

HEALTH, BEHAVIOR AND SOCIETY, PHD

Overview of PhD Program

The PhD in Social and Behavioral Sciences (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/phd-in-social-and-behavioral-sciences/>) program is designed for students seeking training for careers in social and behavioral sciences, health education, and health communication, most often in academic or research settings. The curriculum emphasizes the application of social and behavioral science perspectives to contemporary health problems. The training in this program focuses on the theoretical perspectives and methods of the social and behavioral sciences that enable scholars to understand and influence the social contexts and behaviors relevant to health.

The PhD degree represents outstanding scholarly achievement and the accomplishment of independent research. The University's Doctor of Philosophy Board oversees the granting of all PhD degrees.

The following two areas are examples of significant work in the PhD program:

Social and Psychological Influences on Health

This area focuses on social and psychological factors and processes in the etiology and prevalence of disease, in healthcare-seeking behavior, adaptation and coping, and disease prevention. Students are exposed to current research on contextual factors and their relation to health knowledge, attitudes and beliefs; social and psychological factors in disease etiology; risk reduction; and cultural influences in public health, including cross-cultural studies.

This sociological and psychological conceptualization of health and illness, theories of stress and coping, and the special problems in the design and measurement of social and psychological variables are emphasized in the training of the PhD student. The interactive and independent roles of psychosocial factors for disease, with a focus on the social context in which illness is defined and treated, are emphasized. Major social structural divisions such as gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity are influential in health outcomes. The basic structure and function of health care systems of societies are also considered in their social-political context.

Health Education and Health Communication

Research and practice in this area focus on how principles from educational, behavioral, social, psychological, and communication theory influence health practices and behaviors conducive to optimal health in individuals, groups, and communities. Students are exposed to current research on health education and communication, with a particular focus on ecological models of health, evaluating multi-faceted intervention programs, and patient-provider communication.

Health education and communication programs are laboratories for the study of effective intervention strategies. Students in this area focus on needs assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of comprehensive health promotion programs with an eye toward improving both theory and practice. Specific intervention strategies of interest may include individual behavior change strategies based on learning theory and theories of psychosocial dynamics; use of mass media communication; interpersonal communication; mobilization of social and community support; and advocacy. Program implementation issues

such as administrative and staff development and support are also considered. Interventions studied include those directed at patients, health care professionals, administrators, legislators, the general public, or combinations of the above.

Program Requirements

Course location and modality is found on the BSPH website (<https://www.jhsph.edu/courses/>).

Our doctoral curriculum is designed to help students master a set of program competencies through corresponding required and recommended courses. Courses listed as required must be taken by all doctoral students. Students should meet with their advisers prior to registering for courses each term to discuss the selection and sequence of HBS-recommended courses, as well as courses offered by other departments and divisions appropriate for their individual areas of interest.

Students are expected to take methods courses relevant to the field of their dissertation research. Students who wish to take advanced biostatistics courses (PH.140.651 Methods in Biostatistics I-PH.140.654 Methods in Biostatistics IV) in place of the basic requirements are encouraged to do so, provided they have the necessary background. To register for the advanced series, a working knowledge of calculus and linear algebra is required.

At the end of the first year of coursework, first-year doctoral students take the qualifying exam. This exam tests whether the student has mastered the basic knowledge of the field (as exemplified by the competencies) and whether the student is ready to specialize in a specific area of study.

Students take the Departmental and School-wide Preliminary Oral Examinations in sequence by the end of their third year in the PhD program. In these exams, the goal is for faculty members to examine the student's readiness to conduct independent research. Upon passing, students pursue a research topic under the guidance of an academic adviser and faculty committee. The student's written dissertation is presented in a formal public seminar and then defended at a closed oral examination. Most students complete the PhD within four to five years, and the School requires that students complete it within seven years.

Course Requirements - School

The School requires that at least 18 credit units must be satisfactorily completed in formal courses **outside** the student's primary department. Among these 18 credit units, no fewer than three courses (totaling at least 9 credits) must be satisfactorily completed in two or more departments of the Bloomberg School of Public Health. The remaining outside credit units may be earned in any department or division of the University. This requirement is usually satisfied with the biostatistics and epidemiology courses required by the department and taken in Year 1 of the PhD program.

Students who have completed a master's program at the Bloomberg School of Public Health may apply 12 credits from that program toward this School requirement of taking at least 18 credit units outside the department. Contact the HBS Academic Office for further information.

Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) Requirements

As of 2019-2020, all students matriculating into a graduate program in an accredited school of public health (such as BSPH) are required to take courses that expose them to content that covers 12 'introductory learning

objectives' before graduation. For PhD students in HBS, some of these exposures will come through regular program courses, and others will come through ½ credit "Cells to Society" (C2S) online modules developed by the school. The C2S modules will be offered at least twice a year and will be taken in the first 4 weeks of the term in which they are held. Some courses fulfill more than one learning objective. *These courses need to be successfully completed prior to graduation, and it may be advisable to take some of them in years 2 and 3.* HBS PhD students will fulfill the CEPH requirements by taking the following courses:

1. Explain public health history, philosophy and values: [552.601.81 Foundational Principles of Public Health](#)
2. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 essential services of public health: [552.601.81 Foundational Principles of Public Health](#)
3. 3a. Explain the role of quantitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health: [140.621 Statistical Methods in Public Health](#) 3b. Explain the role of qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health: [410.710 Concepts in Qualitative Methods](#) (or another qualitative course of at least 3 credits)
4. Discuss the science of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.: [340.721 Epidemiological Inferences in Public Health](#)
5. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other community relevant to the school or program: [340.721 Epidemiological Inferences in Public Health](#)
6. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge: [340.721 Epidemiological Inferences in Public Health](#)
7. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population's health: [552.607.81 Essentials of Environmental Health](#)
8. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population's health. *Choose 1 of the following:* [552.608.81 Biologic, Genetic, and Infectious Bases of Human Disease](#), [380.604.01 Life Course Perspectives on Health](#), [550.631.81 Biological Basis of Public Health](#)
9. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health: [410.650 Persuasive Communication](#)
10. Explain the social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities: [410.860 Graduate Seminar in Social and Behavioral Sciences](#)
11. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease: [552.611.81 Globalization and Health: A Framework for Analysis](#)
12. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health and ecosystem health (e.g. One Health): [552.612.81 Essentials of One Health](#)

Curriculum - Social and Behavioral Sciences

Note: Minimum of 16 credits (including special studies and thesis research) is required each term throughout the first 4 years of the PhD program. After Year 4, most students will elect to go part-time and register for 3 credits per term.

