevent registration for the subsequent semester's classes. The hold will be removed only after the student demonstrates satisfactory completion of the module.

All new students enrolled in a program (certificate, degree, or non-degree) will be required to complete the *Student Academic Integrity Module* during their first semester. All continuing students, enrolled in the fall term 2010 will also be required to complete the module by September 30, 2010. Students who enter with non-degree status, and are later admitted into a certificate or degree program within one academic year of having completed this instruction will not be required to repeat it. In summary, students will be required to complete this module only once unless significant changes in University or School policy require recertification.

The Office of Student Affairs will establish a deadline for completion of the module for each subsequent semester so as not to disadvantage students in the registration process. Students will be notified of this date through Office of Student Affairs communications and their respective department liaisons.

The student's department liaison will be required to monitor student completion of the module and ensure that the certificate of completion is filed in the student's academic file housed in the department. Department liaisons will notify the Office of Student Affairs if students do not complete the module by the deadline.

### ***Transfer credit for prior graduate work***

**General:** Transfer or advanced standing credits must be based on specific prior graduate-level coursework relevant to the degree the student is pursuing. Advanced standing credit will be awarded only for graduate courses in which a grade of B or better (or equivalent) was earned. Other restrictions also apply. (Note: only block credits, not course equivalency, can be awarded.) The advanced standing request forms ([Course Credits Accepted Form](#)) should be signed by your advisor and submitted to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#).

Credits for degrees earned outside the US are considered based on a [WES evaluation](#) and may depend on country and institution within the country.

**Credit toward doctoral degrees:** In general, a maximum of 24 credits can be applied from a prior-earned master's degree in a relevant field toward a doctoral degree. Up to 12 additional post-master's graduate credits can be applied if those credits were not previously used toward a degree. Approval of the department granting the doctoral degree is always required.

**Credit toward master's degrees:** In general, 6 credits of prior-earned graduate coursework (degree or non-degree) can be applied towards a master's degree. If graduate credits are taken at another institution but were not and will not be applied to another degree. As many as 1/3 of the number of credits required for a professional Pitt Public Health master's degree can be transferred. Approval of the department granting the degree is always required.

**Credit awarded on the basis of prior clinical degrees:** The credit limits stated above are for academic degrees. Credits earned for clinical degrees (e.g. MD, DDS, nursing) may be subject to stricter limits. In particular, clinical degrees that are earned without a prior college degree (e.g. nursing bachelor's degrees, many non-US medical degrees) may be deemed non-graduate credits.

### ***Adding a second degree, or a certificate, or changing departments/ or degrees***

**Combined degree programs:** Pitt Public Health participates in several formal [combined degree programs](#). Requirements for these programs include all or most of the requirements of the two separate programs.

- **Dual programs** exist within a single school.
- **Joint programs** exist between two or more schools.
- **Cooperative programs** are administered by two or more institutions.

Before registering for courses in pursuit of a cooperative, dual-degree, or joint-degree program, a student must be admitted to both programs.

**Pursuing two independent degree programs simultaneously:** In addition to the formal combined programs, students may pursue two independent graduate degrees simultaneously.

Rules for credit sharing must be followed.

**Current Students - How to Apply to a New Program:** Current student must send an email of intent to the Admissions Manager, [Karrie Lukin](#), in order to transfer programs or add an academic program or certificate to their study plan. The email of intent should include:

1. [Your name](#)
2. [Your current program](#)
3. [Details on the changes you would like to make](#)
4. [The term in which you like the change to occur](#)

Further instruction will be forwarded to you once the Admissions Manager receives your e-mail of intent, depending on department requirements.

Current students submitting official GRE scores must send them to University of Pittsburgh code **2927**, with no department code.

### ***Credit sharing among two or more degrees and/or certificates earned simultaneously***

**General:** Students wishing to pursue two or more programs simultaneously should consult with all programs and with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#), about credit requirements. Complex credit-sharing arrangements may require special approval from the Provost. This does not apply to students enrolled in formal University of Pittsburgh joint or dual programs.

**Master's degree and doctoral degree:** Students simultaneously pursuing a master's and doctoral degree at the University of Pittsburgh may generally share up to 24 credits between the two programs. There may be limitations to this rule if the doctoral program is completed first. If the two degrees are in the same department, it may be possible to apply all master's degree credits toward the doctoral degree (see specific departmental requirements).

**Two masters' degrees:** Students pursuing two masters' degrees at the University of Pittsburgh simultaneously (not joint or dual degrees) may generally share up to 6 credits between the two programs.

**Degree and Certificate:** Students pursuing both a degree and a certificate should consult with both programs about credit sharing. University and school rules allow all certificate credits to be applied toward the degree, but individual programs may limit sharing. There may be exceptions if the certificate is started before the degree or if the certificate and degree are awarded by different schools.

**More than two programs:** Any student pursuing more than two programs (degrees or certificates) should consult with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#), about credit sharing.

**Combining credit-sharing with advanced standing:** In general, it is not possible to both share credits among simultaneous degrees and also receive advanced standing credit for prior work. Students who are pursuing simultaneous degrees and also seeking advanced standing credits for prior work should consult with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#).

### ***Statute of Limitations***

The following are the statutes of limitations for the degree programs offered in Pitt Public Health:

- Doctoral programs: 10 years

- MPH programs: 5 years
- MHA program: 5 years
- MS programs: 4 years

To request an extension to the statute of limitations, students must first talk to their program director or advisor. They will advance the request to the department chair who will submit a written request to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Students with questions about this process should consult with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#).

# 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

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## 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 requirements. Consult the [graduation page](#) for more detailed information.

# **Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18**

## ***Part IV: Detailed policies and references***

Pitt Public Health policies and documents

- School-level required (core) courses

- Biostatistics core course policy

- Milestone committee composition rules

- Detailed essay, thesis, and dissertation rules

- School-Wide MPH Essay/ Thesis Completion Policy

- Independent Development Plan (IDP) policy

- Probation and dismissal guidelines

- Pitt Public Health Academic Integrity Procedures

- TA and GSR policy

University policies

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## **Part IV: Detailed policies and references**

### ***Pitt Public Health policies and documents***

A | School-level required (core) courses

B | Biostatistics core course policy

C | Milestone committee composition rules

D | Detailed essay, thesis, and dissertation rules

E | School-Wide MPH Essay/ Thesis Completion Policy

F | Independent Development Plan (IDP) policy

G | Probation and dismissal guidelines

H | Pitt Public Health academic integrity procedures

I | TA and GSR policy

### ***University policies***



# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

## Pitt Public Health school-level required (core) courses

July 2013 | Amended May 2016

### Master of Public Health (MPH)

The MPH core curriculum provides the foundational knowledge and competencies that all public health professionals need. Based on the [ASPPH core competencies](#), it covers the following broad areas: epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental and occupational health, behavioral and community health sciences, health policy and management, public health biology, public health professionalism, systems thinking, program planning, communication and informatics, diversity and culture in public health practice, and leadership.

Students must complete all other core courses before taking Capstone (PUBHLT 2016), although exceptions can be made for students who need to take one remaining core course simultaneously with the Capstone course. Exceptions are by permission of the Capstone instructor.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| PUBHLT 2015 | Public Health Biology (2 credits)   |
| BIOST 2011* | Principles of Statistical Reasoning (3 credits)   |
| BIOST 2041* | Introduction to Statistical Methods I (3 credits)   |
| EPIDEM 2110 | Principles of Epidemiology (3 credits)  |
| BCHS 2509   | Social and Behavioral Sciences and Public Health (3 credits)<br><i>not required for BCHS students</i>                                     |
| EOH 2013    | Environmental Health and Disease (3 credits)<br><i>not required for EOH students</i>  |
| HPM 2001    | Health Policy and Management in Public Health (3 credits)<br><i>not required for HPM students starting Fall 2013 or later</i>             |
| PUBHLT 2016 | Capstone: Problem Solving in Public Health (2 credits)  |
| PUBHLT 2022 | The Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds (0 credits) - two terms required; Completed during first and second terms. Offered fall and spring. |

\*Students are required to take either:

-BIOST 2011, or

-BIOST 2041

Selection of BIOST course(s) should be done in consultation with your advisor.

For full information view the *biostatistics core requirements*.

- The Dean’s Public Health Grand Rounds is not required for students who started before January 2008.
- Public Health Biology is not required for MMPH students who started before fall 2013.

**Master of Health Administration (MHA)**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| HPM 2141    | Managerial Epidemiology (3 credits)   |
| PUBHLT 2011 | Essentials of Public Health (3 credits)   |
| PUBHLT 2022 | The Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds (0 credits) - two terms required; Completed during first and second terms. Offered fall and spring. |

- The Dean’s Public Health Grand Rounds is not required for students who started before January 2008.
- Managerial Epidemiology is not required for students who started before fall 2011.

**Master of Science (MS)**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| PUBHLT 2011 | Essentials of Public Health (3 credits)   |
| EPIDEM 2110 | Principles of Epidemiology (3 credits)  |
| PUBHLT 2022 | The Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds (0 credits) - two terms required; Completed during the first and second terms. Offered fall and spring. |

- The Dean’s Public Health Grand Rounds is not required for students who started before January 2008.
- Essentials of Public Health is not required for students who started before fall 2005.

**Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)**

Students seeking a DrPH take the same school-wide core as MPH students, unless they enter with an MPH degree from an accredited school of public health, in which case they are only required to take the following.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| PUBHLT 2022 | The Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds (0 credits) - two terms required; Completed during first and second terms. Offered fall and spring. |
|-------------|---|

- The Dean’s Public Health Grand Rounds is not required for students who started before January 2008.

### Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| EPIDEM 2110 | Principles of Epidemiology (3 credits)  |
| PUBHLT 2011 | Essentials of Public Health (3 credits)   |
| PUBHLT 2022 | The Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds (0 credits) - two terms required. Completed during first and second terms. Offered fall and spring. |

- The Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds is not required for students who started before January 2008.
- Essentials of Public Health is not required for students who started before January 2012 (varies by department).

# **Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18**

## **Pitt Public Health Biostatistics Core Course Policy**

### **GSPH Biostatistics Core Course Policy**

March 2012 | Amended May 2016

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy statement is 1) to clarify the distinction between requirements for professional degrees and for academic degrees (as defined by The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), and 2) to delineate a revised policy for biostatistics core courses for GSPH professional degrees.

#### **GSPH degree types**

For the purposes of CEPH accreditation, there are three types of degrees offered by the GSPH: professional public health degrees (all MPH and DrPH degrees), other professional degrees (MHA and MS in Genetic Counseling), and academic degrees (all other MS and PhD degrees).

#### **Policy for ACADEMIC and OTHER PROFESSIONAL degrees**

Neither CEPH nor the GSPH requires any specific biostatistical training. Thus statistical requirements for each of these degree programs are at the discretion of the department offering the degree, though degree programs as a whole need to be approved by the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC), by the University, and by CEPH.

#### **Policy for PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH degrees**

For MPH and DrPH degrees, the GSPH and CEPH require that all students take or be formally exempted from a course that addresses the core biostatistical competencies necessary for a public health professional degree. This requirement can be met by any of the following, though many departments have more specific requirements. Students should choose among these options in close consultation with their advisors.

1) BIOST 2011

2) BIOST 2041

3) In special circumstances and with the permission of both the student's advisor and the Department of Biostatistics, other introductory statistics courses may be substituted for the above, certain PSYED courses, and certain STAT courses. However, any course or course sequence that is substituted must cover the majority of statistical methods that are used in the public health literature, and should ideally include public health application examples.

# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

## Pitt Public Health Milestone Committee Composition Rules

### General Notes Regarding All Committees

1. Each department in the school maintains a list of [core educational faculty](#). These are defined as faculty of the University of Pittsburgh who are heavily involved in the educational mission of the department as demonstrated by at least some of the following: teaching courses or having significant involvement in courses led by others; participating on a routine basis in journal club; mentoring students in independent studies and master's essays; serving on curriculum committees; and serving on examination or dissertation committees. Faculty with primary appointments in the department are automatically considered core faculty. The core faculty lists are kept on record with the Office of Student Affairs and updated periodically. The departments bear the responsibility of meeting with core faculty once a year to update them on any changes in policy or procedures, and to provide them with academic program manuals.
2. Research associates *who are involved in the educational program of the department* may be listed as core faculty and allowed to serve on all committees at departmental discretion.
3. All rules below are intended as school-wide minimum standards; individual departments are free to implement more stringent requirements.
4. Individuals who do not have University of Pittsburgh faculty appointments may serve on committees only *in addition* to the minimum required numbers of University of Pittsburgh faculty.

A list of the graduate faculty for the University of Pittsburgh (as referenced below) may be found on the [Provost's Web site for graduate studies](#).

### Rules for Committee Composition:

#### PhD Qualifying Exam

- The committee must consist of at least three University of Pittsburgh faculty members.
- The committee chair must be on the core faculty list of the student's department.
- Half or more of the members must be on the core faculty list of at least one GSPH department.
- Half or more of the members must have graduate faculty status.
- One of the Pitt faculty on the committee must not be on the core list from the student's department.

## **PhD Comprehensive Exam**

If the comprehensive exam takes place at the same time as the dissertation proposal, then the rules for the dissertation committee apply. If the comprehensive exam is taken separately from the dissertation proposal, then the comprehensive exam committee can be composed either according to the rules for the qualifying exam committee or the rules for the dissertation committee, at the discretion of the department.

## **PhD Dissertation Overview and Proposal Committee**

If the overview/dissertation proposal meeting takes place separately from the comprehensive examination, composition rules for the dissertation committee apply.

## **PhD Dissertation Committee**

- The committee must consist of at least four University of Pittsburgh faculty members.
- At least two members must be on the core list of some GSPH department.
- The majority of members must have graduate faculty status.
- One of the Pitt faculty on the committee must not be on the core list from the student's department.
- If thesis work includes internship/ practica experience, including data and policies, from the Allegheny County Health Department the committee must include a preceptor from the Allegheny County Health Department. If the preceptor is an adjunct faculty member, they count as a faculty member. If they do not hold an adjunct appointment, they must be added in addition to all faculty on the committee.

## **MS Comprehensive Exam**

The rules are the same as for the PhD qualifying exam, except that graduate faculty status is not required.

## **MS or MPH Thesis Committee**

- The committee must consist of at least three University of Pittsburgh faculty members.
- Half or more of the members must be on the core faculty list of at least one GSPH department.
- One of the Pitt faculty on the committee must not be on the core list from the student's department.
- If thesis work includes internship/ practica experience, including data and policies, from the Allegheny County Health Department the committee must include a preceptor from the Allegheny County Health Department. If the preceptor is an adjunct faculty member, they count as a faculty member. If they do not hold an adjunct appointment, they must be added in addition to all faculty on the committee.

The same rule as for the MS comprehensive exam, except that the thesis committee chair need not be on the core list of the student's department.

## **MPH and MHA Essay**

- The committee must consist of at least two University of Pittsburgh faculty members.
- Members must have primary appointments in different University departments (at least two departments represented).
- At least one member must be on the core list of some GSPH department.
- If thesis work includes internship/ practica experience, including data and policies, from the Allegheny County Health Department the committee must include a preceptor from the Allegheny County Health Department. If the preceptor is an adjunct faculty member, they count as a faculty member. If they do not hold an adjunct appointment, they must be added in addition to all faculty on the committee.

## **DrPH**

Rules for composition of all committees are the same as for the PhD, except that all committees must have a majority of members who are on the core list of at least one GSPH department.

# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

## Format Instructions for Pitt Public Health Essays, Theses, and Dissertations

September 2013

**Before you start:** In addition to these format instructions, be sure you are aware of the following:

- general requirements for the research and document as specified by your department and your advisor, and
- rules regarding committee or readers.

**Before you finish:** Early in the semester in which you intend to graduate you should start looking at the detailed information on how to submit the electronic essay, thesis, or dissertation on the [graduation Web page](#) of Pitt Public Health. Questions should be directed to [Joanne Pegher](#) in the Office of Student Affairs.

**Generic research document outline:** Many students have found the following description of the [components of a typical thesis/dissertation](#) helpful as they begin to plan the layout of the document. Some essay writers may also choose to use this format.

**Other sources of format information:** You will also find it useful refer to a style guide such as Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Consult with your department and/or advisor about recommended style guides.

**Bibliography:** You may find it useful to use software such as [Endnote](#) for managing your bibliography.

**ETD (electronic thesis and dissertation) Web site:** Your basic source for format instructions is the [University's ETD Web site](#). This includes instructions, templates, forms, support, and a portal to view all University of Pittsburgh theses and dissertations that have been submitted in the past. However, there are some minor differences in format requirements between the general University guidelines and Pitt Public Health. Some instructions on the University ETD site may conflict with Pitt Public Health instructions, in which case you should follow the Pitt Public Health instructions outlined in the sections below.

**MPH/MHA essay format:** The preferred method for formatting your essay is to use this [template](#). If you do not use the template, be sure that your essay formatting follows [ETD guidelines](#). However, the essay sections should be ordered and numbered as in the table below, which is slightly different from the university ETD instructions. In addition, you do not need bookmarks in the essay. Your final essay can be deposited as a Word document or as a PDF.

### Required Order of Pages for Essays

| Section/Page                              | Page Numbering                                  |
|---|---|
| <a href="#">Title page</a>                | Small Roman numeral i assumed, but not numbered |
| <a href="#">Committee signature sheet</a> | Small Roman numeral ii                          |
| <a href="#">Copyright</a>                 | Small Roman numeral iii                         |
| <a href="#">Abstract</a>                  | Small Roman numeral continuation                |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| Table of contents (including appendix titles)                   | Small Roman numeral continuation  |
| List of tables (if any)   | Small Roman numeral continuation  |
| List of figures (if any)  | Small Roman numeral continuation  |
| Preface/Acknowledgments (optional, and if used should be brief) | Small Roman numeral continuation  |
| Body of essay   | Start with Arabic numeral 1 and continue  |
| Appendices (if any)   | Arabic numeral continuation<br>(If there is more than one appendix, denote them with letters, e.g. "Appendix A, Appendix B."<br>Separate cover sheets for each appendix are not required, although each appendix must begin at the top of a new page. The heading for each appendix is centered without punctuation. The appendix title can either follow the heading or it can be centered below.) |
| Bibliography  | Arabic numeral continuation   |

**Thesis and dissertation format:** Follow the [ETD guidelines](#), except for the title page, committee page, and abstract page, for which you should use the templates linked here. In addition, Pitt Public Health requires more complete bookmarks than the University guidelines indicate (see below).

