

# MENTAL HEALTH, PHD

## Overview

### PhD Program Description (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/phd-dept-of-mental-health/>)

The PhD program is designed to provide key knowledge and skill-based competencies in the field of public mental health. To gain the knowledge and skills, all PhD students will be expected to complete required coursework, including courses that meet the CEPH competency requirements and research ethics; successfully pass the departmental comprehensive exam; select and meet regularly with a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) as part of advancing to doctoral candidacy; present a public seminar on their dissertation proposal; successfully pass the departmental and school-wide Preliminary Oral Exams; complete a doctoral thesis followed by a formal school-wide Final Oral Defense; participate as a Teaching Assistant (TA); attend Grand Rounds in the Department of Psychiatry; and provide a formal public seminar on their own research. Each of these components is described in more detail below. **The Introduction to Online Learning (<https://courseplus.jhsph.edu/core/index.cfm/go/course.home/cid/90/>) course is taken before the start of the first term.**

### Department Organization (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/mental-health/>)

The PhD Program Director, Dr. Rashelle Musci ([rmusci1@jhu.edu](mailto:rmusci1@jhu.edu)), works with the Vice-Chair for Education, Dr. Judy Bass ([jbass1@jhu.edu](mailto:jbass1@jhu.edu)), to support new doctoral students, together with their advisers, to formulate their academic plans; oversee their completion of ethics training; assist with connections to faculty who may serve as advisers or sources for data or special guidance; provide guidance to students in their roles as teaching assistants; and act as a general resource for all departmental doctoral students. The Vice-Chair also leads the Department Committee on Academic Standards and sits on the School Wide Academic Standards Committee. Students can contact Drs. Musci or Bass directly if they have questions or concerns.

Within the department structure, there are several standing and ad-hoc committees that oversee faculty and student research, practice and education. For specific questions on committee mandate and make-up, please contact Dr. Bass or the Academic Program Administrator, Patty Scott, [patty.scott@jhu.edu](mailto:patty.scott@jhu.edu) ([pscott2@jhu.edu](mailto:pscott2@jhu.edu)).

## Academic Training Programs

The Department of Mental Health houses multiple NIH-funded doctoral and postdoctoral institutional training programs:

### Psychiatric Epidemiology Training (PET) Program (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/mental-health/programs/funded-training-programs/psychiatric-epidemiology-funded-training-pet-program/>)

This interdisciplinary doctoral and postdoctoral program is affiliated with the Department of Epidemiology and with the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the School of Medicine. The Program is co-directed by Dr. Peter Zandi ([pzandi1@jhu.edu](mailto:pzandi1@jhu.edu)) and Dr.

Heather Volk ([hvolk1@jhu.edu](mailto:hvolk1@jhu.edu)). The goal of the program is to increase the epidemiologic expertise of psychiatrists and other mental health professionals and to increase the number of epidemiologists with the interest and capacity to study psychiatric disorders. Graduates are expected to undertake careers in research on the etiology, classification, distribution, course, and outcome of mental disorders and maladaptive behaviors. The Program is funded with a training grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

Pre-doctoral trainees are required to take the four-term series in Epidemiologic Methods (340.751-340.754), as well as the four-term series in Biostatistics (140.621-624). In addition to the other departmental requirements for the doctoral degree, pre-doctoral trainees must also take four advanced courses in one of the domains of expertise they have selected to pursue: Genetic and Environmental Etiology of Mental Disorders, Mental Health Services and Outcomes, Mental Health and Aging, and Global Mental Health. Pre-doctoral trainees should consult with their adviser and the program director to select courses consistent with their training goals.

Postdoctoral fellows take some courses, depending on background and experience, and engage in original research under the supervision of a faculty member. They are expected to have mastery of the basic principles and methods of epidemiology and biostatistics. Thus, fellows are required to take 340.721 Epidemiologic Inference in Public Health, 330.603 Psychiatric Epidemiology, and some equivalent of 140.621 Statistical Methods in Public Health I and 140.622 Statistical Methods in Public Health II. They may be waived from these requirements by the program director if they can demonstrate equivalent prior coursework.