Students must take the free, non-credit mini-course "Introduction to Online Learning (IOL)." Students are now required to take IOL before beginning their first term. See: <https://courseplus.jhu.edu/core/index.cfm/go/course.home/cid/90/>

Course	Title	Credits
First Year		
First Term		
PH.550.860	Academic & Research Ethics at BSPH (online-should be automatically enrolled in this course)	
PH.140.621	Statistical Methods in Public Health I	4
PH.340.721	Epidemiologic Inference in Public Health I	5
PH.410.860	Graduate Seminar in Social and Behavioral Sciences	2
PH.410.863	Doctoral Seminar in Social and Behavioral Research and Practice	1
PH.410.600	Fundamentals of Health, Behavior and Society ¹	4
PH.410.612	Sociological Perspectives on Health	3
Credits		19
Second Term		
PH.140.622	Statistical Methods in Public Health II	4
PH.410.860	Graduate Seminar in Social and Behavioral Sciences	2
PH.410.615	Research Design in the Social and Behavioral Sciences ²	3
PH.410.650	Introduction to Persuasive Communications: Theories and Practice	4
Credits		13
Third Term		
PH.140.623	Statistical Methods in Public Health III	4
PH.410.860	Graduate Seminar in Social and Behavioral Sciences	2
Credits		6
Fourth Term		
PH.140.624	Statistical Methods in Public Health IV	4
PH.410.860	Graduate Seminar in Social and Behavioral Sciences	2
Credits		6
Second Year		
First Term		
PH.410.870	HBS Research and Proposal Writing Process for Doctoral Students I	2
PH.306.665	Research Ethics and integrity	3
Credits		5
Second Term		
PH.410.871	HBS Research and Proposal Writing Process for Doctoral Students II	2
Credits		2
Total Credits		51

¹ Highly recommended for those students with little social and behavioral sciences background. Students should discuss this with their advisors to ensure that they have covered the course content and have met the learning objectives of this course in prior coursework. The course should be taken in 1st term by students who plan to take the course.

Students are required to discuss course selections with their advisors prior to registration. Students not taking PH.410.600 FUNDAMENTALS

OF HEALTH, BEHAVIOR AND SOCIETY in 1st term are required to select at least one 1st term HBS course in addition to PH.410.860 GRADUATE SEMINAR IN SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES and PH.410.863 DOCTORAL SEMINAR IN SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH AND PRACTICE (often this will be Sociological Perspectives/410.612).

² Highly recommended for those students with little social and behavioral sciences research background. Students should discuss this with their advisors to ensure that they have covered the course content and have met the learning objectives of this course in prior coursework.

Recommended HBS Courses

Students should discuss the selection and sequence of recommended and other courses relevant to their research interests with their advisers. Students will select some recommended courses in their first year; other courses may be taken in their second and later years of the program. Note: methodological training requirements (p. 4) in the next section.

The Department offers a flexible PhD curriculum. Students are strongly encouraged to balance breadth and depth, theory, and methodology in pursuing training in the Department. The Department has a broad focus, incorporating health education/health communication as well as social and psychological influences on health.

Students are strongly recommended to take at least 24 credits of taught (non-special studies) HBS classes before they sit for their departmental oral exams. For students with a prior master's in HBS or a BSPH MPH with an SBS concentration, 10 of these credits can be transferred.

HBS courses recommended for doctoral students and offered by term (list does not include required courses noted above):

Code	Title	Credits
Term 1		
PH.410.600	Fundamentals of Health, Behavior and Society	4
PH.410.620	Program Planning for Health Behavior Change	3
PH.410.653	Contemporary Issues in Health Communication	1
PH.410.656	Entertainment Education for Behavior Change and Development	4
PH.410.733	Communication Network Analysis in Public Health Programs	4
PH.410.861	Graduate Seminar in Community-Based Research	1
PH.410.690	Ethnographic Fieldwork	3
Term 2		
PH.550.601	Implementation Research and Practice (extradepartmental)	3
PH.410.631	Introduction to Community-Based Participatory Research: Principles and Methods	3
PH.340.629	The Epidemiology of LGBTQ Health	3
PH.410.640	Global Tobacco Control	3
PH.410.668	Policy Interventions for Health Behavior Change	3
PH.410.679	Decoloniality and Global Health Communication	3
PH.410.710	Concepts in Qualitative Research for Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
PH.410.861	Graduate Seminar in Community-Based Research	1
Term 3		
PH.410.654	Health Communication Programs I: Planning and Strategic Design	4

PH.410.613	Psychosocial Factors in Health and Illness	3
PH.410.651	Health Literacy: Challenges and Strategies for Effective Communication	3
PH.410.638	Scientific Writing in Health Sciences: Developing A Manuscript for Publication I	3
PH.410.672	Organizing for Public Health with the Six Steps to Effective Advocacy: Turning Public Will into Public Policy	3
PH.410.721	Translating Research into Public Health Programs and Policy	3
PH.410.752	Children, Media, and Health	3
PH.410.755	Health Communication Programs	4
PH.410.861	Graduate Seminar in Community-Based Research	1
PH.410.712	Theory and Practice in Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation for The Social and Behavioral Sciences	3