[Thesis title page](#)

[Thesis committee page](#)

[Thesis abstract page](#)

[Dissertation title page](#)

[Dissertation committee page](#)

[Dissertation abstract page](#)

**Bookmarks:** MPH/MHA essays do not need to have bookmarks. Theses and dissertations MUST include complete bookmarks. All items in the thesis or dissertation, beginning with the title page and ending with the bibliography, must be bookmarked. This includes headings/subheadings, heading numbers, committee member page, abstract, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, preface, acknowledgements, appendices, etc. See the [ETD bookmark help sheet](#) for instructions on how to insert bookmarks, and the following notes may also be helpful.

Note 1: Hyperlink the following sections: table of contents, list of tables, and list of figures. You may either create drop-down lists for the items belonging in the list of tables and the list of figures or nest the table and figure bookmarks under the heading they fall under.

Note 2: Any bookmarks or links already in place before the thesis/dissertation is converted from an MS Word document to a PDF document will automatically be tagged "inherit zoom," a feature that ensures that the destination window is displayed at the magnification level the reader uses when viewing links or bookmarks. If you add bookmarks or links after the document has been converted, you will have to manually change them to "inherit zoom" using the following instructions.

- 1) Right-click on bookmark or link and choose "properties."
- 2) Choose "actions" tab.
- 3) Click "edit."
- 4) Change zoom to "inherit zoom."

- 5) If multiple bookmarks/links need to be changed, click through them individually.
- 6) Close bookmarks (press minus sign so that a plus sign appears).
- 7) Save.

**Using published papers in your essay, thesis or dissertation:** Some departments and advisors allow students to submit published or publication-ready manuscripts as thesis or dissertation chapters. Such papers may be included either in the body of the document or in the appendix. They must be based on work done during the student's enrollment at Pitt Public Health. In general the student should be the primary author on such a paper, but that is not absolutely required. The thesis or dissertation should include a preface listing the authors, the full citation (if published), and the role of the student in the work.

The articles must be logically connected by added text and be integrated into the document in a coherent manner. They must be presented in a manner consistent with the remainder of the text, i.e., identical typeface, paper, margins, and consistent numbering of tables, figures and footnotes. Bibliographic citations should be integrated with those for the rest of the document. Everything must be consistent with [University ETD guidelines](#).

If your article is already published or in press, you will need permission from the publisher in order to reuse the article, unless you own the copyright (see below).

**Copyright – general information:** The following links contain helpful information on copyright rules.

1. [Copyright Information for Graduate Students Writing a Thesis or Dissertation](#);
2. The University Library System's [copyright page](#).

**Registering for copyright:** Any work “fixed in a tangible medium of expression” is automatically afforded copyright protection, even without registration for a copyright. However students who wish to register for copyright should see the [ProQuest/UMI \(University Microfilms, Inc.\) instruction sheet](#) for information on registration. Students applying for copyright registration must complete page 6 of the UMI/Proquest form, and submit the form and a \$55 check or money order payable to ProQuest, LLC. Then turn in these documents to Office of Student Affairs with graduation paperwork.

**Use of copyrighted material:** When using text, tables, or figures from a published work, whether your own article or that of another author, you must receive the permission of the journal in which it was published. As a courtesy, you should also request permission of the author. A sample letter for requesting permission to use published text is available [here](#) for doctoral dissertations, and [here](#) for master's theses. Click [here](#) for instructions on preparing a letter or e-mail if time sensitive to the journal. Many journals have on their Web sites a “copyright permission request form.”

More detailed copyright information is available on the [ETD Web site](#).

A copy of the letter or email giving you permission to use the article, table, or figure must be submitted along with other documents that you submit for your thesis or dissertation. Do not incorporate the permission letter into the paper.

You must give notice of copyright in your paper, it should appear on a page immediately following the Committee Membership Page, and numbered 'iii', with the following text:

Copyright by [Name of Author]20\_\_ [year of publication]

# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

## School-Wide MPH Essay/ Thesis Completion Policy

EPCC Approval on July 14, 2016

- I. Requesting committee chair/main reader and/or faculty advisor and additional committee members/readers

Students will confer with their academic advisor or other designee about the essay/thesis in the semester prior to the one in which they plan to graduate. Students will request faculty members to serve as committee members/readers no later than the end of the semester prior to the one in which students plan to graduate.

- II. Timeline for submitting drafts to committee members/readers

The chair/main reader and student together will determine the timeline for submitting drafts, as many as are needed, so that the student can produce a high-quality paper and graduate on time, without putting undue pressure on readers.

- III. Students will submit the final version of the essay/thesis to committee members/readers at least two (2) weeks prior to:

- a. the defense date, in the case of the thesis, or
- b. the final upload date, in the case of the essay.
- c. **Only** the director of the program can request Student Affairs to grant an extension to complete work on the thesis/essay. Student Affairs will not grant extensions directly in response to student or advisor requests. After the readers/committee members have indicated their final approval of the essay/thesis by turning in the fully-signed ETD form for theses and [to be named] form for essays to Student Affairs, students may work directly with Student Affairs on formatting issues and any extensions that may be required for those.
- d. Not adhering to this timeline can result in the failure of the student to graduate in the desired semester, necessitating registration for an additional credit in another semester.

- IV. Expectations

- a. Students are expected to keep their main advisor apprised of all correspondence and discussion with their thesis committee members or essay readers.
- b. Students and their thesis advisor/essay main reader should discuss the process for getting feedback from other readers.
- c. While quality of the paper and extent to which feedback from outside readers is incorporated are up to the discretion of the student's department, there is an expectation that papers will be high quality and that feedback from all readers reviewed and considered.

The master's essay/thesis is a scholarly work that reflects the student's acquisition of knowledge, ability to synthesize information into a well-organized, coherent document, and development as a professional.

## **Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18**

### **University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health Independent Development Plan policy**

EPCC Approval on February 12, 2015

A Graduate Student Career Development Plan, also known as an Independent Development Plan (IDP), is a tool for helping students and advisors outline and discuss short-term and long-term objectives to guide the student's professional development. Graduate School of Public Health doctoral students and advisors are required to complete an IDP at least annually, typically timed to coincide with the required annual doctoral committee meeting. An IDP template is available at [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/IDP](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/IDP), but students and advisors may substitute any other form that meets the same purpose (e.g. department-specific templates or templates provided by professional societies).

Completed IDP forms should be kept in student files at the department level. They should be treated as confidential student records. The Report on Requirements form for the doctoral preliminary exam and dissertation overview includes a checkbox that the committee should use to certify that an IDP has been completed within the six months prior to the exam.

IDPs are intended as a career development tool, and are not a substitute for a GSR evaluation that assesses job performance. For students whose GSR is closely tied to their dissertation research, it may be possible to combine the two, but it is still necessary to assess academic development and job performance separately.

IDPs are not required for master's students, but they are highly recommended. The template at [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/IDP](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/IDP) is suitable for master's students as well as doctoral students.

# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2016-17

## Pitt Public Health Probation and Dismissal Guidelines

University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH)

School-wide Probation and Dismissal Policy (SPDP)

### Scope

The provisions of this policy pertain to dismissal and probation for academic reasons and are developed in conformance with the University Council on Graduate Study's Regulations Governing Graduate Study at the University of Pittsburgh ("Regulations"), located at [www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html). This policy aims to provide a means of establishing and maintaining basic standards and requirements for graduate work at the Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH), and is applicable to all GSPH students.

The GSPH Academic Standards and Performance Policy consists of the School-wide Probation and Dismissal Policy (SPDP), auxiliary policies established by GSPH departments to address specific items not covered by the SPDP, and university-wide academic policies. GSPH departmental policies, although they may differ in details, must conform to the fundamental principles of the SPDP, and may not be more lenient than the SPDP. Policies not covered by the SPDP must be consistent with university-wide policies regarding admission, registration, and graduation requirements. Each department may develop its own policies for probation and dismissal. However, these department-specific policies must be approved by the GSPH Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee, and provided to students upon admission to the degree program, and updates/changes must be provided to students in a timely manner. If departments do not specify such requirements, the SPDP applies. If the SPDP does not specify such requirements, the University-wide policies apply. As a rule of thumb, departments may not retroactively enact policies affecting currently-enrolled students without the approval of the GSPH Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee ("EPCC").

Policies and procedures pertaining to non-academic performance are covered by the University of Pittsburgh's Student Code of Conduct and/or Academic Integrity guidelines. Students are subject to the dismissal for breaches of the Student Code of Conduct and/or Academic Integrity guidelines, and cases are adjudicated through the specific processes related to student conduct and academic integrity.