### Drug Dependence Epidemiology Training (DDET) Program (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/mental-health/programs/funded-training-programs/drug-dependence-epidemiology-funded-training-ddet-program/>)

This training program is co-led by Dr. Renee M. Johnson ([rjohnson@jhu.edu](mailto:rjohnson@jhu.edu)) and Dr. Brion Maher ([brion@jhu.edu](mailto:brion@jhu.edu)). The DDET program is designed to train scientists in the area of substance use and substance use disorders. Research training within the DDET Program focuses on: (1) genetic, biological, social, and environmental factors associated with substance use, (2) medical and social consequences of drug use, including HIV/AIDS and violence, (3) co-morbid mental health problems, and (4) substance use disorder treatment and services. The DDET program is funded by the NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The program supports both pre-doctoral and postdoctoral trainees. Pre-doctoral trainees have a maximum of four years of support on the training grant. After completing required coursework, pre-doctoral trainees are expected to complete original research under the supervision of a faculty member affiliated with the DDET program. Postdoctoral trainees typically have two years of support on the training grant. They are required to engage in original research on a full-time basis, under the supervision of a DDET faculty member. Trainees' research projects must be relevant to the field of substance use.

All trainees are required to attend a weekly seminar series focused on career development and substance use research. The DDET program supports trainees' attendance at relevant academic meetings, including the Annual Meeting of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD) each June. Training grant appointments are awarded annually and are renewable given adequate progress in the academic program,

successful completion of program and departmental requirements, and approval of the training director.

Pre-doctoral trainees are required to take the required series in epidemiology and biostatistics, as well as The Epidemiology of Substance Use and Related Problems (330.602). In addition, they must take three advanced courses that enhance skills or content expertise in substance use and related problems: one in epidemiology (e.g., HIV/AIDS epidemiology), one in biostatistics, and one in social and behavioral science or health policy. The most appropriate biostatistics course will provide instruction on a method the trainee will use during the thesis research (e.g., survival analysis, longitudinal analysis methods). (Course requirements for trainees from other departments will be decided on a case-by-case basis.)

Postdoctoral trainees are expected to enter the program with mastery of the basic principles and methods of epidemiology and biostatistics. They are required to take The Epidemiology of Substance Use and Related Problems in their first year (330.602), as well as required ethics courses. Postdoctoral trainees are encouraged to take courses in scientific writing and grant writing.

### **Global Mental Health Training (GMH) Program (<https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/global-mental-health/education-and-training/fellowships/>)**

The Global Mental Health Training (GMH) Program is a training program to provide public health research training in the field of Global Mental Health. It is housed in the Department of Mental Health (<http://www.jhsph.edu/dept/mh/>), in collaboration with the Departments of International Health and Epidemiology. The GMH Program is supported by a T32 research training grant award from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Dr. Judy Bass ([jbass1@jhu.edu](mailto:jbass1@jhu.edu)) is the training program director.

As part of this training program, trainees will undertake a rigorous program of coursework in epidemiology, biostatistics, public mental health and global mental health, field-based research experiences, and integrative activities that will provide trainees with a solid foundation in the core proficiencies of global mental health while giving trainees the opportunity to pursue specialized training in one of three concentration areas that are recognized as high priority: (1) Prevention Research; (2) Intervention Research; or (3) Integration of Mental Health Services Research.

Pre-doctoral trainees are required to take the required series in epidemiology and biostatistics and department of mental health required courses. In addition, they must take three courses that will enhance skills and content expertise in global mental health: 330.620 Qualitative and Quantitative Methods for Mental Health and Psychosocial Research in Low Resource Settings, 224.694 Mental Health Intervention Programming in Low and Middle Income Countries, and 330.680 Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Mental Disorder in Low and Middle Income Countries.

### **The Mental Health Services and Systems (MHSS) Program (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/mental-health/programs/funded-training-programs/nimh-t32-mental-health-services-and-systems-training-grant/>)**

The Mental Health Services and Systems (MHSS) program is an NIMH-funded T32 training program run jointly by the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Health Policy and Management

and also has a close affiliation with the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Drs. Elizabeth Stuart ([estuart@jhu.edu](mailto:estuart@jhu.edu)) and Ramin Mojtabai ([rmojtab1@jhu.edu](mailto:rmojtab1@jhu.edu)) are the training program co-directors.