Term 4

PH.410.610	Housing Insecurity and Health	3
PH.410.611	Under Pressure: Health, Wealth & Poverty	3
PH.410.620	Program Planning for Health Behavior Change	3
PH.410.625	Injury and Violence Prevention: Behavior Change Strategies	2
PH.410.711	Doctoral Seminar in Mixed Methods for Public Health Research	3
PH.410.630	Implementation and Sustainability of Community-Based Health Programs	3
PH.410.640	Global Tobacco Control	3
PH.410.655	Health Communication Programs II: Implementation and Evaluation	4
PH.410.657	Communication Strategies For Sexual Risk Reduction	3
PH.410.660	Latino Health: Measures and Predictors	3
PH.410.663	Media Advocacy and Public Health: Theory and Practice	3
PH.410.672	Organizing for Public Health with the Six Steps to Effective Advocacy: Turning Public Will into Public Policy	3
PH.410.680	Social Ecological Approaches to Health Regimen Adherence in Chronic Conditions	3
PH.410.617	Foundations of University Teaching and Learning	3
PH.410.639	Scientific Writing in Health Sciences: Developing A Manuscript for Publication II	3
PH.410.722	Translating Research into Public Health Programs II	2
PH.410.861	Graduate Seminar in Community-Based Research	1
PH.410.686	Advanced Quantitative Methods in The Social and Behavioral Sciences: A Practical Introduction	4

School of Public Health course listings for courses in HBS and other departments: <https://www.jhsph.edu/courses/>

Students also have the opportunity to take courses in other divisions of the University. Contact Records and Registration regarding interdivisional course registration procedures (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/policies/academic/interdivisional-registration/>).

Additional Requirements in Methodological Training

In addition to the specific required courses listed above, students are required to complete, **prior to their preliminary oral examination, at least one course in each of four areas** of methodological training in the social and behavioral sciences: quantitative methods (QN), qualitative methods (QL), evaluation methodologies (EV), and methods applications specific to the social and behavioral sciences (SBS). These courses should be taken for a letter grade and not on a Pass/Fail basis. From the menu of courses listed below, students should carefully choose methods training by considering both their previous training and future research goals. Departmental faculty should be consulted as needed.

One course in each of the four areas is considered the minimum; students are encouraged to build their methodological expertise in all areas relevant to their proposed thesis activities and scientific areas of interest. It is valuable for students to seek both breadth and depth in methods training. Therefore, we **strongly recommend that students also elect an area of methodological focus and take multiple courses (3 or more) in this area.** We additionally recommend that all students take at least two courses in Qualitative area.

Students who would like to propose taking a methods course not currently listed in lieu of the listed courses may, with their adviser's consent, request such a substitution in writing to the doctoral program director.

Code	Title	Credits
Qualitative (QL)**		
PH.410.690	Ethnographic Fieldwork ¹	3
PH.410.710	Concepts in Qualitative Research for Social and Behavioral Sciences ¹	3
PH.410.712	Theory and Practice in Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation for The Social and Behavioral Sciences ¹	3
PH.224.691	Qualitative Data Analysis	3
PH.410.711	Doctoral Seminar in Mixed Methods for Public Health Research ¹	3
Quantitative (QN)		
PH.410.686	Advanced Quantitative Methods in The Social and Behavioral Sciences: A Practical Introduction ¹	4
PH.410.733	Communication Network Analysis in Public Health Programs ¹	4
PH.140.640	Statistical Methods for Sample Surveys	3
PH.140.641	Survival Analysis	3
PH.140.655	Analysis of Multilevel and Longitudinal Data	4
PH.140.656	Multilevel and Longitudinal Models - Data Analysis Workshop	4
PH.140.762	Bayesian Methods I (every other year)	3
PH.330.657	Statistics for Psychosocial Research: Measurement	4
PH.340.606	Methods for Conducting Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses	4
PH.380.712	Methods in Analysis of Large Population Surveys	3
Evaluation (EV)		
PH.140.721 & PH.410.722	Probability Theory I and Translating Research into Public Health Programs II ¹	5

PH.300.713	Research and Evaluation Methods for Health Policy	3
PH.380.611	Fundamentals of Program Evaluation	4
PH.380.612	Applications in Program Monitoring and Evaluation	4
SBS Research Approaches (SBS)		
PH.410.631	Introduction to Community-Based Participatory Research: Principles and Methods ¹	3
PH.221.638	Health Systems Research and Evaluation in Developing Countries	4
PH.340.677	Infectious Disease Dynamics: Theoretical and Computational Approaches	4
PH.340.717	Health Survey Research Methods	4
PH.380.603	Demographic Methods for Public Health	4
PH.380.711	Issues in Survey Research Design	3

** Note: Qualitative Reasoning in Public Health (550.604) cannot count towards fulfilling the qualitative requirements for HBS PhD students

¹ HBS faculty instructor

Course/Credit Load

The Department strongly encourages doctoral students to register for fewer than 19 credits (including special studies and thesis research) in any one academic term. While a credit registration of more than 18 credits is possible through the registration system, departmental faculty think that the additional course burden prohibits doctoral students from dedicating the appropriate time needed for the educational activities being undertaken. Any decision to register for more than 18 credits should be carefully considered and discussed with the student's adviser prior to registering. Doctoral students should register for a minimum of 16 credits each term; the maximum number of credits per term is 22.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Doctoral students in the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society are expected to maintain satisfactory academic standards for the duration of the degree program. In the Department, satisfactory academic progress is defined as follows:

1. A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00. Any doctoral student who does not obtain the minimum 3.00 GPA by the end of the third term during the first year will not be permitted to sit for the written qualifying exams. In this situation, an appropriate course of action will be determined by the Department Chair. If students fall below a 3.0 GPA, they have 2 terms to regain at least a 3.0 GPA.
2. All courses required for the program must be taken for a letter grade. All HBS departmental courses must be taken for a letter grade except with prior consent of the adviser. The pass/fail option may only be used for elective courses and only with the consent of the student's adviser.
3. No grades below a "B" in core courses. Any required course (or course taken to fulfill a methodological requirement) for which a grade of C or below is received) must either be retaken, or an alternative mechanism for material mastery must be agreed upon between the PhD program director, the adviser and the student. This should be successfully completed before taking the schoolwide oral exam.
4. All grades will be calculated into the student's GPA.
5. All doctoral students will have their transcripts evaluated at the end of their first year. This evaluation will be completed in conjunction with the qualifying exam review process.