### Periodic Review and Documentation

All academic difficulties described should be documented in writing at each stage and should begin as soon as problems arise. The requirement for documentation applies to all degrees, academic programs, and academic shortcomings. Maintaining documentation of student

academic problems is primarily, although not exclusively, the responsibility of the student's academic advisor and the student's department. The absence of documentation, however, will not preclude academic remedies from being imposed upon students in appropriate cases.

All students should be given periodic departmental reviews of academic progress and constructive feedback. As problems are documented, students should receive written notice of documented problems, as well as the opportunity to respond to written notice.

### Reasons for Dismissal from GSPH

#### 1. Failure to Maintain Minimum Grade Point Average (3.00)

A GSPH student whose cumulative grade point average (GPA is the same as QPA) falls below 3.00 is immediately placed on academic probation, and the student, his/her academic advisor, and department chairperson are notified by the EPCC. A student on probation may be permitted to take additional coursework over no more than two terms as a full-time student (part-time students may complete a maximum of an additional 18 credit hours) to reach a cumulative GPA/QPA of 3.00 (See Regulations, "Academic Standards," Located at: [www.pitt.edu/~graduate/reggeneral.html#standards](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/reggeneral.html#standards)). Students whose GPA/QPA is sufficiently low so as to make it impossible to achieve the GPA/QPA 3.0 standard according to these timeframes may be dismissed without the additional coursework.

#### 2. Failure to meet GSPH minimum grade requirement for GSPH Core Courses and Required Departmental Courses

All master's and doctoral students must meet GSPH minimum grade requirements for both GSPH core courses and courses required by their department.

The minimum grade requirement for school-wide core courses is a C. Students who are otherwise eligible are granted two opportunities to register for and achieve at least a C in GSPH school-wide core courses.

Students who are otherwise eligible also have a maximum of two opportunities to register for and achieve the minimum required grade for departmental core courses. The minimum grade requirement for those courses is established by departments.

#### 3. Failure to Make Normal Progress Towards Degree (Completion of Courses)

Except in unusual circumstances (e.g. medical leave of absence) students may not accumulate more than 15 credits of unresolved G grades. A student approaching 15 credits of unresolved G grades will receive a memo from EPCC, and the student and his/her academic advisor will be asked to develop a plan for timely resolution of the grades.

A student will not be permitted to register for additional credits until the G grades are converted as a result of completion of course work. Because the University requires resolution of G grades within one year, requests for change of G grades more than a year old must be accompanied by an appeal in support of the request from the student's department and must

be approved by the GSPH Assistant Dean of Student Affairs before they are submitted to the Registrar's Office.

#### 4. Failure of Master's or Doctoral Program Examinations

The University Regulations pertaining to Master's and Doctoral degrees describe the requirements for master's and doctoral examinations. Departments may determine the format and content of the examinations within the broad University guidelines and should provide students with formal written guidelines, and each department is responsible for specifying the procedure for administration of the master's comprehensive examination. Master's students on provisional status may not take a comprehensive examination (Regulations, "Comprehensive Examination," located at: [www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regmasters.html#comps](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regmasters.html#comps)).

Examining committees for the doctoral overview/prospectus meeting and the final doctoral defense should be unanimous in their recommendation that a student be passed (Regulations, "Doctoral Students," located at: [www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regphd.html#doctor](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regphd.html#doctor)).

If the committee does not vote unanimously to pass a student, the matter will be sent to the department chair, and, if necessary, to the GSPH Dean for resolution. Students who fail a doctoral or master's examination (doctoral overview or defense: less than unanimous vote to pass; other exams: see department standards), will be permitted one re-take of the examination. If a student fails a re-take, the student's department chair, if he/she feels that a second re-take is justified, may appeal to the GSPH Dean on the student's behalf. If the student's department chair feels that a second re-take should not be granted the student may appeal for a second attempt by submitting a letter to the Chair of the school's Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee (EPCC). The EPCC has a detailed procedure for administering this process. More specific rules governing program examinations may be covered by department-specific academic performance policies.

#### 5. Inability to Conduct Research or to Perform According to Professional Standards

*Inability to Conduct Research:* Faculty are responsible for guiding the research of a GSPH student accepted for participation in their research project, and for meeting the advising requirements set forth in the University of Pittsburgh's document, "Elements of Good Academic Advising." However, no faculty member is obliged to accept a specific student as a member of his/her research team. The student, not the faculty advisor, is expected to: (1) design and plan the research project; (2) conceptualize and formulate the hypothesis and methodology; (3) perform data analysis; and (4) write an acceptable essay, thesis, or dissertation. If a student is judged by GSPH faculty members to be unable to conduct independent research as appropriate to the discipline, the student may be dismissed.

Primary responsibility for determining whether a student has demonstrated the ability to apply research methods and to conduct independent research as appropriate to the discipline rests with the student's academic and research advisors (including the master's or doctoral



committees). However, in order that evaluation of a student's work be fair and objective, failure to demonstrate the ability to conduct research must be well-documented by the faculty advisor(s) and reviewed by: (1) a committee convened by the department chair and consisting of other departmental faculty and students; or (2) if the student has already formed one, the doctoral committee. Upon the recommendation of these committees, the department chair must notify the EPCC of his/her decision to dismiss the student, and provide the documentation for the EPCC to review. If a majority of the elected faculty EPCC members concurs, the EPCC chair will notify the department chair, who must notify the student of his/her dismissal, and the reasons for dismissal.

*Inability to Perform According to Professional Standards:* Faculty who are responsible for supervising GSPH students during professional activities are required to ensure that the student is able to perform according to professional standards. The student is expected to: (1) participate in professional development activities, including but not limited to involvement in professional associations; (2) behave in a manner consistent with the norms of the discipline / professional field during a field placement, practicum, or residency.

Primary responsibility for determining whether a student has demonstrated the ability to perform according to professional standards rests with the student's academic and field placement advisors. However, in order that the evaluation of a student's work be fair and objective, failure to demonstrate the ability to perform according to professional standards must be well-documented by the faculty advisor(s) and reviewed by: a committee convened by the department chair and consisting of other departmental faculty and students. Upon the recommendation of this committee, the department chair must notify the EPCC of his/her decision to dismiss the student, and provide the documentation for the EPCC to review. If a majority of the elected faculty EPCC members concurs, the EPCC chair will notify the department chair, who will notify the student of his/her dismissal and the reasons for dismissal.

#### Probation and Dismissal Process and General Appeals Process

Both the GSPH Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and the EPCC chair are available for consultation regarding the GSPH policies. Any GSPH faculty member can request the department chair to review a GSPH student's performance. Subsequently, the department chair should contact the EPCC chair to request a review, and provide the EPCC chair with documentation to support the department's decision. The EPCC will review the documentation and notify the department chair regarding its support of the decision. If the EPCC concurs with the decision to dismiss, the EPCC chair will notify the department chair. The department chair will contact the student who is being dismissed to inform him/her of the action. The department chair must identify which of the reasons for dismissal is applicable. If the EPCC disagrees with the department's decision to dismiss a student, the matter is referred to the GSPH Dean for resolution.

A student may appeal a decision to dismiss by filing a written appeal with his/her department

chair. The department chair must then bring the appeal to the attention of the EPCC, which will meet with the department chair and student's academic advisor to discuss the basis for dismissal. The EPCC must then provide its recommendation to the GSPH Dean, who will approve or reverse the department's decision to dismiss the student. The GSPH Dean's decision is final, and this appeal exhausts all remedies available to the student.

The EPCC must create an ad hoc committee to provide objective feedback on dismissal cases related to *Inability to Conduct Research or to Perform According to Professional Standards*. The department chair will bring the GSPH student's appeal to the attention of the EPCC, which will set up an ad hoc committee to review documentation consisting of at least one faculty member and at least one student from the same GSPH department, and at least one faculty member and at least one student from outside the department (i.e., at a minimum, an ad hoc committee must consist of two faculty and two students). If the ad hoc committee disagrees (by majority vote) with the department's decision to dismiss, the EPCC chair will contact the GSPH Dean to approve or reverse the department's decision.

# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

## Pitt Public Health academic integrity procedures

July 2013

### *I. Student Obligations*

A student has an obligation to exhibit honesty and to respect the ethical standards of the profession in carrying out his or her academic assignments. Without limiting the application of this principle, a student may be found to have violated this obligation if he or she:

1. Refers during an academic evaluation to materials or sources, or employs devices, not authorized by the faculty member.
2. Provides assistance during an academic evaluation to another person in a manner not authorized by the faculty member.
3. Receives assistance during an academic evaluation from another person in a manner not authorized by the faculty member.
4. Engages in unauthorized possession, buying, selling, obtaining, or use of a copy of any materials intended to be used as an instrument of academic evaluation in advance of its administration.
5. Acts as a substitute for another person in any academic evaluation process.
6. Utilizes a substitute in any academic evaluation proceeding.
7. Practices any form of deceit in an academic evaluation proceeding.
8. Depends on the aid of others in a manner expressly prohibited by the faculty member, in the research, preparation, creation, writing, performing, or publication of work to be submitted for academic credit or evaluation.
9. Provides aid to another person, knowing such aid is expressly prohibited by the faculty member, in the research, preparation, creation, writing, performing, or publication of work to be submitted for academic credit or evaluation.
10. Presents as one's own, for academic evaluation, the ideas, representations, or words of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources.
11. Submits the work of another person in a manner which represents the work to be one's own.
12. Knowingly permits one's work to be submitted by another person without the faculty member's authorization.
13. Attempts to influence or change one's academic evaluation or record for reasons other than achievement or merit.