The goal of the MHSS Program is to train scholars who will become leaders in mental health services and systems research. This program focuses on producing researchers who can address critical gaps in knowledge with a focus on: (1) how healthcare services, delivery settings, and financing systems affect the well-being of persons with mental illness; (2) how cutting-edge statistical and econometric methods can be used in intervention design, policies, and programs to improve care; and (3) how implementation science can be used to most effectively disseminate evidence-based advances into routine practice. The program strongly emphasizes the fundamental principles of research translation and dissemination throughout its curriculum.

Pre-doctoral trainees in the MHSS program are expected to take a set of core coursework in epidemiology and biostatistics, 5 core courses related to the core elements of mental health services and systems (330.662: Public Mental Health, 330.664: Introduction to Mental Health Services, 140.664: Causal Inference in Medicine and Public Health, 550.601: Implementation Research and Practice, and 306.665: Research Ethics and Integrity), and to specialize in one of 3 tracks: (1) health services and economics; (2) statistics and methodology; or (3) implementation science applied to mental health. Trainees are also expected to participate in a biweekly training grant seminar every year of the program and take a year-long practicum course exposing them to real-world mental health service systems and settings.

For more details see this webpage: <http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-mental-health-and-addiction-policy-research/training-opportunities/>

### **Epidemiology and Biostatistics of Aging (<https://coah.jhu.edu/graduate-programs-and-postdoctoral-training/epidemiology-and-biostatistics-of-aging/>)**

This program offers training in the methodology and conduct of significant clinical- and population-based research in older adults. This training grant, funded by the National Institute on Aging, has the specific mission to prepare epidemiologists and biostatisticians who will be both leaders and essential members of the multidisciplinary research needed to define models of healthy, productive aging and the prevention and interventions that will accomplish this goal. The Associate Director of this program is Dr. Michelle Carlson ([mcarloso2@jhu.edu](mailto:mcarloso2@jhu.edu)).

The EBA training grant has as its aims:

- Train pre- and post-doctoral fellows by providing a structured program consisting of: a) course work, b) seminars and working groups, c) practica, d) directed multidisciplinary collaborative experience through a training program research project, and e) directed research.
- Ensure hands-on participation in multidisciplinary research bringing trainees together with infrastructure, mentors, and resources, thus developing essential skills and experience for launching their research careers.
- Provide in-depth knowledge in established areas of concentration, including a) the epidemiology and course of late-life disability, b) the epidemiology of chronic diseases common to older persons, c) cognition, d) social epidemiology, e) the molecular, epidemiological and statistical genetics of aging, f) measurement and analysis of complex gerontological outcomes (e.g. frailty), and g) analysis of longitudinal and survival data.

- Expand the areas of emphasis to which trainees are exposed by developing new training opportunities in: a) clinical trials; b) causal inference; c) screening and prevention; and d) frailty and the integration of longitudinal physiologic investigation into epidemiology.
- Integrate epidemiology and biostatistics training to form a seamless, synthesized approach whose result is greater than the sum of its parts, to best prepare trainees to tackle aging-related research questions.

These aims are designed to provide the fields of geriatrics and gerontology with epidemiologists and biostatisticians who have an appreciation for and understanding of the public health and scientific issues in human aging, and who have the experience collaborating across disciplines that is essential to high-quality research on aging. More information can be found at: <https://coah.jhu.edu/graduate-programs-and-postdoctoral-training/epidemiology-and-biostatistics-of-aging/>.

## Aging and Dementia Training Program (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/mental-health/programs/funded-training-programs/aging-and-dementia-funded-training-program/>)

This interdisciplinary pre- and post-doctoral training program is an interdisciplinary program, funded by the National Institute on Aging, affiliated with the Department of Neurology and the Department of Psychiatry at the School of Medicine, the Department of Mental Health at the School of Public Health and the Department of Psychology and Brain Sciences at the School of Arts and Sciences. The Department of Mental Health contact is Dr. Michelle Carlson ([mcarlo1@jhu.edu](mailto:mcarlo1@jhu.edu)). The goal of this training program is to train young investigators in age-related cognitive and neuropsychiatric disorders.

## Program Requirements

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

### Residence Requirements

All doctoral students must complete and register for four full-time terms of a regular academic year, in succession, starting with Term 1 registration in August-September of the academic year and continuing through Term 4 ending in May of that same academic year. Full-time registration entails a minimum of 16 credits of registration each term and a maximum of 22 credits per term.