Independent Developmental Plans (IDP)

It is now university policy that each Ph.D. student and Post Doctoral Fellow will develop an individual development plan (IDP) in conjunction with their adviser. This is in line with the 2014 NIH notice that strongly encourages the development of an institutional policy on Individual Development Plans for all graduate students and postdoctoral scholars who are supported by NIH funds. Beginning in 2017-2018, all matriculating PhD students must complete an IDP, review it with their adviser and submit a signed IDP form for departmental records on an annual basis.

The IDP is a mechanism for self-reflection as well as a communication and planning tool for the student and their faculty mentor/s. The IDP can be useful to make sure that the student's and the adviser's expectations are clearly outlined and in agreement so that there are no big surprises, particularly at the end of the student's training.

The goal of the IDP and the annual review process is to support the student in their success in the program and in attaining readiness for their intended future career. To this end, the IDP creates a structure for the student to:

1. assess current skills, interests, and strengths;
2. make a plan for developing skills to meet academic and professional goals; and
3. communicate and collaborate with supervisors, advisers, and mentors about evolving goals and related skills.

The onus to engage in the IDP process is on the student, with the support and input of the adviser. Although the IDP is kept on file in the department, it is primarily a document for use by the student. Through the IDP process, it is possible that the student may decide to identify various additional mentors to whom they can go for expertise and advice.

Once an IDP is written, it is expected that it will be revisited and revised by the student and their adviser (and when appropriate, the dissertation committee) on an annual basis and that this review will be integrated into an annual review process for each student. It is expected that the department will keep a record of this document and of the process by which it was developed and revised.

There are three aspects of the HBS IDP that will be completed on an annual basis, and **submitted to the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator by January 15th of each year**. The IDP summary and the signature form will both be kept in the student's departmental file.

1. **Self-assessment and goal setting**, primarily accomplished by the student through the completion of an assessment tool provided by the department.
2. **Adviser's Response to the plan**. It is required that the adviser be involved in a review and possible refinement of the student's IDP process. In most instances, an adviser's feedback will be provided in the context of an in-person meeting. There may be circumstances where it makes sense to involve other faculty members (such as co-advisers, training program leaders, or members of the thesis committee). There may also be times (such as if remote field work is being undertaken) where review of a plan needs to occur via Skype or phone call. In all cases students and advisers should discuss the plan submitted/amended
 - a. The student should set up a meeting with their adviser specifically to review the IDP. The IDP should be forwarded to the adviser in advance of this meeting so that the adviser has time to review before the meeting. The student and the adviser should

discuss the IDP and possibly revise (e.g. add goals or members of the mentorship team).

- b. Both student and adviser should sign the signature form. The student must send electronic copies of the IDP and the form to the **HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator, cc'ing their adviser and the PhD program director**.
3. **Annual Departmental and program feedback to the student**. Written feedback will be provided from the department/program, that evaluates student progress in the program to date and the student's graduation trajectory, and progress toward stated career goals. Departmental feedback should be integrated into the IDP process. **After Year 1, students will receive written departmental feedback before the beginning of the first term of each year**. The goals outlined in the IDP will be reviewed in preparation of this feedback. Other elements of the IDP will not factor into departmental feedback.

Ideas for Items/Topics to Consider in Creation/Review of the IDP Year 1

1. Career goal for PhD program (long-term goals)
2. Coursework plans/goals for Year 1 (other than required courses)
3. Coursework plans/goals before embarking on dissertation
4. Skills assessment (areas of strength and needs for additional training)
5. Goals for establishment of professional identity and network
6. Goals for research opportunities in coming year/entire PhD program
7. Goals for teaching opportunities
8. Goals for practice opportunities
9. Funding targets/opportunities
10. Preparation for qualifying exams

Year 2/3 (before departmental and schoolwide preliminary exams)

1. Achievements/goals met over the past year
2. Challenges faced over the past year
3. Career goal for PhD program (long-term goals)
4. Remaining coursework plans/goals (other than required courses)
5. Skills assessment (areas of strength and needs for additional training)
6. Goals for establishment of professional identity and network
7. Goals for research opportunities in coming year/entire PhD program
8. Goals for teaching opportunities
9. Goals for practice opportunities
10. Goals related to identification of dissertation topic/focus
11. Progress on identification of broader mentorship team/committee
12. Progress on preparation of dissertation proposal
13. Funding targets/opportunities

Years 3+ (after preliminary exams)

1. Achievements/goals met over the past year
2. Challenges faced over the past year
3. Career goal for PhD program (long-term goals)
4. Dissertation goals for the coming year
5. Planned timeline for program completion and remaining activities and milestones
6. Non-dissertation (research/teaching/practice) goals for remainder of program
7. Skills assessment (areas of strength and needs for additional training)

8. Goals for establishment of professional identity and network
9. Identification of possible career opportunities
10. Funding targets/opportunities

Departmental Qualifying Examination

As stated in the School's Policy and Procedure Memorandum for doctoral degree programs, the examination should constitute a comprehensive inquiry into the student's grasp of the subject matter underlying their discipline. It should explore the student's understanding of scientific principles and methods as well as their substantive knowledge of the major field and related areas.