14. Indulges, during a class (or examination) session in which one is a student, in conduct which is so disruptive as to infringe upon the rights of the faculty member or fellow students.
15. Fails to cooperate, if called upon, in the investigation or disposition of any allegation of dishonesty pertaining to a fellow student.
16. Violates the canons of ethics of the [Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health](#).

## ***II. Procedures for Adjudication***

No student should be subject to an adverse finding that he or she committed an offense related to academic integrity, and no sanction should be imposed relating thereto, except in accordance with procedures appropriate for disposition of the particular matter involved. The degree of formality of proceedings, the identity of the decision maker or decision makers, and other related aspects properly reflect such considerations as the severity of the potential sanction, its probable impact upon the student, and the extent to which matters of professional judgment are essential in arriving at an informed decision. In all cases, however, the objective is to provide fairness to the student as well as an orderly means for arriving at a decision, starting first with the individual faculty member and then designated administrative officers or bodies.

**These Guidelines are not meant to address differences of opinion over grades issued by faculty in exercising good faith professional judgments of student work.** They are meant to address matters in which a faculty member deals with a student regarding an alleged breach of academic integrity. In matters of academic integrity, the succeeding procedural steps must be followed:

1. Any member of the University community may bring to the attention of the faculty member a complaint that a student has failed, in one or more respects, to meet faithfully the obligations specified in the above Section I.
2. Acting on his or her own evidence, and/or on the basis of evidence submitted to the faculty member, the faculty member will advise the student that he or she has reason to believe that the student has committed an offense related to academic integrity, and the student will be afforded an opportunity to respond. If the accused student and the faculty member accept a specific resolution offered by either of them, the matter shall be considered closed if both parties complete and sign a written agreement to that effect using the [Report of Possible Academic Integrity Violation by a Student form](#) and submit it to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Mary Derkach. The Assistant Dean will maintain a written record of the form, signed by the student and the faculty member. These records are not to be added to the student's individual file, and they are to be destroyed when the student graduates or otherwise terminates registration. The Assistant Dean may provide such information on an individual student for the following uses:
  - a. to a faculty member who is involved with a student integrity violation at the initial stage and who wishes to use this previous record in determining whether a resolution between the faculty member and the student or an

academic integrity board hearing may be most appropriate, especially in the case of repeat offenders; and

- b. to the GSPH Academic Integrity Hearing Board (AIHB) after a decision of guilt or innocence has been made in a case, but before a sanction has been recommended.
3. If an agreed-upon resolution between the faculty member and the student cannot be reached, the faculty member will file a written statement of charges with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, who serves as the school's academic integrity administrative officer and support staff for the GSPH AIHB. Such statement should set forth the alleged offenses which are the basis of the charges, including a factual narrative of events and the dates and times of occurrences. The statement should also include the names of persons having personal knowledge of circumstances or events, the general nature and description of all evidence, and the signature of the charging party. If this occurs at the end of a term, and/or the last term of enrollment, the "G" grade should be issued for the course until the matter is decided. In situations involving the student's last term before graduation, degree certifications can be withheld pending the outcome of the hearing, which should be expedited as quickly as possible.
4. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will transmit the written statement of charges to the student, together with a copy of these regulations.
5. The letter of transmittal to the student, a copy of which shall also be sent to the faculty member or charging party, will state a time and place when a hearing on the charges will be held by the Chair of the GSPH AIHB.
6. In proceedings before the GSPH AIHB, the student shall have the right:
  - a. to be considered innocent until found guilty by clear and convincing evidence of a violation of the student obligations of academic integrity;
  - b. to have a fair disposition of all matters as promptly as possible under the circumstances;
  - c. to be informed of the general nature of the evidence to be presented;
  - d. to confront and question all parties and witnesses except when extraordinary circumstances make this impossible;
  - e. to present a factual defense through witnesses, personal testimony, and other relevant evidence;
  - f. to decline to testify against himself or herself;
  - g. to have only relevant evidence considered by the GSPH AIHB;
  - h. to have a record of the hearing (audio tape), at his or her own expense, upon request.
7. The hearing should provide a fair inquiry into the truth or falsity of the charges, with the charged party and the faculty member or charging party afforded the right to cross-examine all adverse witnesses. At the level of the GSPH AIHB, legal counsel shall not be permitted, but a non-attorney/law student representative from within

the University community shall be permitted for both faculty and students. A law student cannot be used as a representative at a hearing of the University's Board.

8. Any member of the University community may, upon showing relevancy and necessity, request witnesses to appear at the hearing. Witnesses who are members of the University community shall be required to appear, and other witnesses shall be requested to appear, at a hearing. When necessitated by fairness or extraordinary circumstances, the Chair of the GSPH AIHB may make arrangements for recorded or written testimony for use in a proceeding.

**HEARING PROCEDURE:** The hearing will be conducted as follows:

- a. the Chair of the GSPH AIHB will not apply technical exclusionary rules of evidence followed in judicial proceedings nor entertain technical legal motions. Technical legal rules pertaining to the wording of questions, hearsay, and opinions will not be formally applied. Reasonable rules of relevancy will guide the Chair of the GSPH AIHB in ruling on the admissibility of evidence. Reasonable limits may be imposed on the number of factual witnesses and the amount of cumulative evidence that may be introduced;
- b. the alleged offense or offenses upon which the complaint is based shall be read by the Chair of the GSPH AIHB;
- c. objections to procedure shall be entered on the record, and the Chair of the GSPH AIHB shall make any necessary rulings regarding the validity of such objections;
- d. the charging party shall state his or her case and shall offer evidence in support thereof;
- e. the accused or representative(s) for the accused shall have the opportunity to question the charging party;
- f. the charging party shall be given the opportunity to call witnesses;
- g. the accused or representative(s) for the accused shall be given the opportunity to question each witness of the charging party after he or she testifies;
- h. the charging party shall inform the Chair of the GSPH AIHB when his or her presentation is completed, at which time the GSPH AIHB members shall be given an opportunity to ask questions of the persons participating in the hearing;
- i. the GSPH AIHB shall recess, and the Chair of the GSPH AIHB shall make a determination as to whether the charging party has presented sufficient evidence to support a finding against the accused, if such evidence is uncontroverted. The parties may be required to remain in the hearing room during the recess or may be excused for a time period set by the Chair of the GSPH AIHB;

- j. depending upon the determination of the Chair of the GSPH AIHB, the matter shall be dismissed or the accused shall be called upon to present his or her case and offer evidence in support thereof;
- k. the accused may testify or not as he or she chooses;
- l. the charging party shall have the opportunity to question the accused if the accused voluntarily chooses to testify;
- m. the accused or representative(s) for the accused shall have the opportunity to call witnesses;
- n. the charging party shall have the opportunity to question each witness of the accused after he or she testifies;
- o. the accused shall inform the Chair of the GSPH AIHB when his or her presentation is complete, and the GSPH AIHB members shall have an opportunity to ask questions of the accused as well as the accused's witnesses;
- p. the Chair of the GSPH AIHB shall have an opportunity to address the Board on University regulations or procedure in the presence of all parties, but shall not offer other comments without the consent of all parties; and,
- q. the hearing shall be continued and the members of the Board shall deliberate in private until a decision is reached and recorded.

9. A suitable record (audio recording) shall be made of the proceedings, exclusive of deliberations to arrive at a decision.

10. The proposed decision, which shall be written, shall include a determination of whether the charges have been proven by clear and convincing evidence, together with findings with respect to the material facts. If any charges are established, the proposed decision shall state the particular sanction or sanctions to be imposed. Prior violations or informal resolutions of violations may be considered *only* in recommending sanctions, not in determining guilt or innocence. Once a determination of guilt has been made, and before determining sanctions, the Chair of the GSPH-AIHB should find out from Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Derkach whether prior offenses and sanctions imposed have occurred.

11. The proposed decision shall be submitted to the GSPH dean, who will make an independent review of the hearing proceedings. The dean may require that the charges be dismissed, or that the case be remanded for further proceedings whenever he or she deems this to be necessary. Upon completion of such additional proceedings, if any, and within a reasonable time the dean shall issue a final decision. The dean may reject any findings made by the GSPH-AIHB adverse to the student, and may dismiss the charges or reduce the severity of any sanction imposed, but the dean may not make new findings adverse to the student or increase the severity of a sanction, except in the case of repeat offenders of the Academic Integrity Guidelines.