Full-time residence means more than registration. It means active participation in department seminars and lectures, research work group meetings, and other socializing experiences within our academic community. As such, doctoral trainees are expected to be in attendance on campus for the full academic year except on official University holidays and vacation leave.

### Course Requirements

Not all courses are required to be taken in the first year alone; students typically take 2 years to complete all course requirements.

Students must obtain an A or B in all required courses. If a grade of C or below is received, the student will be required to repeat the course. An exception is given if a student receives a C (but not a D) in either of the first two terms of the required biostatistics series, but then receives a B or better in both of the final two terms of the series; then a student will not be required to retake the earlier biostatistics course. However,

the student cannot have a cumulative GPA lower than 3.0 to remain in good academic standing. Any other exceptions to this grade requirement must be reviewed and approved by the departmental CAS and academic adviser.

Below are the required courses for the PhD; further information can be found on the PhD in Mental Health (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/phd-dept-of-mental-health/>) webpage.

### BIOSTATISTICS

Code	Title	Credits
PH.140.621	Statistical Methods in Public Health I (first term) <sup>1</sup>	4
PH.140.622	Statistical Methods in Public Health II (second term) <sup>1</sup>	4
PH.140.623	Statistical Methods in Public Health III (third term) <sup>1</sup>	4
PH.140.624	Statistical Methods in Public Health IV (fourth term) <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>16</b>

<sup>1</sup> Must be completed to be eligible to sit for the departmental written comprehensive exams.

### EPIDEMIOLOGY

Code	Title	Credits
PH.340.751	Epidemiologic Methods 1 (first term) <sup>1</sup>	5
PH.340.752	Epidemiologic Methods 2 (second term) <sup>1</sup>	5
PH.340.753	Epidemiologic Methods 3 (third term) <sup>1</sup>	5

<sup>1</sup> Must be completed to be eligible to sit for the departmental written comprehensive exams.

### DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH COURSES

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Courses usually taken first year:</b>		
PH.330.604	Seminars in Research in Public Mental Health (all terms required for first year students)	1
PH.330.617	Psychopathology for Public Health (first term) <sup>1</sup>	3
PH.330.662	Public Mental Health (first term) <sup>1</sup>	2
PH.330.603	Psychiatric Epidemiology (second term) <sup>1</sup>	3
PH.330.661	Social, Psychological, and Developmental Processes in the Etiology of Mental Disorders (third term) <sup>1</sup>	3
PH.330.607	PREVENTION of MENTAL DISORDERS: PUBLIC HEALTH InterVENTIONS (third term) <sup>1</sup>	3
PH.330.612	Introduction to Behavioral and Psychiatric Genetics (fourth term) <sup>1</sup>	3
PH.330.623	Brain and Behavior in Mental Disorders (fourth term) <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>Courses to be taken either first or second year:</b>		
PH.330.664	Introduction to Mental Health Services (first term) <sup>1</sup>	3
PH.330.602	The Epidemiology of Substance Use and Related Problems (second term) <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>Courses usually taken second year:</b>		
PH.330.657	Statistics for Psychosocial Research: Measurement (first term) <sup>1</sup>	4

PH.330.660	Grant Writing for the Social and Behavioral Sciences (fourth term)	3
PH.330.611	Writing Publishable Manuscripts for the Social and Behavioral Sciences (second year and beyond only - second term)	2
PH.330.605	Doctoral Seminar in Public Mental Health (2nd year PhD students only)	1

<sup>1</sup> Must be completed to be eligible to sit for the departmental written comprehensive exams.

<sup>2</sup> For Department of Mental Health doctoral students, a research paper is required entailing one additional course credit. PH.330.840 Special Studies and Research Mental Health listing Dr. Eaton as the mentor.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS OUTSIDE THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

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.

Candidates 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. Contact the Academic Office for further information.

## SCHOOL-WIDE COURSES

Introduction to Online Learning (<http://distance.jhsph.edu/core/index.cfm/go/course.home/cid/90/>) taken before the first year.

## ETHICS TRAINING

PH.550.860 Academic & Research Ethics at BSPH (0 credit - pass/fail) **required of all students in the first term of registration.**

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) connotes a broad range of career development topics that goes beyond the more narrowly focused "research ethics" and includes issues such as conflict of interest, authorship responsibilities, research misconduct, animal use and care, and human subjects research. RCR training requirements for JHPSH students are based on two circumstances: their degree program and their source of funding, which may overlap.