Doctoral students become eligible for the departmental qualifying examination upon successful completion of the first-year required courses while maintaining the minimum GPA required.

The exam is offered in June and is under the purview of the HBS Exam Committee. Specific details on the nature of the exam and policies related to grading will be distributed well in advance of the exam.

Research Hours

The School requires all doctoral students to engage in research in addition to the research conducted as part of their dissertation, so that they will gain exposure to and experience in different research skills, and approaches. While HBS encourages students to work within the Department, students are free to pursue opportunities of interest throughout the School, University, or off-campus. Research hours can be fulfilled by engaging in either paid or unpaid research tasks.

The research hours can involve participation in any of the following aspects of research, including but not limited to:

- elements of research design (literature review and development of the conceptual framework of a study);
- community development and liaison activities;
- community needs assessment and its related social, epidemiological, behavioral, or political diagnosis;
- development and piloting of health interventions or materials;
- data collection;
- data analysis and interpretation;
- policy analysis;
- literature reviews;
- manuscript preparation;
- grant preparation and any other form of research approved by the adviser.

Students must discuss their plan for fulfilling the research hours requirement with their academic adviser and have the plan approved by their academic adviser prior to engaging in the research tasks. Students are expected to engage in at least two different research tasks, which may be related to a single study or two separate studies. These tasks should reflect different elements of the research design as outlined above. The student must identify a primary mentor to work with for each of the tasks, and this mentor must agree to serve in this capacity by signing the research hours form in advance. Up to 50% of the required hours can be accomplished through off-campus work, as long as the work has been approved by the student's academic adviser. A student's academic adviser can serve as a primary mentor for one but not both of the research tasks. A minimum of 300 hours for total work on research tasks is required, with at least 100 hours on each task.

The research hours should be completed between matriculation and the Departmental preliminary oral exam. Completion of this requirement will be monitored by the Department through submission of the Research Hours Form to the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator.

Departmental Preliminary Oral Examination

Students must successfully pass the Departmental preliminary oral examination before taking or scheduling the School-wide preliminary oral exam. The format of the exam is similar to the School-wide preliminary oral exam and is intended to determine if the student is academically prepared to pass the School-wide preliminary oral exam and to carry out independent dissertation research. Students must have successfully completed the departmental qualifying exam before taking the departmental or schoolwide oral exam.

The examination requires the student to prepare a dissertation protocol that will be examined by the committee members before the exam takes place. This protocol should be between 7,000 and 9,000 words (rough guide) and no more than 10,000 words. The proposal should provide the committee with the student's rationale for the proposed study and the research questions to be examined and the approach and methods the student proposes to use.

The departmental preliminary orals committee consists of four faculty members and an alternate. The student's adviser is included in the four committee members. All committee members should have primary appointments in the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society. (An exception is made when the student's adviser has a primary appointment in another department and a joint appointment in HBS.) The senior faculty member from the department who is not the student's adviser will serve as chair of the committee. The exam is closed, with only the committee members and the student in attendance.

The student will coordinate the date of the exam with the exam committee members and will distribute a copy of the research proposal to all committee members at least three weeks before the exam is scheduled to be held. The student is required to complete the Departmental Oral Form, available from the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator. The information required on this form includes the names of the committee members, the title of the research protocol, and the date, time, and location of the exam. Committee members will receive formal written notification of the exam date and time by memo.

Immediately following the examination, the committee evaluates the success or failure of the student. One of the following results must be reported to the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator by the Committee Chair. The two main criteria to determine the outcome of this exam are:

1. The student is academically prepared to pass the School-wide oral examination.
2. The student is academically prepared to carry out their dissertation research.
Note: The exam is an evaluation of the student's general academic preparation and is not limited to an assessment of the student's proposal or the details of the proposed study.

Based on the above criteria, students can then receive:

1. Unconditional Pass: If the members each vote "unconditional pass" on the first ballot, this result is reported with no further discussion. If one or more members vote "conditional pass" or "fail," then the committee should discuss the specific concerns of those members as discussed below.

2. **Conditional Pass:** The committee may decide that further evidence of qualifications is necessary and impose a specific condition that the candidate must fulfill within a given period of time. Those who feel the need for a condition or failure must convince others or vice versa. The committee should make a concerted effort to reach a consensus. In the case of a conditional pass, the committee will remain appointed until the condition is removed. Terms of the condition and its removal must be reported in writing to the HBS Academic Office. Students will *not* be permitted to sit for the School-wide preliminary oral until the conditions have been removed. It is recommended that conditions are met within six months unless otherwise recommended by the examination committee.
3. **Failure:** If a majority of the committee decides that the candidate has failed the exam, the committee must recommend a future course of action. A student will be permitted to retake the exam only once. The committee may recommend one of the following:
 - a. Reexamination by the same Committee
 - b. Reexamination by a new committee.

HBS Guidelines for the Dissertation Proposal

Research Plan: The student must provide a narrative project description that contains a detailed discussion of the following specific points.

1. An introduction that describes the public health problem and brief overview of the sample, aims/research questions, and public health significance.
2. A literature review that describes the supporting literature and a synthesis of the themes, gaps, and weaknesses in the literature related to the social and behavioral aspects of the proposed project.
3. A conceptual framework and theoretical foundations discussion.
4. The methodology section will discuss sampling, recruitment, data collection procedures, measures, analysis, and steps that will be taken to protect human subjects as appropriate.
5. The strengths and limitations of the proposed project.
6. Timeline for completion of the proposed study.
7. Other pertinent information deemed appropriate by the student and their adviser such as facilities and resources, timeline, etc.