12. The Chair of the GSPH-AIHB shall then transmit to the charged party and the accusing faculty member copies of all actions taken by the GSPH-AIHB and the dean. If a sanction is imposed, the notice to the student will make reference to the student's opportunity, by petition filed with the provost, to appeal to the University Review Board.

### ***III. Timeliness***

It is the responsibility of all parties, including administrative officers, to take prompt action in order that charges can be resolved quickly and fairly. Failure of the faculty member to utilize these procedures diligently may constitute grounds for dismissal of charges. Parties have the right to seek review by the Provost or to petition the University Review Board for an appeal from a decision of the GSPH-AIHB or investigatory committee within five (5) working days of the date of the decision letter.

### ***IV. Sanctions***

The alternative sanctions which may be imposed upon a finding that an offense related to academic integrity has been committed are the following:

1. Dismissal from the University without expectation of readmission.
2. Suspension from the University for a specific period of time.
3. Reduction in grade, or assignment of a failing grade, in the course in which the offending paper or examination was submitted.
4. Reduction in grade, or assignment of a failing grade, on the paper or examination in which the offense occurred. The schools can add other sanctions approved by the dean of GSPH and the Provost. Such sanctions must be made known to students.

In administering sanctions, academic units must strive to achieve consistency in their application. That is, within the same units, the same sanctions should be applied for the same offenses, unless extenuating circumstances can be documented, e.g., the student is a repeat offender. The imposition of such sanctions may be considered by the school in the preparation of any report concerning a student submitted to a government agency, accrediting body, or other person or institution in accordance with the requirements of law or the written consent of the student.

### ***V. Academic Integrity Hearing Board***

The GSPH Academic Integrity Hearing Board (AIHB) shall be composed of both faculty and students and consist of: at least twelve persons, including one faculty representative from each GSPH department, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Associate Dean for Education, and two GSPH students. Faculty representatives are also members of the GSPH Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC). The two student representatives are representatives to the EPCC who have been selected by the EPCC to serve on the GSPH AIHB. Assistant and Associate Deans for Student Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Education are ex-officio members. In order to ensure continuity and orderly turnover



of members, faculty representatives will serve staggered terms of either two or three years, and students will serve for one year. All will be familiarized with the GSPH-AIHB guidelines.

#### ***VI. Review and Appeal***

A student or faculty member may seek to have a dean's final decision (or a determination that the charges are not subject to adjudication) reviewed by the Provost, who may seek the advice of the University Review Board, or the student may appeal to the University Review Board, whose recommendation shall be made to the Provost. The action of the Provost, taken with or without the advice of the University Review Board, shall constitute an exhaustion of all required institutional remedies.

### **University of Pittsburgh**

#### **GSPH Academic Integrity Policy and Hearing Procedures**

#### **Faculty Obligations and Student Rights**

##### ***I. Faculty Obligations and Student Rights***

A faculty member accepts an obligation, in relation to his or her students, to discharge his or her duties in a fair and conscientious manner in accordance with the ethical standards generally recognized within the academic community, (as well as those of the profession).

Without limiting the application of the above principle, members of the faculty are also expected (except in cases of illness or other compelling circumstance) to conduct themselves in a professional manner, including the following:

1. To meet their classes when scheduled.
2. To be available at reasonable times for appointments with students, and to keep such appointments.
3. To make appropriate preparation for classes and other meetings.
4. To perform their grading duties and other academic evaluations in a timely manner.
5. To describe to students, within the period in which a student may add and drop a course, orally, in writing, or by reference to printed course descriptions, the general content and objectives of a course; and announce the methods and standards of evaluation, including the importance to be assigned various factors in academic evaluation and, in advance of any evaluation, the permissible materials or references allowed during evaluation.
6. To base all academic evaluations upon good-faith professional judgment.
7. Not to consider, in academic evaluation, such factors as race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, and political or cultural affiliation, and life style, activities, or behavior outside the classroom unrelated to academic achievement.
8. To respect the confidentiality of information regarding a student contained in University records; and to refrain from releasing such information, except in connection with intra-University business, or with student consent, or as may be permitted by law.

9. Not to exploit his or her professional relationship with students for private advantage; and to refrain from soliciting the assistance of students for private purposes in a manner which infringes upon such students' freedom of choice.
10. To give appropriate recognition to contributions made by students to research, publication, service, or other activities.
11. To refrain from any activity which involves risk to the health and safety of a student, except with the student's informed consent, and, where applicable, in accordance with the University policy relating to the use of human subjects in experimentation.
12. To respect the dignity of students individually and collectively in the classroom and other academic contexts.

## ***II. Grievance Procedures***

Any member of the University community having evidence may bring to the attention of first the department chair and later, if necessary, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs Cindy Bryce a complaint that a faculty member has failed, in one or more respects, to meet faithfully the obligations set forth above. The chair or associate dean, at his or her discretion, will take such action by way of investigation, counseling, or action--in accordance with applicable University procedures--as may appear to be proper under the circumstances. The faculty member's and student's interest in confidentiality, academic freedom, and professional integrity in such matters will be respected.

## ***III. Individual Grievances***

In order to provide a means for students to seek and obtain redress for grievances affecting themselves individually, the following procedures should be followed. These are not intended and shall not be used to provide sanctions against faculty members.

## ***IV. Procedures***

Where an individual student alleges with particularity that the actions of a faculty member have resulted in serious academic injury to the student, the matter shall (if requested by the student) be presented to the GSPH Academic Integrity Hearing Board (AIHB) for adjudication. Serious academic injury includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the awarding of a lower course grade than that which the student has earned or suspension from a class. **However, this is not intended to address normal grading decisions of faculty in exercising good-faith professional judgment in evaluating a student's work.** It is the responsibility of the student, before seeking to have a grievance adjudicated, to attempt to resolve the matter by personal conference with the faculty member concerned, and, if such attempts are unavailing, to call the matter to the attention of first the department chair and later, if necessary, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs Bryce for consideration and adjustment by informal means. If a matter remains unresolved after such efforts have been made, the following grievance procedures shall be employed:

1. The aggrieved student will file a written statement of charges with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Mary Derkach, the GSPH designated Academic Integrity Administrative Officer.
2. If Assistant Dean Derkach determines in consultation with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs that the charges are subject to adjudication under the terms of the Academic Integrity Guidelines, she will transmit the charges to the faculty member and to Associate Dean Bryce, together with a copy of these regulations.
3. The letter of transmittal to the faculty member, a copy of which shall also be sent to the student, will state the composition of a committee convened by Associate Dean Bryce that has been named to meet with the involved parties to make an informal inquiry into the charge. The purpose of this committee is to provide a last effort at informal resolution of the matter between the student and the faculty member.
4. The committee shall meet with the faculty member, the student, and others as appropriate, to review the nature of the problem in an attempt at reaching a settlement of the differences. This is not a formal hearing, and formal procedural rules do not apply. Upon completion of this meeting, if no mutually agreeable resolution results, the committee may produce its own recommendation for a solution to the conflict.
5. Should the committee recommend that the faculty member take some corrective action on behalf of the student, its recommendations shall be provided to the faculty member. As promptly as reasonable and at least within five (5) working days after the faculty member receives the recommendations of the committee, the faculty member shall privately take that action which he or she elects, and so advise the student and the chair of the committee of that action.
6. Should the committee conclude that the faculty member need not take corrective action on behalf of the student, this finding shall be forwarded to both the faculty member and the student.
7. If the student elects to pursue the matter further, either because he or she is dissatisfied with the resulting action of the faculty member or the conclusion of the committee, he or she should discuss this intent with the chair of the committee, who should review the procedures to be followed with the student. If the student wishes to proceed with a formal hearing, the chair of the committee shall advise the Chair of the GSPH AIHB that the case appears to involve a student's claim of serious academic injury, and that the formal hearing procedure must be initiated.
8. The formal hearing should provide a fair inquiry into the truth or falsity of the charges, with the faculty member and the student afforded the right to cross-examine. At the level of the GSPH-AIHB, legal counsel shall not be permitted, but a representative from within the University community shall be permitted for both faculty and students.
9. A suitable record (audio recording) shall be made of the proceedings, exclusive of deliberations to arrive at a decision.
10. The proposed decision, which shall be written, shall include a determination of whether charges have been proved by clear and convincing evidence, together with

findings with respect to the material facts. If any charges are established, the proposed decision shall state the particular remedial action to be taken.

11. The proposed decision shall be submitted to the GSPH dean, who will make an independent review of the hearing proceedings. The dean may require that the charges be dismissed, or that the case be remanded for further proceedings whenever he or she deems this to be necessary. The dean may limit the scope of any further proceedings or require that part or all of the original proceedings be reconvened. Upon completion of such additional proceedings, if any, the dean shall issue a final decision. The dean may reject any findings made by the GSPH AIHB, may dismiss the charges, or may reduce the extent of the remedial action to be taken. If the dean believes the remedial action to be taken may infringe upon the exercise of academic freedom, he or she will seek an advisory opinion from the Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (TAF) before issuing his or her own decision. The decision of the dean shall be in writing, shall set forth with particularity any new findings of fact or remedies, and shall include a statement of the reasons underlying such action.