1. All PhD students are required to take one of two courses in Responsible Conduct of Research, detailed below one time, in any year, during their doctoral studies.
2. All students, regardless of degree program, who receive funding from one of the federal grant mechanisms outlined in the NIH notice below, must take one of the two courses listed below to satisfy the 8 in-person hours of training in specific topic areas specified by NIH (e.g., conflict of interest, authorship, research misconduct, human and animal subject ethics, etc.).

The two courses that satisfy either requirement are:

- PH.550.600 Living Science Ethics - Responsible Conduct of Research [1 credit, Evans]. Once per week, 1st term.
- PH.306.665 Research Ethics and integrity [3 credits, Kass]. Twice per week, 3rd term.

Registration in either course is recorded on the student's transcript and serves as documentation of completion of the requirement.

- If a non-PhD or postdoctoral student is unsure whether or not their source of funding requires in-person RCR training, they or the PI should contact the project officer for the award.
- Students who have conflicts that make it impossible for them to take either course can attend a similar course offered by Sharon Krag at Homewood during several intensive sessions (sequential full days or half days) that meet either on weekends in October or April, a week in June, or intersessions in January. Permission is required. Elizabeth Peterson (epeterso@jhsph.edu) can provide details on dates and times.
- Students who may have taken the REwards course (Research Ethics Workshops About Responsibilities and Duties of Scientists) in the SOM can request that this serve as a replacement, as long as they can provide documentation of at least 8 in-person contact hours.
- Postdoctoral students are permitted to enroll in either course but BSPH does not require them to take RCR training. However, terms of their funding might require RCR training and it is their obligation to fulfill the requirement.
- The required Academic Ethics module is independent of the RCR training requirement. It is a standalone module that must be completed by all students at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. This module covers topics associated with maintaining academic integrity, including plagiarism, proper citations, and cheating.

## PhD in Mental Health

Department of Mental Health candidates for the degree Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) must fulfill all University (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/university-wide-policies-information/academic-policies-information/phd-specific-policies/>) and School requirements. These include, but are not limited to, a minimum of four consecutive academic terms at the School in full-time residency (some programs require 6 terms), continuous registration throughout their tenure as a PhD student, satisfactory completion of a Departmental Written Comprehensive Examination, satisfactory performance on a University Preliminary Oral Examination, readiness to undertake research, and preparation and successful defense of a thesis based upon independent research.

PhD Students are required to be registered full-time for a minimum of 16 credits per term and courses must be taken for letter grade or pass/fail. *Courses taken for audit do not count toward the 16-credit registration minimum.*

Students having already earned credit at BSPH from a master's program or as a Special Student Limited within the past three years for any of the required courses may be able to use them toward satisfaction of doctoral course requirements.

For a full list of program policies, please visit the PhD in Mental Health (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/phd-dept-of-mental-health/>) page where students can find more information and links to our handbook.

## Completion of Requirements

The University places a seven-year maximum limit upon the period of doctoral study. The Department of Mental Health students are expected to complete all requirements in an average of 4-5 years.

# Learning Outcomes

## PhD Program Description

The PhD program is designed to provide key knowledge and skill-based competencies in the field of public mental health. Upon successful completion of the PhD in Mental Health, students will have mastered the following competencies:

- Evaluate the clinical presentations, incidence, prevalence, course and risk/protective factors for major mental and behavioral health disorders.
- Differentiate important known biological, psychological and social risk and protective factors for major mental and behavioral disorders and assess how to advance understanding of the causes of these disorders in populations.
- Evaluate and explain factors associated with resiliency and recovery from major mental and behavioral disorders.
- Evaluate, select, and implement effective methods and measurement strategies for assessment of major mental and behavioral disorders across a range of epidemiologic settings.
- Critically evaluate strategies for the prevention and treatment of major mental and behavioral disorders as well as utilization and delivery of mental health services over the life course, across a range of settings, and in a range of national contexts.
- Assess preventive and treatment interventions likely to prove effective in optimizing mental health of the population, reducing the incidence of mental and behavioral disorders, raising rates of recovery from disorders, and reducing risk of later disorder recurrence.

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/>).