School-wide Preliminary Oral Examination

The School-wide preliminary oral examination takes place after the student has successfully completed the departmental qualifying examination and the departmental preliminary oral examination and completed PH.550.600 LIVING SCIENCE ETHICS - RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH (**it is only offered in 1st term**). You will not be approved to complete the school-wide exam if you have not taken this course. The purpose of this examination, as stated in the School's Policy and Procedure Memorandum (PPM), is to determine whether the student has both the ability and knowledge to undertake significant research in their general area of interest. Specifically, the examiners will be concerned with the student's:

- capacity of logical thinking;
- breadth of knowledge in relevant areas;
- ability to develop and conduct research leading to a completed dissertation.

Discussion of a specific research proposal, if available, may serve as a vehicle for determining the student's general knowledge and research

capacity. However, this examination is not intended to be a defense of a specific research proposal.

It is a School requirement that the School-wide preliminary oral exam be taken by the end of the student's third year in residence and before significant engagement in their own research. Note: The school has placed a time limit of three years between matriculation into a degree program and successful completion of the preliminary oral exam. Students are encouraged to keep this time limit in mind when planning their academic schedule.

All requests for extensions beyond the stated time periods to take and pass the School-wide Preliminary Oral Examination or to complete the doctoral degree requirements must be approved by the Committee on Academic Standards. School policy regarding extension requests can be accessed at: <https://my.jhsph.edu/Offices/StudentAffairs/RecordsRegistration/AcademicInformation/Pages/default.aspx>. Contact the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator for the most up-to-date information on extension policies.

The School-wide preliminary oral examination must be scheduled at least one month in advance by submission of a preliminary oral examination form to the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator. Instructions on scheduling the examination and information on committee composition are available on the Records and Registration website: <https://my.jhsph.edu/Offices/StudentAffairs/RecordsRegistration/DoctoralCandidateInfo/Pages/default.aspx>

After successful completion of School-wide preliminary oral exam, students register for 16 credits of PH.410.820 THESIS RESEARCH IN HEALTH BEHAVIOR AND SOCIETY each term (or a combination of Thesis Research and other courses totaling at least 16 credits) until completion of all degree requirements.

Dissertation Advisory Committee

The progress of each doctoral student is followed regularly, at least once a year, by a committee consisting of the dissertation adviser and two to four other faculty members. Other committee members can come from either inside and/or outside the student's department. The student and their adviser, with the consent of the Department chair, decide on the composition of this committee. The objective of the Dissertation Advisory Committee is to provide continuity in the evaluation of the student's progress during the dissertation phase of the student's training. Students should form their advisory committees and obtain IRB approval soon after passing their preliminary oral exams and well before the Office of Graduate Education and Research deadline.

Each month, the Office of Graduate Education and Research will generate a report of the students who passed their Preliminary Oral Exam within the past three months. (Students receiving a conditional pass must meet the conditions before this contact is initiated.) An e-mail and "Dissertation Research Documentation Form" will be sent to the student and copied to the student's Dissertation A (as identified on the Preliminary Oral Exam Committee) and the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator. The form is to be completed and returned within three months of contact (or six months past preliminary oral exam date) to the Office of Graduate Education and Research for tracking and inclusion in the student's academic file. A copy is kept by the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator.

As noted in the "Milestones" table of this handbook, students should schedule meetings with their advisers at least once per term to review their dissertation progress. Students are required to meet at least once

per year with their Dissertation Advisory Committee and provide this committee with a written progress report and a copy of the “HBS Doctoral Dissertation Progress Evaluation Form” (available from the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator) to be completed by the student’s adviser, attached to the progress report, and submitted to the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator for the student’s file. The first progress report and evaluation form should be completed by one year from the date the “Dissertation Research Documentation Form” was submitted.

Completion of this requirement each year will be monitored by the student’s adviser and the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator.

Dissertation Guidelines

All doctoral students must complete an original investigation presented in the form of a dissertation. The dissertation must be based on original research, worthy of publication, and acceptable to the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society and to a committee of dissertation readers. During the student’s application process, various research ideas may have been discussed with faculty members. However, each student’s dissertation proposal must be developed, reviewed, and found acceptable to departmental faculty while the candidate has been enrolled as a doctoral student.

The traditional doctoral dissertation consists of a statement of the problem and specific aims; a literature review; data and research methods; analyses and results; and a discussion of findings and their implications. The form these take will reflect the specific academic discipline or orientation guiding the student’s research. Doctoral students also have the option of a manuscript-oriented dissertation as an alternative to the traditional dissertation. See the “Dissertation Policy for HBS Doctoral Students” at the end of this section for more information on manuscript formats.

Students should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option with their adviser before deciding on a dissertation strategy.

Completion of a satisfactory investigation of the principal subject and its presentation in the form of a dissertation, approved by a committee of the faculty, is the next step toward the doctoral degree. The material contained in the dissertation should be worthy of publication in a scientific journal in the field involved. To establish this committee, the student and adviser recommend four faculty members to serve as dissertation readers. These faculty members, one of whom is the dissertation adviser, should hold an appointment as Assistant Professor or higher and represent at least three departments of the University and at least two departments of the School of Public Health. One member must hold the rank of Associate Professor or Full Professor and not hold a joint appointment in the student’s department. This individual will serve as the Chair of the Final Oral Examination Committee. One adjunct or one scientist faculty member may serve on the Committee but not both. All faculty members must serve as Dissertation Readers representing the department of their primary faculty appointment.

The committee of readers may be increased to five members provided the conditions stated above are satisfied for four readers. If a fifth member was approved to serve as a Dissertation Reader, that individual does not have voting privileges on the Final Examination Committee.

Oral Defense of Dissertation

The oral defense of the dissertation by the candidate before a committee of the faculty is the final step for the doctoral degree candidate. Instruction and forms for the appointment of dissertation readers and

scheduling the final oral exam can be accessed at <https://my.jhsph.edu/Offices/StudentAffairs/RecordsRegistration/DoctoralCandidateInfo/Pages/default.aspx>.