12. The dean shall then transmit to the faculty member and to the student copies of all actions affecting them taken by the hearing authority and the dean. Suitable records shall be maintained as confidential and retained in the Office of the Dean.

#### ***V. Remedial Action***

Remedies on a student's behalf should usually be those agreed to willingly by the faculty member. Other remedial action to benefit a student may be authorized by the dean only upon recommendation of the GSPH AIHB and limited to: allowing a student to repeat an examination; allowing a student to be evaluated for work that would otherwise be too late to be considered; directing that additional opportunities be afforded for consultation or instruction; eliminating a grade that had been assigned by a faculty member from the transcript; changing of a failing letter or numerical grade to a "pass" or "satisfactory" grade, so as not to adversely affect a student's grade average; allowing a student to repeat a course without penalty, schedule and program permitting.

If some action is contemplated that might be deemed to infringe upon the academic freedom of the faculty member, the dean will seek an advisory opinion from the Senate Committee on TAF. In such cases, TAF may identify other acceptable remedies or render such advice as may be appropriate in the particular situation.

No action detrimental to the faculty member will be taken, except as in strict accordance with established University procedures. An adjustment hereunder in the student's behalf shall not be deemed a determination that the faculty member was in any way negligent or derelict.

#### ***IV. Review and Appeal***

A student or faculty member may seek to have a dean's final decision (or a determination that the charges are not subject to adjudication) reviewed by the Provost, who may seek the advice of the University Review Board, or the student may appeal to the University Review Board, whose recommendation shall be made to the Provost. The action of the Provost, taken with or

without the advice of the University Review Board, shall constitute an exhaustion of all required institutional remedies.

If any such determination may be deemed to have a possible adverse effect upon the faculty member's professional situation, the faculty member may seek the assistance of the Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee of the University Senate.

### ***VII. Timeliness***

It is the responsibility of all parties, including administrative officers, to take prompt action in order that grievances may be resolved quickly and fairly. While no explicit time limit could apply to all cases, failure to use diligence in seeking redress may constitute grounds for denial of a hearing or other relief, especially if prejudice results. Parties have the right to seek review of the Provost or to petition the University Review Board for an appeal from a decision of the GSPH AIHB or investigatory committee within five (5) working days of the date of the decision letter.

### ***VII. Investigatory Committees and Hearing Boards***

The informal investigatory committees shall consist of three to five faculty selected by Associate Dean Bryce and one or two students from the EPCC. The GSPH AIHB shall be composed of both students and faculty and shall consist of seven faculty, one representing each department, two students, and three ex-officio members. The faculty and students are representatives to the GSPH EPCC, and the ex-officio members are the Assistant and Associate Deans for Student Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Education. Associate Dean Bryce will select individuals to serve in particular cases.

### ***Grievance Procedures Against Senior Administrators***

A student complaint of arbitrary or unfair treatment against the principal officer of an academic unit (e.g., the dean) should be made to the Provost or appropriate Senior Vice Chancellor. There must be a prompt review and decision on the grievance. Members of the faculty who may be called upon to review and advise on the grievance should be drawn from outside the jurisdiction of the administrator against whom the charge is made.

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### **Footnotes**

1. There may be instances where the charging party may more appropriately invoke the *University of Pittsburgh Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Procedures*. This may occur where the alleged wrong mainly involves factual determinations and not academic issues.
2. If the faculty member elects not to pursue a complaint submitted by a member of the University community, the complaint can be submitted to an individual appointed by the dean who can pursue the matter in place of the faculty member.
3. The University Review Board and its jurisdiction are described at the end of this document.

4. In implementation, the decision of the Provost shall be binding also on matters of interpretation of codes and procedures, determination of serious injury, and determination that an allegation is subject to adjudication by the procedures provided herein.
5. GSPH recognizes that what is expected of faculty hereunder is intended to provide students with a notion of what is required in the course, and how they will be evaluated; a general statement of broadly defined parameters would therefore suffice. If a course is deemed experimental in content, evaluation techniques, or grading practices, the students should be so advised. By academic evaluation is meant a measurement or grading of a student's academic performance, such as in written or oral examinations or papers, research reports, or class or laboratory participation.
6. If the student charges such discrimination, the Assistant or Associate Dean for Student Affairs will consult with the University's affirmative action officer to ensure compliance with civil rights legislation and regulations. In such cases, the University Senate Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee may be consulted at any time.
7. References or recommendations may be given in good faith by a faculty member on his or her own behalf, without documentation of a student's consent if it may be reasonably perceived that the student initiated the request for a recommendation, in response to apparent bona fide inquiries, such as those from institutions which state that the student has applied for employment, for admission to graduate academic unit, or for a professional license. See fuller statements concerning University records in the "Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Procedures."
8. Students are advised that other University policies may more appropriately apply to a given grievance or avenue of redress, including, but not necessarily limited to, *the University of Pittsburgh Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures*.

#### **UNIVERSITY REVIEW BOARD**

The University Review Board (URB) is the duly authorized appellate body which serves as an advisor to the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor and the Chancellor. (Regional Campuses may establish similar appellate bodies which serve as an advisor to their President and whose appellate jurisdiction shall be limited to nonacademic matters). The URB may exercise appellate jurisdiction for academic and non-academic matters and shall have sole appellate jurisdiction for matters originating from judicial bodies within the University Student Judicial System. The URB shall also exercise limited jurisdiction for matters referred directly from the Chancellor and the Provost, the Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences, or the Vice Provost and Dean of Students. The University Review Board may meet from time to time for the purpose of orienting new members and reviewing prior decisions and shall meet at such other times as are necessary to conduct appellate hearings.

#### **URB STRUCTURE**

The URB shall be a standing body of fifteen members of the University community appointed for staggered terms of two years. Appointment shall be made in the following manner:

1. Five faculty members elected by the University Senate.
2. Five graduate and professional students appointed by the Graduate and Professional Student Association.
3. Five undergraduate students:
  - a. two appointed by the General Studies Student Council; and
  - b. three appointed by the Undergraduate Student Government Board.

A matter properly submitted for review shall be heard by a Review Board of five members of the URB. Review Boards shall be composed as follows:

1. In academic cases, three faculty members and two students.
2. In non-academic cases, two faculty members and three students.

#### **URB MODERATOR**

An attorney appointed by the Chancellor who shall serve as URB Moderator is authorized to:

1. Conduct the administrative and procedural operations of the URB.
2. Determine the appropriateness and completeness of Petitions to the URB in consultation with one student and one faculty member of the URB.
3. Provide advice and assistance to members of the University community regarding the processing of an appeal.
4. Select members from the URB membership to serve on Review Boards.
5. Moderate all proceedings before the URB.
6. Serve as legal advisor to the URB. 17
7. Provide legal advice related to URB proceedings and recommendation, if requested, to the Chancellor or other referring authority.

#### **BASIS FOR APPEAL**

The URB shall hear an appeal whenever requested by the Chancellor, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor, Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences, or the Vice Provost and Dean of students. The URB shall also hear appeals on the petition of a faculty member, student, or student organization when either petition, together with supporting documentation, presents a substantial question within the scope of review of the URB and either the prior adjudication or action resulted in:

1. Suspension or dismissal from the University for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
2. Suspension or dismissal from the University or the imposition of a serious academic sanction for violation of academic integrity standards.
3. Grant or denial of a remedy in an academic grievance proceeding.
4. Suspension or dismissal from the University residence halls.
5. Procedural rulings or substantive interpretations which have an important continuing impact upon the University Student Judicial System or the University community.

#### **SCOPE OF REVIEW**

The scope of review of the URB shall be limited to consideration of the following questions:

1. Whether rights affirmed by the Board of Trustees have been denied.
2. Whether the adjudicatory process of an initial hearing was conducted fairly and in conformity with properly prescribed procedures.
3. Whether the adjudication was supported by substantial evidence.
4. Whether the regulations involved were lawful and proper and whether they were properly applied in the particular case.
5. Whether the sanction or remedy imposed was in due proportion to the gravity and nature of the conduct.

## **URB PROCEDURES**

Any faculty member or student adversely affected by the decision of a judicial body within the University Student Judicial System may institute an appeal before the URB by filing a petition in the Office of the URB Moderator.

A petition must set forth the following:

1. The name and address of the petitioner adversely affected by the prior adjudication.
2. The name and address of the respondent.
3. The result of the prior adjudication.
4. One or more of the questions within the scope of review of the URB. 18
5. A statement supporting, through factual narrative and argument, the petitioner's position. The Moderator, in consultation with one student and one faculty member of the URB, shall review petitions and determine whether all requirements set forth for the filing of an appeal are satisfied and whether the petition sets forth the basis for an appeal and raises a question within the scope of review.

Upon receipt of a properly filed petition, the Moderator shall notify the parties that an appeal has been instituted. Notice shall include:

1. A copy of the petition.
2. A copy of the relevant regulations and procedures.

After determining the appropriateness and completeness of a petition and allowing a reasonable amount of time for preparation and review of any documents and recordings, the Moderator shall schedule an appeal. All parties shall receive written notification of the time, date, and place. The Moderator shall convene a Review Board at the time, date, and place scheduled, and the appeal shall be conducted under the procedural guidance of the Moderator.

*\* The URB, at its discretion, may elect to decide an appeal based on the submission of briefs by the parties without oral argument. In such cases, the Moderator will provide written instruction to the parties.*

## **POSTPONEMENT OF SANCTION PENDING APPEALS**

A sanction or remedy which has been recommended by a judicial board and approved by the appropriate administrative officer may be postponed upon petition by the affected party or parties upon a determination that pending the final examination of an appeal it would be unfair not to postpone imposition of the sanction or remedy.

Persons wishing to postpone a sanction or remedy may petition the URB by separate petition setting forth reasons why the imposition of a sanction or remedy would unfairly prejudice a party. Petition for postponement shall be reviewed by the Moderator, one student, and one faculty member of the URB. The criteria to be applied in determining whether to postpone a sanction or remedy are as follows:

1. Whether the issues raised in the appeal may be resolved in favor of the petitioning party.
2. Whether the petitioning party will be unfairly prejudiced pending a final determination of the appeal by the immediate imposition of the sanction or remedy.
3. Whether the responding party will be unfairly prejudiced by the postponement of the sanction or remedy.

All decisions regarding the postponement of sanctions shall be made within five (5) days of the receipt of such a petition and shall be communicated to all parties in writing through the office of the Moderator.



## **REPRESENTATION**

A party may be represented or assisted by whomever he or she wishes, but only one representative may take an active part.

## **ARGUMENT FORMAT**

Each party in interest shall be given ample time to present his or her position. In support of a position, a party may refer to any records, documents, or recordings from a prior proceeding and may present an oral or written argument. 19

Each party may question the other about his or her argument. Members of the URB may question the parties. The URB shall make factual findings and shall render a final adjudication in the form of a written opinion. A majority shall control all decisions, but there may be an accompanying minority opinion.

## **URB ACTION**

The URB may remand a matter to the initial adjudicatory authorities for further proceedings if it determines there are insufficient written findings or prejudicial procedural error. In other cases, the URB shall render a written opinion and recommend action to the Chancellor, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor, Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences, or the Vice Provost and Dean of Students, accompanied by the complete record. The Moderator shall be responsible for promptly communicating any formal action of the URB to the parties, transmitting remanded cases to the initial adjudicatory authorities, and forwarding the recommendations to the Chancellor and his or her representatives.

## **ACTION BY THE CHANCELLOR OR OTHER REFERRING AUTHORITY**

The Chancellor and/or his or her representatives shall consider the opinions and recommendations of the URB, the record, and such other advice as they may deem necessary and proper. He, she, or they may remand the matter to the initial adjudicatory authority or to the URB for further proceedings or may enter a final decision, accepting or rejecting the recommendations in part or in their entirety. (A sanction imposed by an initial adjudicatory authority may not be increased.) 20

The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.

For information on University equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and complaint/grievance procedures, please contact the University of Pittsburgh; Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Inclusion; Carol W. Mohamed, Director (and Title IX, 504 and

ADA Coordinator); 412 Bellefield Hall; 315 South Bellefield Avenue; Pittsburgh, PA 15260; 412-648-7860.

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WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY HAS BEEN VIOLATED Should you feel that academic integrity in the form of cheating, plagiarism, etc. has occurred, the steps below are provided to guide and assist you through the process. Please note that these are general guidelines and may not be pertinent to every situation. Should you have any questions or concerns, you can contact Mary Derkach, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

1. If you suspect that academic integrity has been violated, document the behavior(s) you observed, those involved, and the date. Do this as soon after the event as possible to ensure that key facts are documented as they occurred. Keep this record in a safe place.
2. Meet with the individual(s) involved to discuss the matter and obtain all the facts. You could meet one-on-one with the individual(s) or ask that a colleague who would be neutral to the situation to sit in on the meeting. It would be advised that you do not select the student's academic advisor or the department chair of that particular department as this may pose additional pressure on the student.
3. If after the meeting, you believe that academic integrity has been violated, the [Academic Integrity Violation form](#) must be completed.
4. The Academic Integrity Violation form documents the violation, sanction, and whether the student agrees on the imposed sanction. The completed form is to be returned to [Mary Derkach](#), Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. This form will be placed in a confidential file housed in the Office of Student Affairs. It will not become part of the student(s)' academic file and will be destroyed when the student graduates.
5. If the student indicates on the Academic Integrity Violation Form that they do not agree with the imposed sanction, a hearing before the GSPH Academic Integrity Hearing Board will occur.

# **Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18**

## **Pitt Public Health TA and GSR Policy**

### **GSPH Policy on GSRs, GSAs, TAs, and TFs**

The University policy statements on student assistants are the foundation for the GSPH policy. In addition, individual departments and programs within GSPH may have policies of their own, as long as those do not conflict with University or GSPH policy.

### **Definition of GSA/GSR**

According to University policy, a Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) is a graduate student receiving financial support from research funds in return for duties performed to meet the goals for which the funds were awarded. The research performed is often an integral part of the student's research practicum experience, thesis, or dissertation, but this is not a requirement. A Graduate Student Assistant (GSA) performs duties to assist in the educational or research mission of the University, but does not teach a class, recitation or laboratory.

### **GSPH Enrollment**

All students appointed as GSRs/GSAs/TAs/TFs through the GSPH must be enrolled in a degree program at GSPH. It is permissible for GSPH faculty to support students in other programs, as long as those students are appointed through their own programs.

### **Length of Appointment and Funding Eligibility**

The length of any appointment may not exceed one academic year. Funding cannot be guaranteed beyond the term of the appointment.

### **Weekly Work Requirement and Limitations**

In accordance with University policy, the workweek of a student with a full GSA or GSR appointment shall not exceed 20 hours. When the GSR assignment is an integral part of a student's practicum experience, research project, thesis or dissertation research, more hours may be required, but these should be planned in coordination with the student's other academic obligations so that the student is able to make satisfactory progress toward all aspects of completing the degree.

At any particular time, students may not hold more than one full assistantship or the equivalent of one full appointment in fractional appointments. Students with full appointments or the equivalent of a full appointment may not receive additional hourly employment positions within the University (or UPMC). In all cases, a student

may not hold any combination of assistantship appointments and hourly work appointments amounting to more than 20 hours per week.

### **Registration/Credit Limitations**

Courses taken and covered by the tuition scholarship must be required for the degree or certified by the student's department as relevant to the degree. In no case should a student take fewer than six credits in the fall and spring terms, or fewer than three credits in the summer term (unless restricted by the department to fewer credits in the summer). Please note: foreign students must be registered full time in the fall and spring *unless prior to registration*, Office of International Services (OIS) has given them permission to register for fewer credits.

### **Evaluation and Reappointment**

Reappointment will be conditional upon satisfactory work performance. Each student will be evaluated at least annually for performance by the project director and academic advisor. While GSPH encourages ongoing evaluation of the GSR throughout their appointment, a formal written evaluation is required once a year (please see section on evaluation). Progress must be satisfactory in order for the student to be reappointed.

### **Appointment Letter**

Before the beginning of the term of appointment, each student shall be given a letter outlining all duties and terms of appointment. Departments may use the letter format provided by the Dean's Office.

The letter shall be signed by: 1) the student's major advisor; 2) the faculty member who will oversee the research (if not the major advisor); and 3) the chair of the department offering the appointment. Copies of the University and GSPH policy statements shall be attached, and the student shall sign the letter as an indication of acceptance of the terms of the appointment. Signed copies of this letter must be forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs and to the Director of Personnel.

### **Leave Policies**

It is the faculty member's responsibility to define the terms of the research assignment and to convey them to the graduate student prior to the signing of the appointment letter. These terms should include an understanding of the extent of between-term and holiday leaves, observance of religious holidays and personal leaves. There is no uniform University policy on holidays. However, GSPH strongly encourages faculty to consider student needs for appropriate leaves during holidays and between terms.

Students appointed as GSRs, GSAs, TAs or TFs are entitled to parental accommodation and leave as outlined in the [University policy on graduate student parental accommodations](#).

### **University Research Policies**

Both faculty and students must be familiar with and adhere to University policies on conflict of interest and research integrity, and any other policies relevant to the student's work.

### **Other Conditions**

All appointments will be given both a stipend and a tuition scholarship as provided by the University policy. Tuition scholarships may not be given without a stipend. Tuition scholarships will be prorated for appointments whose start or end dates do not coincide with the official dates of the term.

### **Grievances**

Should a student encounter difficulties with their faculty advisor for their GSR, the first recourse is to address those difficulties with that faculty member. Should they be unable to resolve the issues, a student can raise their concerns to the department chair. GSPH strongly encourages students to work out the issues within the department. If that is not feasible, the student should bring those issues to either the Assistant or Associate Dean for Student Affairs or the Associate Dean for Education.

# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

## Part IV

### ***University of Pittsburgh Policies***

[Academic Integrity](#)

[Alcohol](#)

[Buckley Amendment \(FERPA\)](#)

[Drug-Free Schools](#)

[Graduate Advising](#)

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[Graduate Student Researchers](#)

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