Records and Registration require that the “Appointment of Dissertation Readers & Final Oral Examination Committee” form be submitted at least one month in advance of the proposed date.

The completed form must be submitted to the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator for review. The HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator will obtain the Department Chair’s signature and forward the form to Records and Registration. **Committee members should be given at least 30 days to properly read the dissertation before the defense, and the “Dissertation/ Dissertation Approval Form,” signed by the adviser, should be included with the dissertation copies. The adviser should consult with committee members at least two weeks prior to the exam date to ensure that the student is ready to proceed with the exam.**

Students must be continuously registered up to and including their term of completion. A doctoral student is not considered complete at the time they pass their final defense. Note that students must be registered in the term of their final oral exam. Doctoral students who schedule their exams after the end of 4th term must register for the summer term. They then have until the end of the add/drop period of the following term to complete all requirements. Students are considered complete:

1. when copies of their acceptance letters from the Examining Committee Chair and Dissertation Adviser are on file in the Office of Records & Registration;
2. the dissertation is submitted electronically to The Milton S. Eisenhower Library; and
3. a pdf copy of the dissertation and a dissertation form submitted to the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator once approved by the library.

Students should be sure to check both graduation and registration deadlines with the HBS Doctoral Program Coordinator well in advance.

Public Seminar

As a culminating experience, all doctoral students are required by the School to present a formal, public seminar. A room that holds no less than 25 people should be reserved for the public seminar. A three-hour period should be allowed for the final oral examination, consisting of the public seminar and session with the examination committee. It will begin with an approximately 45-minute public seminar followed by 15 minutes of Q&A with the audience. This will be immediately followed by the closed portion of the examination, which is closed to all except the doctoral candidate and the examination committee. Records and Registration posts the seminar announcement to the School’s events calendar.

Dissertation Policy for HBS Doctoral Students

Students in HBS have the choice of completing a “traditional” doctoral dissertation or a manuscript-oriented dissertation. Ideally, this decision should be made by the time the student undergoes the departmental preliminary oral examination. There are advantages and disadvantages to each option which should be carefully discussed with the student’s adviser.

Each of these options is described briefly below.

The traditional doctoral dissertation generally consists of an abstract, five chapters, references, and any appendices. The outline of chapters below is merely a guide. The page numbers are rough estimates, and

the form of the chapters will vary, reflecting the academic discipline or orientation of the student's research.

Abstract: The abstract is a short overall summary of the work. It lays out the purpose(s) and aims of the study, the methods, and the key results and implications. The abstract generally is 2-3 double-spaced pages.

Chapter 1: Introduction: Statement of the Problem and Specific Aims. This chapter, which tends to be relatively short (5-6 double-spaced pages), provides an introduction to the dissertation. It describes briefly why this work was undertaken, what background conditions or data suggested it was an important problem, and what, then, this project was intended to accomplish.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. The literature review summarizes existing literature that informed the dissertation research. It is generally organized topically. The literature review tends to be a fairly detailed review, particularly for those topics most directly related to the content and methods of the dissertation. The literature review tends to be 30-60 pages in length.

Chapter 3: Methods. The content of the methods chapter varies tremendously with the methodological approach taken by the student for the dissertation research. With traditional empirical studies, it will generally include the specific aims, research questions, and/or hypothesis; a description of the source of study data, a description of the study instrument and its development, if relevant; a description of secondary data obtained, if relevant; analytic methods, including data cleaning, creation of a data set, creation of variables and/or qualitative codes, types of analyses done, and human subjects issues. The methods chapter ranges from 20-40 pages.

Chapter 4: Results. The results chapter reports the main findings of the dissertation. It is often organized by research question or specific aim or hypothesis but need not necessarily follow this format. The results chapter ranges from 25-50 pages.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Results and Policy Implications. The discussion chapter both summarizes key findings and discusses findings in light of existing literature and in light of their policy implications. Also included generally is a description of the study's limitations and implications for future research. The Discussion chapter is generally 25-50 pages.

References: A listing of all citations used for the dissertation must be provided. The Department allows any standard format for references.

Appendices: Appendices can be used for many purposes. They can include study instruments, if relevant; they can include additional tables not included in the main body of the dissertation; also to be included must be a copy of the student's CV. The traditional dissertation should be able to "stand alone" without appendices; however, such results should never be put in appendices that are key to the study's main findings.

All components of the traditional dissertation will be judged by the committee to be one of the following: Acceptable, Acceptable with Revisions, or Unacceptable. Students, with guidance from their adviser, will rework their dissertation until all components are judged acceptable.

The manuscript dissertation consists of the following:

- A total of three (or more) papers, linked to the student's dissertation topic. One of these papers may be the literature review, provided it is a comprehensive critical review, suitable for publication. If one of the three papers is not a literature review, the dissertation must still contain a chapter that critically surveys the literature.
- A chapter that integrates and discusses the findings reported in the manuscripts. It should include a discussion of the conclusions of the research, and it should make recommendations for further studies.
- An appendix outlining in detail the study methods and any accompanying data tables necessary to fully understand the data.

A manuscript-oriented dissertation must also meet the following criteria:

- The doctoral student must be the first author on the three manuscripts used to satisfy this requirement.
- No manuscript will be accepted as part of the dissertation if it was submitted for publication before the student passes the School-wide preliminary oral exam.

As is true for the traditional doctoral dissertation, all components of the manuscript-oriented dissertation will be judged to be one of the following: Acceptable, Acceptable with Revisions, or Unacceptable. Students, with guidance from their adviser, will rework their dissertation until all components are judged acceptable.

Role of Faculty Adviser in Relation to the Dissertation:

The adviser's role is to facilitate successful completion of the doctoral dissertation. The type of assistance provided should be tailored to the individual student's needs. Both the traditional dissertation and the manuscript-oriented dissertation must reflect work that is the student's independent and original work. The adviser, then, can and should provide ongoing and critical feedback, but the research must be that of the student.

Maintaining this balance may be particularly challenging for manuscript-oriented theses. Even if the adviser (or another committee member) will be a co-author on a manuscript, the manuscripts must be viewed first and foremost as fulfilling the student's needs in the dissertation process, with publication as a secondary goal. Advisers or other committee members who are co-authors may not undertake the first draft of any portions of the manuscripts nor substantial re-writes. Whether an adviser will be a co-author on any manuscript should be decided early in the dissertation process.

Link to Thesis guidelines and deadlines (<https://my.jhsph.edu/Offices/StudentAffairs/RecordsRegistration/DoctoralCandidateInfo/Pages/default.aspx>)

Link to School PPM on PhD Degree (https://my.jhsph.edu/Resources/PoliciesProcedures/ppm/PolicyProcedureMemoranda/Academic_Programs_03_Doctor_Of_Philosophy_Degree_042522.pdf)

Career Development Resources for PhD Students

The BSPH Career Services Office provides a variety of assistance including individual career coaching, a university-wide job and employer database (<http://jhu.joinhandshake.com/>), career development workshops and events, a list of career resources (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/offices-and-services/office-of-student-affairs/career-services/career-planning-for-students/>), and an annual career fair (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/offices-and-services/office-of-student-affairs/career-services/bloomberg-school-public-health-career-fair/>). More information is available here (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/offices->

and-services/office-of-student-affairs/career-services/career-planning-for-students/).

The Professional Development and Career Office (PDCO) provides professional development training and career services to support PhD students and Postdoctoral Scholars in designing their life. The PDCO supports academic careers by providing grant writing workshops, teaching opportunities at local undergraduate institutions, and an annual academic job search series. It also supports career exploration outside the academy by hosting alumni career panels, organizing an alumni mentorship program, running leadership workshops, and by offering paid internships in science policy, consulting, business development, etc. PDCO staff can also meet with PhD students or post-doctoral fellows one on one to meet their specific career goals. The PDCO services are outlined here: <https://pdco.med.jhmi.edu>. They also send monthly emails that list events for PhDs happening across the university (sent through the doctoral student listserv).

Milestones for the PhD Program

Key Dates	Task/Event
First Year	
Term 1	
Before 1st term registration	Introductory Advisor Meeting
	Course selections – Discussion of required and highly recommended courses, courses in area of interest, and special studies.
	Identify professional and educational goals. Review deadlines. Review the Individual Development Plan Procedures
Term 2	
Before 2nd term registration	Advisor Meeting
	Course selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
	Discuss research plans. Identify faculty resources.
	Discuss the individual Development Plan (IDP)
Term 3	
Before 3rd term registration	Advisor Meeting
	Course selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
	Submit IDP to Academic Coordinator
Term 4	
Before 4th term registration	Advisor Meeting
	Course selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
By end of first year	Residency requirement met
	Student has discussed research hours requirement with advisor
	Departmental qualifying exam in June
Second Year	
Term 1	
Before 1st term registration	Advisor Meeting

	Course selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
	Discuss possible composition of oral exam committees.
	Review IDP and procedures
Term 2	
Before 2nd term registration	Advisor Meeting
	Course selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
Term 3	
Before 3rd term registration	Before 3rd term registration
	Course selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
	If student plans to take oral exam in 2nd year, committee members should be identified by 3rd term.
	Submit CV and IDP to academic coordinator
Term 4	
Before 4th term registration	Advisor Meeting
	Course selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
Third Year	
Terms 1-4	
Before registration each term	Advisor Meeting
	After successful completion of school preliminary oral exam, student registers for PH.410.820 Thesis Research each term until completion of all degree requirements (see timetable at end of student handbook).
Prior to prelim exams	Research Hours form has been completed by student, signed by advisor, and submitted to Academic Office.
By 3 years from matriculation date	Successful completion of departmental and school preliminary oral examinations
Within 3 months of successful completion of school prelim oral exam	Student has identified a dissertation advisory committee and submitted the School's Thesis Research Documentation form to HBS Academic Office
	Review IDP
	Submit CV to Academic Coordinator
Fourth Year	
Terms 1-4	
At least once per term	Advisor Meetings to review thesis progress
Annually, post prelim oral exam	Dissertation Advisory Committee meets to evaluate progress and submits evaluation to HBS Academic Office

Ensure that students who have an interest in an academic career have had some teaching experience as TA or the opportunity to apply for a Dean's Teaching Fellowship.

Review IDP

Submit CV to Academic Coordinator

Timetable for Completion of Degree Requirements

Please direct questions regarding the timetable for completion of degree requirements to the Office of Records & Registration (JHSPH.Registra@jhu.edu).

For a full list of program policies, please visit the PhD in Social and Behavioral Sciences page (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/phd-in-social-and-behavioral-sciences/>) where students can find our handbook.

Our curriculum is designed to help students master the following competencies:

- Design a research study using qualitative or quantitative methods to answer social science questions relevant to public health at a doctoral level
- Demonstrate that the theoretical perspective one begins with influences the scientific questions analyzed
- Critically discuss theoretical concepts and orientations in the social and behavioral sciences
- Integrate understanding of concepts related to multiple levels of determinants of health and inequality
- Demonstrate skills for oral presentation and defense of their research in both academic and professional settings
- Design public health interventions based on theoretical foundations to address health determinants outlined by the socioecological model
- Apply core methodological concepts and analytical approaches for social and behavioral sciences in public health

According to the requirements of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), all BSPH degree students must be grounded in foundational public health knowledge. Please view the list of specific CEPH requirements by degree type (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/ceph-requirements/>).